



WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Annual Accreditation Report

April 1, 2009-March 31, 2010

**WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGE COMMISSION
2020 CAREY AVENUE, 8TH FLOOR
CHEYENNE, WYOMING 82002
(307) 777-7763
www.communitycolleges.wy.edu**

*Casper College • Central Wyoming College • Eastern Wyoming College • Laramie County Community College
Northwest College • Northern Wyoming Community College District • Western Wyoming Community College*

ACCREDITATION BY THE HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC), a commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA), accredits Wyoming's seven community colleges. Institutional accreditation is a voluntary process that serves the critical purposes of quality assurance and institutional and program improvement. Colleges that are accredited by the HLC continually evaluate their programs and overall institutions in light of the criteria for accreditation set forth by the HLC.

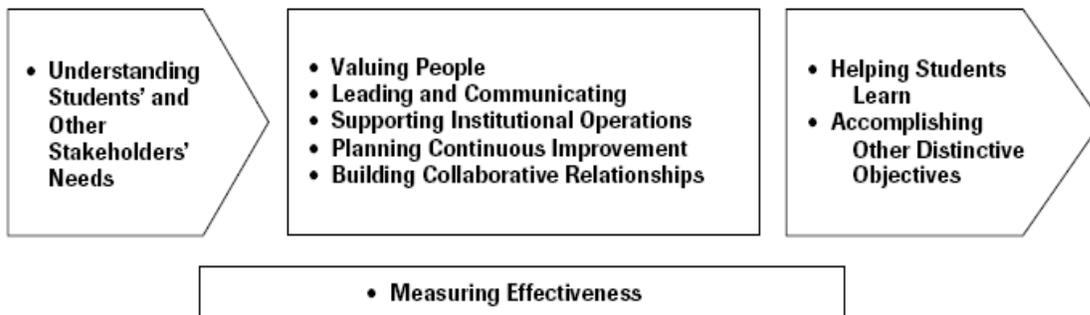
Currently, most of the Wyoming community colleges follow the HLC Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ) to maintain accreditation status. The PEAQ process for institutional accreditation is a continuous cycle. For approximately two years the institution conducts a Self-Study, which critically assesses all programs and aspects of the institution. Next, a team of peer evaluators conducts a Comprehensive Visit. The Team critically evaluates the Self-Study Report and the institution during the visit and subsequently makes a recommendation about reaffirmation of accreditation status. Some institutions are granted continued status with the stipulation that the institutions provide a written report (Progress, Monitoring, or Contingency) within a specified time period or a possible focused visit to examine specific aspects of an institution. The longest time period continued institutional accreditation is reaffirmed by the HLC is for ten years.

An alternate method by which colleges can maintain accreditation status is an HLC program called Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). Wyoming colleges have the option of applying to become part of the Academic Quality Improvement Program if they prefer a different approach to accreditation. AQIP is a program built around quality improvement categories with a focus on goal-setting, networking, and accountability activities (see categories below). The college engages in all AQIP processes (Strategy Forums, Annual Updates, Systems Portfolio Appraisals) and visits during a seven-year period. Currently, three Wyoming community colleges have applied and been accepted into AQIP: Laramie County Community College, Northern Wyoming Community College District and Western Wyoming Community College.

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

1. **Mission and Integrity:** the institution “operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.”
2. **Preparing for the Future:** the institution’s “allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.”
3. **Student Learning and Effective Teaching:** the institution “provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.”
4. **Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge:** the institution “promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.”
5. **Engagement and Service:** “as called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.”

The Academic Quality Improvement Program Categories



WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACCREDITATION ACTIVITY 2009-2010

Because continued institutional accreditation is reaffirmed for various periods of time and institutions applied for candidacy at various times in the past, each of the Wyoming community colleges is at a different phase of the on-going institutional accreditation process. During the time period of April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010 four of the seven Wyoming community colleges had institutional accreditation activity. This summary is provided in compliance with W.S. 21-18-202(e)(i), which requires the Community College Commission to “report the findings of institutional and specialized accreditation studies.” An accreditation schedule is also included at the end of this summary for easy reference.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACCREDITATION SUMMARIES

CASPER COLLEGE (PEAQ STATUS)

Casper College completed the comprehensive evaluation process and was approved for continued accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission in August 2009. A progress report on general education is required to be submitted by June 30, 2012. Casper College’s next comprehensive visit is scheduled for 2018-19.

CENTRAL WYOMING COLLEGE (PEAQ STATUS)

Central Wyoming College (CWC) in Riverton submitted an Assessment Progress report to the Higher Learning Commission in December 2008. This report was accepted by the Higher Learning Commission in January 2009, and no further reports are required. Central Wyoming College’s next comprehensive visit is scheduled for 2015-2016.

EASTERN WYOMING COLLEGE (PEAQ STATUS)

Eastern Wyoming College (EWC) in Torrington did not have any official accreditation activity during the reporting period. EWC is finishing its self-study for its next PEAQ evaluation visit which is scheduled for October 25-27, 2010. EWC filed an agreement with the Higher Learning Commission to complete a Special Emphasis on The First Year of College for self study based on the Foundations of Excellence ®. The FoE activities started with a team attending the launch meeting held in August, 2008 in North Carolina. Activities culminated with a comprehensive report on the first year of college. In 2009-2010, the expansion of the self-study has been conducted to address the criteria components. The report will be mailed to the Higher Learning Commission in the summer of 2010.

LARAMIE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE (AQIP STATUS)

Laramie County Community College, a participant in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP), worked on several action projects between April 1, 2009, and March 31, 2010. These projects fell into the categories of Helping Students Learn, Valuing People, and Leading and Communicating; they are outlined in the table below.

Category	Project	Project Dates
Helping Students Learn	Developing a New Advising System	January 2008 – September 2009
Helping Students Learn	Reviewing and Revising Prerequisites	September 2009 – December 2010
Valuing People	Recommendations for a Professional Development System	January 2008 – September 2009
Valuing People	Developing a Performance Management System	September 2009 – May 2010
Leading and Communicating	Streamlining Electronic Communications	January 2008 – September 2009
Leading and Communicating	Identification of Issues and Recommendations for Improvement	October 2009 – April 2010

The College also began work on its Systems Portfolio, which will be published and reviewed by AQIP peer evaluators in the fall of 2010. In the portfolio, LCCC will describe the processes and systems it uses to achieve its goals. The portfolio also includes a discussion of the effectiveness of those processes and systems and strategies for improving them.

NORTHWEST COLLEGE (PEAQ STATUS)

Northwest College (NWC) is fully accredited through 2011 and did not have any official accreditation activity during the reporting period. The visiting team for the next comprehensive PEAQ evaluation will be on campus November 15-17, 2010, to assess the extent to which the College meets the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation requirements. The NWC Accreditation Executive Committee has finalized the College’s self-study, which will be mailed to the HLC during the summer of 2010.

NORTHERN WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT (AQIP STATUS)

Northern Wyoming Community College District (NWCCD), serving Sheridan, Campbell, and Johnson counties, participates in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) form of accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission. The College’s Systems Portfolio, analyzing nine categories related to the institution, received a very favorable response in spring 2008, and the report stated that: The Systems Appraisal team concluded that Northern Wyoming Community College District has presented evidence that it complies with each of the *Five Criteria for Accreditation* and each of their Core Components. The Portfolio is a dynamic document that will be submitted again in Fall 2011 with a report due Spring 2012, and an official process of reaccreditation will occur the same year. A steering committee from the College attended the Strategy Forum in spring 2008 and is currently preparing for the institution’s first Quality Checkup Visit, scheduled for November 2010. The College has three active action projects and has retired seven projects.

WESTERN WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGE (AQIP STATUS)

Western Wyoming Community College (WWCC) in Rock Springs formally applied to the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) in April 2008 and was accepted as a participant on July 15, 2008. A team from the College attended the strategy forum in February 2009 and has submitted their first three action plans to the Higher Learning Commission. The College is incorporating strategic planning priorities with the AQIP action plans to move the institution forward in a systematic way. WWCC’s next Reaffirmation of Accreditation is now scheduled for 2015-16.

Accreditation Schedule Wyoming Community Colleges

Last updated: May 2009

(Non-Shaded rows indicate PEAQ Status; Shaded rows indicate AQIP Status)

Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

References: 1. W.S. 21-18-202(e) (i) and (iii) 2. MIS Handbook, pages: Admin-10 and Accred-1	Last Comprehensive Visit	Focused Visit	Required Progress Report	Required Monitoring Report	Required Contingency Report	Next PEAQ Comprehensive Visit or AQIP Quality Checkup/ Site Visit
Casper College	March 2009	None Scheduled	None Due	None Due	None Due	2018-2019
Central Wyoming College	October 2005	None Scheduled	None Due	None Due	None Due	2015-2016
Eastern Wyoming College	February 2001	None Scheduled	None Due	None Due	None Due	2010-2011
Laramie County Community College	October 1999	None Scheduled	None Due	None Due	None Due	2010-2011
Northwest College	March 2001	None Scheduled	None Due	None Due	None Due	2010-2011
Northern Wyoming Community College District	November 1997	None Scheduled	None Due	None Due	None Due	2010-2011
Western Wyoming Community College	February 2004	None Scheduled	None Due	None Due	None Due	2015-2016

WYOMING COMMUNITY COLLEGE COMMISSION

2020 Carey Ave, 8th Floor, Cheyenne, Wyoming
307-777-7763

<http://www.communitycolleges.wy.edu>