

ACCREDITING AGENCY SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NORTHWESTERN

Northwestern Oklahoma State University will undergo a comprehensive evaluation visit April 19-21, 2004, by a team representing the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Northwestern has been accredited by the Commission since 1922 and the University's current accreditation is at the master's degree level.

The Higher Learning Commission is one of six accrediting agencies in the United States that provide institutional accreditation on a regional basis. Institutional accreditation evaluates an entire institution and accredits it as a whole. Other agencies provide accreditation for specific programs. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and the Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges expect all of their institutions to be regionally accredited. The Commission accredits approximately 950 institutions of higher education in a 19-state region. The Commission is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

Since 2002, Northwestern has been engaged in a process of Self-Study, addressing the Commission's requirements for criteria for accreditation. The evaluation team will visit the institution to gather evidence that the Self-Study is thorough and accurate. The team will recommend to the Commission a continuing status for the university. Following a review process, the Commission itself will take the final action.

The public is invited to submit comments regarding the university to: Public Comment on Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Higher Learning Commission, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, 30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400, Chicago, IL 60602.

Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of the institution or its academic programs. Written, signed comments must be received by March 19. The Commission cannot guarantee that comments received after the due date will be considered. Comments should include the name, address, and telephone numbers of the person providing the comments. Comments will not be treated as confidential.

Individuals with a specific dispute or grievance with an institution should request the separate Policy on Complaints document from the Commission office. The Commission on Institutions of Higher Education cannot settle disputes between institutions and individuals. Complaints will not be considered third party comment.

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