



May 21, 2021

Ms. Deborah Fox  
President  
Highland Community College  
606 West Main Street  
Highland, KS 66035-4165

Dear President Fox:

Attached is a copy of the Multi-Location Visit Report completed following the visit to Highland Community College. As detailed in the report, the pattern of operations at the locations appears to be adequate and no further review or monitoring is necessary.

Within the Multi-Location Visit Report, you will find brief comments on the instructional oversight, academic services, student services, facilities, marketing and recruitment information and adequacy of assessment of student performance. Please consider these comments as advice for continued improvement of the additional locations.

Per HLC policy, completion of these visits and fulfillment of the requirement will be noted in your institution's history record and the completed report will be included in your institution's permanent file.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the Multi-Location Visit or the attached report, please contact Pat Newton-Curran ([pnewton@hlcommission.org](mailto:pnewton@hlcommission.org)).

Sincerely,

Higher Learning Commission



## Multi-Location Visit Peer Review Report

**Institution:** Highland Community College

**Additional Locations Visited:**

Location Name	Location Address <i>(street, city, state and ZIP code)</i>	Date Reviewed
HCC-Electrical Building	17349 Country Club Road, Atchison, KS 66002	5/11/2021
Perry	203 W. Bridge Street, Perry KS 66073	5/11/2021
	One-hour meeting conducted through Zoom with the President's Staff	5/10/2021

**Peer Reviewer**

Name: Ruth E. Cain

Institution: retired from the University of Missouri-Kansas City      Title:

*Instructions*

In order to document effective administrative systems for managing multiple additional locations, please complete the following. For each item, check **adequate** or **attention needed**, and indicate in Comments the institution's strengths and/or opportunities for improvement in controlling and delivering degree programs off-campus. If comments pertain to a specific location, they should be included along with the identity of that location.

Submit the completed report as a PDF file at [hlcommission.org/upload](http://hlcommission.org/upload). Select "Final Reports" from the list of submission options to ensure the institution's materials are sent to the correct HLC staff member. The report is due within 30 days after the last additional location is visited.

**Overview Statement**

Provide information about current additional locations and the institution's general approach to off-campus instruction. Describe the growth pattern at the institution since the last review of off-campus instruction. Provide information about the involvement of external organizations or other higher education institutions.

**Judgment of reviewer.** Check appropriate box:

Adequate

Attention Needed

### Comments:

Highland Community College (HCC; College) serves northeast Kansas through a variety of associate's degree programs, technical training, professional enhancement programs, and personal development opportunities. Consistent with its mission of life-long learning and service to area communities, HCC has experienced several changes in locations, programs, and enrollments since its last review of off-campus instruction in 2016. These recent changes which illustrate the evolution of the locations and the programs provided, include:

- closing of additional locations at Marysville, Sabetha, and Holton by 2018;
- the discontinuation of the Perry Center serving as the base of the Early Childhood program;
- the designation of the Electrical Building and the Construction Trades Buildings in Atchison as additional locations;
- facility renovation to support the expansion of the program at the Electrical Building to a two-year certificate program and the addition of a second instructor for that program; and
- program expansion at the Western Center.

Recent enrollment declines, particularly at the Perry and Wamego Centers, are attributed in part to improvements in the economy and the job market (pre-pandemic). HCC continually works to identify areas for program growth, such as the new viticulture and enology certificate program at the Wamego Center.

HCC is governed by a six-member Board of Trustees elected from Doniphan County and is coordinated by the Kansas Board of Regents. The technical programs have Advisory Committees whose members are drawn from related business and industry in the area. The College partners with area schools to offer concurrent college classes to high school students at the Perry Center and a two-year automotive technology program at Leavenworth High School.

HCC plans for future growth, as well program elimination, based on decisions made by the Kansas Board of Regents, student demand, enrollment trends, and needs identified by the community and the College. For example, HCC is adding a new building at the Technical Center. The Diesel program will relocate to this facility, freeing up space for program addition or expansion at the location. In Fall 2021, Early Childhood programs will be added at the Technical Center and at the Western Center.

## Institutional Planning

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What evidence demonstrates that the institution effectively plans for growth and maintenance of additional locations? Identify whether the institution has adequate controls in place to ensure that information presented to students is adequate. Describe whether the financial planning and budgeting process has proven effective at additional locations.

**Judgment of reviewer.** Check appropriate box:

Adequate

Attention Needed

## Comments:

HCC engages in short-term and strategic planning concerning the facilities and programs at its additional locations in response to enrollment trends, community needs, workforce needs, and changes in industry standards. For example, HCC identified the need for a new building at the Technical Center to accommodate high enrollment demand for the Diesel Program. The expanded Diesel Program will move to this facility, freeing up space for new or expanded programs at the Technical Center. The Electrical Building was substantially increased in size in 2019 through the addition of a second classroom and faculty office to accommodate expansion of the program from a one-year to a two-year certificate program in response to changes in industry standards.

For the technical locations, the Director of Technical Education gathers input from program faculty, the Western Center Director, and the Advisory Committees for each technical program and makes recommendations for facilities and program expansions to the President's Staff and the Board of Trustees. The Perry, Wamego, and Western Center Directors work, first, with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and, then, with the President's Staff on planning programmatic and facility changes at those locations.

HCC is in the process of finalizing its next three-year strategic plan, which will update the 2016-19 plan. The Strategic Planning Council consists of a cross-section of faculty and staff, including representation from the additional locations. The recommendations of the council will be presented to the Board for review and approval. The College also plans to start developing a master facilities plan to replace the one issued in 2002.

## Facilities

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What evidence demonstrates that the facilities at the additional locations meet the needs of the students and the curriculum? Consider, in particular, classrooms and laboratories (size, maintenance, temperature, etc.); faculty and administrative offices (site, visibility, privacy for meetings, etc.); parking or access to public transit; bookstore or text purchasing services; security; handicapped access; and other (food or snack services, study and meeting areas, etc.)

**Judgment of reviewer.** Check appropriate box:

Adequate

Attention Needed

## Comments:

All technical programs have Advisory Committees, consisting of representatives of area business and industry, that provide recommendations on facility and equipment needs. The Director of Technical Education regularly visits the additional locations and reviews adequacy of maintenance, facilities, equipment, and safety measures. The Technical Center Director makes recommendations to the President's Staff for needed improvements. Annually, capital outlay funds provided by the State are budgeted to provide equipment and facility improvements.

The Perry Center and Wamego Center Directors submit requests for facilities and equipment to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. These requests are discussed at President's Staff meetings and approved projects are added to the capital needs list and carried out as funds are available.

Prior to the pandemic, the Vice President for Academic Affairs visited the Perry Center on a weekly basis and the Wamego, Western, and Technical Centers on a monthly basis to observe facility and maintenance needs and will resume the regular visits once conditions allow.

The technical facilities have custodial and maintenance staff on site, and the Perry and Wamego Centers contract custodial and maintenance work.

As evidenced by the multi-location visit to the Perry Center and the Electrical Building, parking is adequate at the additional locations. The local transportation authority has a bus stop at the Wamego Center.

The two locations visited were accessible and adequately maintained and cleaned (including enhanced COVID sanitation protocols). Both have adequate classrooms, laboratories, and other instructional areas appropriately equipped for the programs offered. Recent improvements to instructional facilities include the acquisition of a variety of human anatomical models, funded by an external grant, for use in the anatomy and physiology classes at the Perry Center. A recent graduate indicated that these models were made available for additional study by students outside scheduled classes.

Perry and Wamego centers have areas where students can pick up their rental textbooks and purchase HCC merchandise. The additional locations have snacks available for purchase in the bookstore or vending machines. Textbooks for students at the Electrical Center are available for pickup at that location.

The Perry Center includes a front-desk staffed by the administrative assistant, faculty and administrative offices, a breakroom for faculty and staff, and a student lounge. The Electrical Building includes faculty offices. Administrative offices for staff supporting the Electrical Building are located at the nearby (1.5 miles) Atchison Technical Center.

COVID stimulus funds were used to install smart classrooms at the additional locations and provide instructor tablets and student laptops or tablets, including, if needed, students in the Electrical Building, Construction Trades Building, and the Auto Technology programs. Students at the Perry Center have access to computers in the computer classroom outside of class time and students at the Electrical Building have access to several computers connected to the internet if needed.

## Instructional Oversight

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What evidence demonstrates that the institution effectively oversees instruction at the additional locations? Consider, in particular, consistency of curricular expectations and policies, availability of courses needed for program and graduation requirements, faculty qualifications, performance of instructional duties, availability of faculty to students, orientation of faculty/professional development, attention to student concerns.

**Judgment of reviewer.** Check appropriate box:

Adequate

Attention Needed

**Comments:**

All HCC courses follow common course syllabi, which are published on the College's web site and included in the First Day Handouts for each class.

HCC's general education courses are part of Kansas's Systemwide Transfer agreement, which shares course competencies across institutions. A sample of the common courses are reviewed by the faculty-led, discipline-specific Kansas Core Outcomes Groups that meet annually to confirm or articulate learning outcomes and discuss courses for inclusion in the Kansas Systemwide Transfer library. Each course in the transfer library has core outcomes, which are observable and measurable actions that students will be able to perform upon successful completion of a course.

Many of the technical programs are aligned across the State's institutions. Faculty representatives from the various technical programs meet periodically with Kansas Board of Regents staff to develop competencies, identify aligned courses, and make adjustments to curriculum based on insights from business and industry and workforce needs.

HCC's Curriculum and Instruction Committee, which includes faculty and staff representation from the additional locations, reviews all curriculum change requests, including new course and program proposals, as well as course and program modifications.

Center Directors work in collaboration with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, with discipline directors, and with other Center Directors for shared classes, to schedule courses each semester, as well as with high schools for concurrent class scheduling. Considerations include providing a balance between day and evening courses, and occasional weekend courses for some degree requirements, to meet students' scheduling needs and enrollment demands. Students affirmed that courses were offered at times convenient to them and they experienced no difficulty in accessing required courses.

Students indicated that faculty were readily available outside of class, either in person or through phone or email contact. The students additionally emphasized that faculty were highly responsive to requests for assistance and fostered supportive student-faculty relationships.

HCC has an established, formal process for processing student complaints. The complaint policy and procedures, including an online form, are readily accessible on the College's web site. Formal complaints are submitted to the Vice President for Student Services, who then routes them to the appropriate Center Director for resolution. If the complaint concerns a Center Director, it is handled by the Student Services staff. Documentation of resolution of complaints is maintained in the Student Services office. Faculty, staff, and students indicated that most questions or concerns were handled informally by a staff or faculty member.

## **Institutional Staffing and Faculty Support**

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What evidence demonstrates that the institution has appropriately qualified and sufficient staff and faculty in place for the location, and that the institution supports and evaluates personnel at off-campus locations? Consider the processes in place for selecting, training, and orienting faculty at the location.

**Judgment of reviewer.** Check appropriate box:

Adequate

Attention Needed

### **Comments:**

Faculty qualifications for teaching general education, technical, and disciplinary courses are verified by the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) at the time of a candidate's initial application. The VPAA sends the HCC Adjunct Instructor Approval Form to Center Directors, who hire the adjuncts as needed. This form indicates the applications qualifications and course(s) approved to teach. Full-time faculty hiring occurs through the College's standard search-committee process, which includes a review of qualifications.

Faculty make-up and supervision varies among the additional locations. Full-time faculty deliver all instruction in the Auto Technology program at Leavenworth High School and at the Electrical Building and Construction Trades Building. These faculty report to the Director of Technical Education. At the Atchison Technical Center, which is overseen by the Director of Technical Education, the technical programs are delivered by full-time faculty, while general education courses are taught by adjuncts. The technical programs at the Western Center are also overseen by the Director of Technical Education. The Directors at the Perry Center and the Wamego Center supervise the adjunct instructors at those locations and assist with VPAA in the evaluation of full-time faculty as requested.

Full-time faculty at the additional locations are evaluated according to a process and timeline detailed in the Master Contract. The faculty member is evaluated each semester during the first two years, once a year during years three and four, and once every three years thereafter. The full-time faculty member has the option to identify either the director or the VPAA to conduct the evaluation. The evaluation includes class observation, during which the evaluator completes the evaluation rubric, a written report, and a scheduled discussion on strengths and areas and strategies for improvement.

Adjunct faculty at all locations are evaluated each semester they teach. The evaluation includes an observation by the Center Direct, the VPAA, or full-time faculty utilizing an evaluation checklist (eWalkthrough) and written feedback. Faculty and staff who conduct the evaluations participate in calibration exercises prior to conducting the evaluations to ensure consistency in application of the tool. The adjunct receives a copy of the completed evaluation checklist and comments. The supervisor meets with the adjunct to discuss the evaluation and identify strategies to enhance teaching effectiveness.

In Spring 2021, HCC introduced a revised faculty orientation process, which was developed by a multi-disciplinary committee of faculty and staff. The process includes a checklist of processes to complete (e.g., HR forms) and modules on policies and procedures. Additionally, faculty and staff at the locations mentor new faculty, such as providing examples of the first day handout or orienting them to classroom technology.

Ongoing faculty development occurs through scheduled in-service sessions at the start of each fall and spring semester. The fall semester sessions are delivered by the HHC administration, while faculty plan the spring sessions. Full-time faculty attendance is required, and adjuncts are invited to participate. Recent topics for the professional development sessions include classroom management techniques, online teaching strategies, using the learning management system (Canvas), and assessment. The in-service sessions include discipline breakouts, at which faculty discuss changes at the College, discipline, or course level (e.g., new text books), as well as strategies related to teaching and assessment specific to the discipline. Sessions on using Canvas have also been conducted on site at the locations, and support is available in-person or remotely upon request.

## Student Support

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What evidence demonstrates that the institution delivers, supports, and manages necessary student services at the additional locations? Consider, in particular, the level of student access (in person, by computer, by phone, etc.) to academic advising/placement, remedial/tutorial services, and library materials/services. Also, consider the level of access to admissions, registration/student records, financial aid, and job placement services, as well as attention to student concerns.

**Judgment of reviewer.** Check appropriate box:

Adequate

Attention Needed

### Comments:

Student support services at the additional locations are made available to students through a combination of in-person and remote access. The qualifications of the staff at the additional locations are comparable to those of staff in similar positions at the main campus.

The availability of in-person access varies by location. For example, the Wamego, Western, and Technical centers have full-time student services staff available during normal center operating hours. At the Perry Center, the part-time Director provides academic advising and the Office Assistant assists students in areas such as admission, enrollment, and textbook pickup and connects students with offices on the main campus, such as Financial Aid, the Registrar, and Billing. A staff member is also available on-site when weekend and evening classes are in session. In keeping with the array of programs offered, the Technical Center in Atchison has a large student services staff relative to other locations. The students who attend classes at the Electrical Building and the Construction Trades Building access the student services at the Technical Center. Student services staff at the Technical Center includes two Student Services representatives, a Testing Coordinator, and an Office Manager who assists with student account questions. These and other staff at the Technical Center provide assistance in areas including admissions, advising, enrollment, financial aid, orientation, textbooks, uniforms, and student employment. The Director of Technical Education and student services staff from the Technical Center are frequently at the Construction Trades and Electrical buildings and are accessible to students with questions or who require assistance.

Students participating in the site visit indicated that assistance was easily accessible at the additional locations. If on-site personnel were unable to provide the requested assistance, they readily contact the appropriate staff at the Highland campus to assist the student.

All locations have Wi-Fi available to students to connect to the College's resources, such as Canvas, MyHCC, and Office 365. Students attending the additional locations have access to student services provided by the main campus though email or phone or in-person, including the departments of Admissions, Financial Aid, Registrar, Student Billing, and Book Store. The Director of Advising is also available to assist in the event the advisor at the additional location is not available. Students may schedule tutoring appointments, conducted through Zoom, with peer tutors located at the Highland campus.



Student complaints may be reported to the Director responsible for the location or to the Student Services office through the College's online process. Policies and processes for resolving complaints and grade appeals are published in the catalog and the student handbook and are the same for the main campus and additional locations, unless otherwise noted in the catalog or handbook. Students participating in the site visit were aware of the complaint process. The students indicated that any concerns they might have were primarily in the form of questions or need for information that were addressed by the faculty or staff.

All locations have access to the HCC library's online resources and any print materials requested are delivered by courier service to student's location. Students can access the online catalog and electronic resources from anywhere they have internet access, and library staff are available to students via phone and email during normal day, evening, and weekend library hours.

## Evaluation and Assessment

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What evidence demonstrates that the institution measures, documents, and analyzes student academic performance sufficiently to maintain academic quality at the additional locations? How are measures and techniques employed at a location equivalent to those for assessment and evaluation on the main campus? Consider, in particular, the setting of measurable learning objectives, the actual measurement of performance, and the analysis and use of assessment data to maintain/improve quality.

**Judgment of reviewer.** Check appropriate box:

Adequate

Attention Needed

### Comments:

HCC is in the process of implementing a comprehensive assessment plan, as detailed in the College's April 2020 interim monitoring report. Progress on plan implementation includes the development of the program- and course-level learning goals and benchmark assignments for general education and the disciplines, as well as the creation of master course outlines for the System Wide Transfer courses. Faculty confirmed their involvement in the development of the general education and discipline goals and assessment methods and indicated that adjuncts were asked for feedback as the goals were developed. While plan implementation was disrupted due to the pandemic, full-time faculty have tested the benchmark assignments.

Development of assessment for the technical programs was delayed by the need to respond to the pandemic and further delayed by the departure of two faculty who had been designated to lead assessment plan development in these areas. An in-service on assessment in the technical programs was presented to the technical faculty by the VPAA in January 2021. During spring semester 2021, technical faculty finalized program-level learning goals and were finalizing course-level learning goals and benchmark assignments.

HCC is preparing to roll-out the assessment plans to adjunct faculty in August 2021, with the goal of fully implementing the new assessment model at all locations in 2021-2022.

Additionally, as its Quality Initiative, HCC is participating in the HLC's Assessment Academy, with a focus on co-curricular assessment. An eight-member team, including full-time and adjunct faculty and student services staff, is leading this initiative.

HCC conducts a review of each discipline on a three-year rotation. The faculty in the discipline prepare a report which includes summaries of staffing, faculty professional development activities, enrollment trends, assessment, planning, and opportunities for future development. Each report is reviewed by a committee external to the discipline, which provides a response (Peer Review Recommendations) highlighting the program's strengths and recommending areas for improvement, as well as making recommendations for budgeting for facilities and equipment upgrades. The VPAA compiles the reports and recommendations, which are sent to the President's Staff for review and action.

## Continuous Improvement

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What evidence demonstrates that the institution encourages and ensures continuous quality improvement at its additional locations? Consider in particular the institution's planning and evaluation processes that ensure regular review and improvement of additional locations and ensure alignment of additional locations with the mission and goals of the institution as a whole.

**Judgment of reviewer.** Check appropriate box:

Adequate

Attention Needed

### Comments:

HCC's concern with continuous improvement is evident in its recent development of a comprehensive assessment plan, to be fully implemented in 2021-22, its ongoing program review protocol that includes recommendations from faculty committees external to the discipline, its faculty evaluation policies and processes, and its strategic planning initiatives. As part of its short- and long-term planning, HCC monitors enrollment trends, regional workforce needs, changes in business and industry, and input from the technical programs' Advisory Committee to ensure currency of programs and plan for program changes and facility improvements.

To ensure alignment of programs and courses across the institution and with HCC's mission and goals, the Assessment Committee and the Curriculum Committee include representatives from the additional locations. The additional locations are represented on the President's Staff by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Director of Technical Education frequently reports to the President's Staff in areas such as recommendations for programmatic changes, budget requests, and facility needs for the technical programs.

The College works with the Kansas Board of Regents and other Kansas institutions of higher education to align general education, technical programs, and system-wide transfer courses across HCC and with colleges and university throughout Kansas.

HCC is in the process of finalizing a three-year strategic plan to update the 2016-19 Strategic Plan, which will be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval. The Strategic Planning Council includes faculty and staff representation from the additional locations. The College is also planning to create an updated master facilities plan, to replace the one developed in 2002, which will include the additional locations.

## Marketing and Recruiting Information

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What evidence confirms that the information presented to students in advertising, brochures, and other communications is accurate?

**Judgment of reviewer.** Check appropriate box:

Adequate

Attention Needed

### Comments:

The HCC website is used to communicate admissions policies and procedures and is frequently updated to reflect changes in areas such as policies, programs, or tuition. The HCC catalog is updated bi-annually to reflect course changes and admissions requirements. Brochures issued for the additional locations are revised annually to reflect current costs and scholarship opportunities and changes in program requirements. All materials are produced by the Director of Marketing and the Media Production Manager, working in collaboration with appropriate staff on the Highland campus and the additional locations. For example, to ensure the accuracy of the information presented, the Director of Marketing works with the VPAA to produce the twice-yearly course guide and with the staff at the locations to develop brochures concerning programs and services specific to the location. These materials are submitted to the requesting office for final approval prior to publication.

## Summary Recommendation

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Select one of the following statements. Include, as appropriate, a summary of findings.

- Overall, the pattern of this institution's operations at its additional locations appears to be adequate, and no further review or monitoring by the Higher Learning Commission is necessary.
- Overall, the pattern of this institution's operations at its additional locations needs some attention as defined in this report. The institution can be expected to follow up on these matters without monitoring by the Higher Learning Commission. The next scheduled comprehensive review can serve to document that the matters identified have been addressed. **[Identify specific areas needing organizational attention.]**
- The overall pattern of this institution's operations at its additional locations is inadequate and requires attention from the Higher Learning Commission. **[Identify the specific concerns and provide a recommendation for HLC follow-up monitoring.]**

Summary of Findings:

Highland Community College’s planning, oversight, and operations at its additional locations appear to be adequate. The College monitors enrollment trends at the locations, seeks community input, and monitors changes in business and industry to identify opportunities for new programs, program changes, and, when indicated, program elimination. Faculty and staff representatives from the locations serve on College committees, such as for curriculum, assessment, and strategic planning. Full-time and adjunct faculty are regularly evaluated according to HCC policies and procedures, and full-time faculty attend in-service professional development programs each semester, to which adjunct faculty are invited. Additionally, there are special professional development sessions targeted at adjuncts, when necessary, such as training on the new learning management system and the new assessment protocols. The needs of the locations are considered in annual budgeting decisions, strategic planning, fundraising, and capital improvements.

Classes at the additional locations are scheduled at times convenient to the students’ availability, including some weekend and evening courses, and in cooperation with high schools for concurrent courses. Students indicated that required courses are available at times convenient to them and that student services were available in-person at the Perry Center, or, for students in the electrical program, at the nearby Technical Center or from frequent visits by staff to the Electrical Building. Students also indicated that they are able to receive assistance through email or telephone contact with staff at the Highland campus. Controls are in place, including approval of publications related to the location by the appropriate vice president or center director, to ensure accuracy of the information presented to students.

With the recent addition of a classroom and faculty office to the Electrical Building to accommodate the expansion to a two-year certificate program, facilities at the two locations visited have adequate classrooms and appropriate labs to serve the number of students and programs provided. The locations appear to be well maintained and clean (including recent additional sanitation protocols in response to the pandemic) and have adequate parking, and the buildings and classrooms are easily accessible.

## Notification Program for Additional Locations Approval Form

Complete this form **only** if an institution has been granted access to the Notification Program for Additional Locations. The Institutional Status and Requirements Report for the institution will indicate whether the institution has access to the Program under “Location Stipulation.”

The institution has been accredited by HLC for at least 10 consecutive years with no record of any action during that period for sanction or show-cause.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
HLC has not required monitoring of issues related to the quality of instruction or to the oversight of existing additional locations or campuses in the past 10 years.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The institution has demonstrated success in overseeing at least three locations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The institution has no other HLC or other legal restrictions on additional locations and/or programs offered off campus.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

The institution has appropriate systems to ensure quality control of locations that include clearly identified academic controls; regular evaluation by the institution of its locations; a pattern of adequate faculty, facilities, resources and academic/support systems; financial stability; and long-range planning for future expansion.

Yes     No