

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
The Higher Learning Commission
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CHICAGO- The Higher Learning Commission, a Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools in pleased to announce that Lamar Community College, CO, has been approved to participate in its Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP).

Moving beyond the boundaries of traditional accreditation, the AQIP model is designed to align accreditation with an institution's program of continuous quality improvement in order to meet the rapidly shifting needs of educational institutions in the 21st century.

By participating in AQIP, Lamar Community College demonstrates a willingness to identify concrete targets for continuous improvement and to hold itself accountable for re-engineering processes and operation to improve the results and activities for itself and for its students.

Lamar Community College's current accreditation will continue as it participates in a series of planning and review activities to energize and reinforce its internal commitment to improvement. The date for the next formal reaffirmation of Lamar Community College's accreditation will be set in 2010-2011. Annual and other reviews of its quality efforts will enable the Higher Learning Commission and AQIP to monitor progress and support Lamar Community College's quality efforts. Formal reaffirmation of accreditation will be based on continuous participation, and patterns of continuous improvement and improving results that indicate success.

As part of the AQIP cycle of processes leading to reaffirmation of accreditation, Lamar Community College will attend a Strategy Forum within one year and will identify and commit to several strategic Action Projects. Lamar Community College will submit Annual Updates on those Action Projects to be reviewed by a panel of quality experts from the QUIP Peer Reviewer corps, who will provide the institution with feedback. Over a period of three years, Lamar Community College will create a public Systems Portfolio of those changes. The Systems Portfolio will undergo a Systems Appraisal by AQIP Peer Reviewers, typically every four years. At that point, Lamar Community College will attend another Strategy Forum and begin the cycle anew.

President Bette Matkowski has been strongly supportive of LCC's application to become an AQIP college. "The traditional accreditation process looked backward and asked a college to explain what it had done. AQIP looks forward and asks a college, 'what do you want to be?'"