

Subject: Important Notice: Higher Learning Commission Probation Status

Dear Missouri State University-West Plains Students,

I am writing to inform you of an important development regarding our institution. Our regional accreditor, Higher Learning Commission (HLC), has recently placed Missouri State University-West Plains on probation.

This decision follows a comprehensive evaluation by the HLC during which officials noted the university was out of compliance with one of the criteria for accreditation and needs to address three other areas of concern. We understand this news may raise concerns and questions, and I want to assure you that the university's leadership is fully committed to addressing these issues promptly and effectively.

Here are a few key points to understand about the probation status:

1. **Accreditation Status:** While we are on probation, Missouri State University-West Plains remains accredited.
2. **Reasons for Probation:** The HLC has highlighted specific areas where we need to enhance our practices and procedures, particularly regarding student learning assessment. Student learning assessment is how we demonstrate that our academic offerings are appropriate to higher education, that our academic programs are quality programs, and that we exercise systematic, integrated planning and improvement in our programs. We are carefully reviewing these areas and are already developing a comprehensive plan to address each one.
3. **Commitment to Improvement:** Our primary goal is to ensure that we meet and exceed the standards set by the HLC. We are dedicated to making the necessary improvements to provide the highest quality education and services to our students.
4. **Your Education and Support:** Your education remains our top priority. We are committed to maintaining the quality of your academic experience and support services throughout this period. Our faculty and staff are here to assist you with any concerns or questions you may have.
5. **Next Steps:** We will be working closely with the HLC over the coming months to implement our improvement plan. Regular updates on our progress and any significant developments will be communicated to you. We also will need to file a “comprehensive Assurance Filing [a self-assessment of how we meet HLC’s standards] at least eight weeks prior to the comprehensive evaluation for Probation” and provide evidence that we have improved, in particular, our assessment of student learning. We will also have another site visit by an HLC-appointed peer review team who will conduct that comprehensive evaluation for Probation, likely in November 2025.

We understand that you may have further questions regarding this situation. Feel free to contact our HLC liaison [Leigh Adams](#) here on the West Plains campus. You may also visit

our HLC [website](#). HLC's [official Action Letter](#) can be found on that page as can the [Public Disclosure Notice-Probation](#) document. For more information, including a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) and access to HLC information, please visit WP.MissouriState.edu/HLCFAQS on the university's website. This site will be updated frequently.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support as we navigate this challenging time. Together, we will strengthen our university and continue to provide an exceptional educational experience for all our students.

Sincerely,
Dr. Dennis Lancaster
Chancellor
Missouri State University-West Plains