

## **Accreditation: What you should know**

### **What is accreditation?**

Accreditation assures quality through a peer review process that verifies that an institution (1) meets threshold standards and (2) is engaged in continuous improvement. Yavapai College's accreditor is The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA), which is one of six regional institutional accreditors in the United States.

### **Why is it important?**

Accreditation is a peer review process that evaluates educational programs and services for quality and to assess a college's efforts toward continuous quality improvement. Accreditation is assurance to students, colleges and employers that education meets acceptable levels of quality and ensures transferability of credits and access to federal financial aid.

### **What is Open Pathways?**

Open Pathways is HLC's new model of reaccreditation. The Open Pathway separates the process into two components: the Quality Initiative and an evidence-based Assurance Review.

### **What is Yavapai College's Quality Initiative Project?**

*A Comparative Analysis of Online and Face-to-Face Learning.* The report is available at <http://yc.edu/accreditation>

### **What are the criterion areas (threshold standards) for the Assurance Review?**

There are five criterion areas where institutions must provide evidence that they meet threshold standards.

1. Mission
2. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct
3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support
4. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement
5. Resources, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness

(to see specific components of each criterion area see <http://yc.edu/accreditation> )

### **When will YC's next on-site accreditation visit occur?**

A Higher Learning Commission peer evaluation team of three to four people will visit Yavapai College March 4-5, 2013.

### **How long does accreditation last?**

The Open Pathway features: a ten-year cycle, Assurance Reviews in Years 4 and 10. Quality Improvement project between years 5 and 9. Annual filing of the Institutional Update, a monitoring of financial and nonfinancial indicators.

### **Yavapai College's Mission and Strategic Initiatives**

*The Mission of Yavapai College is to provide quality higher learning and cultural resources for the diverse populations of Yavapai County.*

Strategic planning information at [www.yc.edu/strategicplanning](http://www.yc.edu/strategicplanning)