



## Institutional Response Form

**Institution:** University of Akron

**Institutional ID:** 1599

**Evaluation Type:** Monitoring, Focused Visits: (Spring 2015) on (a) relationship and roles of faculty in shared institutional governance and (b) assessment of student learning in general education and in undergraduate and graduate majors.

**Date:** 05/05/2015

**Printed Name of President or Chancellor\*:** Dr. Scott Scarborough

**Phone:** (330) 972-7869

**Email:** sscarborough@uakron.edu

**Signature of President or Chancellor:**

(\*The Commission expects the response from the President, Chancellor, or chief executive officer if a different title is used).

### Instructions for Submitting Response

1. This form, and an additional written response if you choose to include one, must be submitted electronically on the following webpage: [http://www.ncahlc.org/document\\_upload/](http://www.ncahlc.org/document_upload/).
2. If you choose to write an additional written response, it should be in the form of a letter to the Institutional Actions Council, should not exceed five pages, and must be sent electronically with this form within the two-week timeframe.

*If a response is not received within the two weeks, the Commission will conclude that the institution concurs with the accreditation recommendation.*

## General Questions

**Please indicate ONE:**

- ☐ The institution concurs with the accreditation recommendations and chooses not to submit a further response.
- ☒ The institution concurs with the accreditation recommendations and has enclosed a written response (please return with this form).
- ☐ The institution does not concur with the accreditation recommendations and chooses not to submit a further response.
- ☐ The institution does not concur with the accreditation recommendations and has enclosed a written response (please return with this form).

- ☐ The institution does not concur with the accreditation recommendations and requests an in-person hearing in place of an Institutional Actions Council (IAC) meeting (see definitions on page 2).

In-person hearings are restricted to specific types of evaluation recommendations by Commission policy. These are: reaffirmation of accreditation; biennial visits in candidacy; focused visits; and financial and non-financial indicator monitoring. All decisions regarding substantive change and staff recommended monitoring or changes to the Statement of Affiliation Status are not eligible for in-person hearings. *Pathways designations recommendations are not eligible for in-person hearings.* Contact your Commission staff liaison for more information. Fees for in-person hearings are found in the schedule of *Commission Dues and Fees* on the website, [www.hlcommission.org](http://www.hlcommission.org).

## Definitions

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**Institutional Response.** The Commission expects a written response from the President or Chancellor of an institution (or chief executive by a different title) within two weeks of receipt of an accreditation report or reaffirmation recommendation and provides the attached response form for this purpose. The institution may choose to include an additional written response in the form of a letter from the President or Chancellor to the Institutional Actions Council. These additional written responses should not be longer than five pages and must be received electronically with this form within the two-week timeframe.

**Institutional Actions Council (IAC).** The IAC is composed of Board-appointed peer reviewers and public members. The First and Second Committees of IAC conduct electronically mediated meetings and in-person hearings to review and act on accreditation recommendations.

**IAC Meeting.** IAC meetings consist of five or more members of the First or Second Committee of IAC, who read the full materials of the evaluation, discuss the findings, and act on the accreditation recommendations. IAC committees may agree with the accreditation recommendations they review or offer differing recommendations or decisions. The meetings are electronically mediated and held eight or more times per year. The majority of accreditation recommendations are reviewed at an IAC Meeting. Exceptions include recommendations that are required by policy to be reviewed at an in-person hearing and recommendations that institutions request be reviewed at an in-person hearing instead of an IAC meeting.

**IAC Hearing.** In some circumstances, an institution may request or may be required to attend an IAC Hearing. IAC Hearings consist of five or more members of the First or Second Committee of IAC, who read the full materials of the evaluation, discuss the findings, and act on the accreditation recommendations. Conducted three times per year, IAC Hearings are held in-person and require the presence of institutional staff, Commission staff, and evaluation team representatives. There is a fee for requested hearings. An institution that is considering an IAC Hearing should consult with its Commission staff liaison for more information, as not all accreditation decisions are eligible for review and action at a hearing.

**IAC First Committee.** Members of the IAC First Committee conduct IAC Meetings and Hearings to act on accreditation recommendations. The First Committee is the initial group to review an institution's case after an accreditation evaluation; the Committee may agree with the evaluation team's recommendation or it may offer a different recommendation or render a different decision.

**IAC Second Committee.** In some circumstances, institutions or Commission staff may request that the First Committee's decision be reviewed by the IAC Second Committee. Members of the Second Committee conduct Meetings and Hearings to act on accreditation recommendations forwarded on request or by policy after the action of the First Committee. The Second Committee may agree with the evaluation team's recommendation or First Committee's decision or it may offer a

different recommendation or render a different decision. Institutions should consult with their staff liaison for more information.



# THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

May 11, 2015

Higher Learning Commission  
230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500  
Chicago, IL 60604-1411

Dear Higher Learning Commission Staff and Institutional Action Council Members:

On behalf of The University of Akron (UA), I am pleased to concur with the recommendations of the Focused Visit team. The team did a thorough analysis of our progress on learning outcomes assessment and shared governance, and provided a thoughtful report that will help our institution continue improving in these areas. For your consideration as an indication of our continued focus on improvement in these areas, we have the following recent actions to add to the record.

With respect to assessment, since the team left UA we hosted Dr. Barbara E. Walvoord, Professor Emerita and well-known author of books on assessment, for a two-day (April 7-8, 2015) series of working meetings and informational/discussion sessions with our department chairs, assessment coordinators, general education revision committees, and upper administration. At her exit session, she advised us in a manner similar to that of the HLC site team's report – that we hire a full-time Director to oversee assessment and our general education revision, reporting to the Provost, and provide funds sufficient to ensure our continued improvement. This is now part of our fiscal year 2016 budget which will be presented to our Board of Trustees (BOT) next month.

In the area of shared governance, we have worked with the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) to secure a consulting arrangement with Terrence MacTaggart to assist our BOT in reviewing and revising (if needed) our governance structures and policies. We attach here the agreement, dated April 3, 2015, to further demonstrate our commitment to building a shared governance model that is grounded in best practices for institutions such as UA.

In closing, I wish to thank the site visit team for their critical review and helpful comments, and I look forward to receiving the final decision as to next steps this summer or next fall.

Sincerely,

Scott L. Scarborough, Ph.D.  
President

Attachment



April 3, 2015

Mr. Ted A. Mallo  
General Counsel & Secretary of the Board  
University of Akron  
302 Buchtel Common  
Akron, OH 44325-4706  
Sent via email: tamallo@uakron.edu

Dear Mr. Mallo:

The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) looks forward to the opportunity to work with you, President Scarborough, and the Board of Trustees of the University of Akron. What follows is a proposal for how AGB can work with you, your board, and key administrators to review a proposal for the establishment of a University Council at the University of Akron.

### ***Scope of Work***

In November 2013, a proposal was submitted to the former president establishing a University Council and it has been operating informally since. The proposal included detailed bylaws for the University Council which, if approved, would be added to the currently operating shared governance practices at the University.

To assess the current shared governance structure and practices at the University, we would begin this work by reviewing the University Council proposal and all other relevant shared governance documents including:

- Board policies,
- bargaining unit agreements,
- faculty senate policies,
- accreditation reports; and
- the history of shared governance at the University.

To work with you we recommend engaging AGB Senior Consultant Dr. Terrence MacTaggart, with support from me. His brief biography is attached. The plan that follows builds on the information shared with Dr. MacTaggart and AGB during a conversation held on January 16, 2015.

This process will provide context for a campus visit for Dr. MacTaggart and I to conduct confidential interviews with Board members, administrative leaders, faculty senate members, University Council leaders, union representatives (if appropriate), and others with key institutional knowledge. The purpose of these confidential interviews is to assess the status of and attitudes toward shared governance at the University, in general, and the proposed University Council, in particular. We anticipate that these interviews will take place over a three-day visit to campus, at a date to be determined; additional telephonic interviews will be scheduled, if necessary.

Following the interview process, Dr. MacTaggart will visit with you, President Scarborough, and others (if appropriate) in person or by phone to discuss next steps.

Mr. Mallo  
April 3, 2015  
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After reviewing the findings from the interview process, Dr. MacTaggart and AGB will prepare recommendations focused on the University Council proposal, but that also includes reference to the contemporary national conversation around shared governance, AGB guidelines, AAUP statements, and other relevant materials.

Dr. MacTaggart and AGB will verbally present their recommendations by teleconference to President Scarborough and the Board in executive session in anticipation that the recommendation may involve preparations for collective bargaining pursuant to Revised Code § 121.22 (G)(4); and/or discuss the process and recommendations in writing or in person, or as may be otherwise requested by the President or Chairman of the Board.

### ***Pricing***

The expected fee for this service ranges from \$27,000 to \$35,000 and shall not exceed \$35,000. The cost includes the consultant's honorarium and AGB's administrative costs, and will depend on whether or not there is a final site visit to report on the process as well as the number of interviews and depth of document review. Travel and accommodations are additional.

If additional work, beyond the scope of work provided in this letter, is agreed upon by the University of Akron and AGB Consulting, then a second proposal or addendum would be sent for your review.

### ***Termination***

The University of Akron can terminate the engagement on five days' notice for any reason. In the event of termination, the University would be obliged only for professional fees and expenses incurred through the effective date of termination.

### ***About AGB and Qualifications***

AGB is a membership organization serving over 1,300 public and private higher education institutions and 36,000 individual board members, presidents, and senior administrators. Founded over ninety years ago, AGB advances the practice of citizen trusteeship that distinguishes American higher education. By serving as a continuing-educated resource to trustees and boards and by contributing to effective working relationships between boards and chief executives, AGB seeks to strengthen the governance of high education institutions. By providing education to boards, trustees, presidents, and other senior institutional and university system leaders, AGB hopes to enhance institutional oversight and to stimulate cooperation with public-policy makers, government agencies, and private organizations that have a stake in the quality and effective governance of colleges and universities.

AGB works to identify emerging issues of concern to higher education and to promote visibility by conducting research, developing publications, holding forums for discussions, and by encouraging appropriate member initiatives, whether on individual campuses, in state systems, or across higher education as a whole. AGB's comprehensive portfolio of services for board and chief executives of our member institutions is internationally recognized.

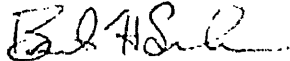
Mr. Mallo  
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The Association has conducted a significant number of consulting projects and board development efforts for our private and public institution members as well as university systems, and affiliated university foundations. AGB consultants are engaged by the Association as independent contractors and represent the best thinking and practices related to institutional and system governance.

We look forward to hearing from you regarding how you would like to proceed. If you would like to engage our services, I will schedule a phone call for you, President Scarborough, Dr. MacTaggart, and me to discuss the objectives of the project in further detail, as well as identify key calendar dates for the proposed interviews. Please let us know what dates and times work best with your schedule.

If you have questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at 202-776-0824 or BSchrader@agb.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "B. Schrader", with a horizontal line extending from the end.

Brent H. Schrader, MEd  
Assistant Director, AGB Consulting  
Association of Governing Board of Universities and Colleges

Enclosed: Brief biography, Dr. Terrence MacTaggart

### **Terrence MacTaggart**

Terry MacTaggart is an experienced leader and scholar in higher education. His consulting and research work focuses on higher education leadership and policy, strategic planning, institutional advancement, trustee development and leadership evaluation. He has served as a faculty member and administrator at several public and independent colleges and universities where he has led or participated in substantial institutional transformations. He has held the Chancellor's position at the Minnesota State University System and on two occasions at the University of Maine System. He has served as a consultant and facilitator of board retreats for numerous colleges, universities and systems including the University of Connecticut, Rutgers, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Nebraska System, the University System of Maryland, Metropolitan State College of Denver, East Carolina University, the Oregon University System, the University of Alaska System, the University of Northern British Columbia, the University of Victoria in British Columbia, the University of Houston System, Texas Southern University, the Texas Tech University System, the Massachusetts Maritime Academy, the Maine Maritime Academy, Johnson & Wales University, New England College, Endicott College, Mitchell College, College of the Marshall Islands, Fielding Graduate University and others.

He has served as Chair of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). He has led multiple visiting teams for several regional accrediting associations. He has served as a Fulbright Scholar to Thailand and to Vietnam as an expert on accreditation and quality assurance.

His research and publications focus on governance, improving relations between institutions and the public, and restoring institutional vitality. His most recent book, *Leading Change: How Boards and Presidents Build Exceptional Institutions*, fills a significant void in leadership literature and focuses on the changing level of board engagement. This book examines 18 institutions, across the spectrum of higher education, at which the board played a significant collaborative role with the president, the leadership team and the faculty to lead change. Another best-selling book, published by ACE/Praeger in 2007, is titled *Academic Turnarounds: Restoring Growth and Vitality to Challenged American Colleges and Universities*. With James Mingle, he authored *Pursuing the Public's Agenda: Trustees in Partnership With State Leaders*. In 1996, he served as the editor and lead author of *Restructuring Public Higher Education—What Works and What Doesn't in Reorganizing Public Systems*. Two years later he produced *Seeking Excellence Through Independence*, which focuses on rebalancing campus autonomy and accountability in order to achieve better results. In 2000, he wrote, along with Robert Berdahl, a study of the partial privatization of public institutions entitled *Charter Colleges: Balancing Freedom and Accountability*. He is currently preparing a book on high functioning boards of trustees.

His academic credentials include a doctorate and master's degree in English Literature from Saint Louis University, a Master of Business Administration degree from St. Cloud University, an honorary doctor of law degree from the American College of Greece, and membership in Phi Beta Kappa.