



Columbia College Chicago

Higher Learning Commission of the
North Central Association of
Colleges and Schools (HLC/NCA)

2008/2009

Self-Study and Site Visit

HLC/NCA Self-Study and Site Visit

- Conducted study from spring 2007 through fall 2008
- Submitted self-study report on February 6, 2009
- Consultant evaluators site visit – March 30 to April 1, 2009
- Site visit report – Late spring 2009
- Final action by Higher Learning Commission – summer 2009

Overview

- Columbia is a vital, dynamic organization that demonstrates all the values and attributes of a higher learning institution as defined by the Higher Learning Commission;
- Columbia has gone through a remarkable period of growth and change over the last ten years. Columbia is a demonstrably better performing, more competitive, higher profile institution than it was in 1999;
- Columbia heads into the future in a very strong position, but the challenges of the coming years are formidable. The college has much to learn from the successes and missteps of the last ten years of growth.

Mission and Integrity

Columbia College Chicago operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Mission and Integrity

- Columbia's historic mission continues to give the college clarity of purpose and express values that unify and motivate the college community;
- The values of the mission continue to guide the college's actions, but the college's application of the mission has evolved as the college has grown and matured;
- Columbia's governance and administrative structures have grown and matured with the college; but faculty, staff, and student knowledge of how those structures work – and support the mission – has not kept pace.

Preparing for the Future

Columbia College Chicago'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.

Preparing for the Future

- Columbia's key environmental challenges for the future are: costs, competition, demographics, and rapid change in the arts and media industries;
- Growth was a key environmental factor for Columbia in recent years; to prepare for the future, the college needs to better understand the impact of growth;
- Columbia's planning structures work well and have fostered growth; coordination and communication are areas for improvement;
- Columbia makes good use of its resources to accomplish its mission and strategic goals; more specific criteria and benchmarks will improve planning for the future.

Learning and Teaching

Columbia College Chicago provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Learning and Teaching

- Columbia has created an incredibly rich learning environment by focusing on teaching excellence, and by dramatically expanding the number, variety, and quality of learning experiences available to students;
- Columbia 2010 established a comprehensive outcomes-based vision of undergraduate education and the college has developed a good system for evaluating student outcomes;
- Columbia has made good progress in improving space and technology resources that support learning; but there is more to be done, including improving knowledge of how facilities and technology affect learning.

Knowledge

Columbia College Chicago 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.

Knowledge

- Tenure, rank, and the resources that support them demonstrate the value the college places on the creative and scholarly work of the faculty in achieving Columbia's mission and strategic objectives;
- Columbia 2010 sets a new and compelling vision of balancing integrated learning in the liberal arts and sciences with learning in the arts and media; the college continues to examine the learning options available to students in the B.A. and B.F.A. degrees;
- Columbia 2010 established a powerful model of lifelong, self-directed learning in the body of work concept, which the college is now implementing;
- The college's graduate programs are fundamentally sound, but the college needs to complete its strategic plan for the future of graduate education at Columbia.

Engagement

As called for by its mission, Columbia College Chicago identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

Engagement

- Columbia's engagement with its external constituents has flourished over the last ten years guided by the college's strategic objectives and fueled by the passion and energy of the faculty and staff;
- Growth has expanded the college's capacity to engage in outreach activities, which have in turn, empowered growth by enhancing the college's visibility and reputation;
- Columbia's relationships with its external constituents have matured as the college has grown; they have become more reciprocal and more purposefully integrated with the college's educational and strategic objectives;
- After many years of dynamic growth, the college has some work to do in strengthening its processes for planning and evaluating its engagement with external constituents.

Conclusion

- Columbia clearly meets the criteria for accreditation;
- Columbia has a clear understanding of what it values, who it serves, and what its aspirations are for the future;
- Growth has had a powerful and positive impact on Columbia; the college has adapted remarkably well, but not without some growing pains;
- Some discomfort remains among members of the faculty and staff about changes in college structures and about perceived changes in the organizational culture;
- Deepening institutional knowledge about the college's environment and performance are critical to meeting the known (and not yet known) challenges in the future.

create...

change

For More Information...

Self-Study Website & Report:
www.colum.edu/selfstudy

HLC/NCA Website:
www.ncahlc.org