



**Higher Learning Commission**  
A commission of the North Central Association

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May 14, 2013

Dr. Teresa L. Amott  
President  
Knox College  
2 East South Street  
Galesburg, IL 61401

Dear President Amott:

The monitoring report you submitted to our office has now been reviewed. A staff analysis of the report is enclosed.

On behalf of the Commission, staff accepts the report on program review and student learning outcomes. No further reports are required. The institution's next reaffirmation of accreditation is scheduled for 2019 - 2020.

Also enclosed is a copy of the institution's Statement of Affiliation Status, which reflects the actions taken by the Commission. For more information on the interim report process contact Lil Nakutis, Process Administrator, Accreditation Services, at [lnakutis@hlcommission.org](mailto:lnakutis@hlcommission.org).

Thank you.

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION



**STAFF ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL REPORT**

DATE: May 14, 2013

STAFF: Robert R. Appleson

REVIEWED BY: Katherine C. Delaney

INSTITUTION: Knox College, Galesburg, IL

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Teresa L. Amott, President

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION RE: REPORT: A monitoring report due 4/30/2013 focused on program review and student learning outcomes.

ITEMS ADDRESSED IN REPORT: The office of the Commission received Knox College's report on the above topic on 4/30/2013.

STAFF ANALYSIS: Knox College hosted a comprehensive visit in November 2009. The comprehensive visit team recommended this monitoring report based on the following rationale:

*A regular cycle (5-7 years) of academic department and college-wide program reviews should have as a central focus student learning and achievement of institutionally stated student learning outcomes. Continuous improvement requires gathering of longitudinal data and evidence over time.*

*By April 30, 2013 the following expectations should be met:*

- 1. That all academic departments and college-wide programs have 3-5 assessable learning outcomes clearly stated, with "criteria for success" for each outcome.*
- 2. That all academic departments and college-wide programs have identified tools to be used and/or evidence to be gathered for both direct and indirect measures of learning outcomes.*
- 3. That Knox have in place a plan for assessing the new curriculum by providing evidence that each of the five components is achieving stated goals.*
- 4. That a majority of academic departments and college-wide programs have at least one year of data collected and analyzed, using a mix of both direct and indirect measures, including a written plan for using lessons learned for continuous improvement of student learning.*

*If the conditions outlined for the Monitoring Report are not met a Focused Visit is recommended.*

The appendix of the monitoring report provided the following updates to the four expectations established by the comprehensive visit team for this report:

1. That all academic departments and college-wide programs have 3-5 assessable learning outcomes clearly stated, with "criteria for success" for each outcome.

Of the 36 programs for which assessment documentation is required, all have established learning

goals. Program learning goals are included in the Knox College Catalog.

2. That all academic departments and college-wide programs have identified tools to be used and/or evidence to be gathered for both direct and indirect measures of learning outcomes.

Assessment Planning Reports have been received from 30 of the 36 programs for 2012-2013. The remaining programs will be asked to submit a hybrid document of both planning and progress for the current academic year. Since 2010, 34 of 36 departments/programs have reported on their methods of collection of assessment data on learning goals. All programs (majors and minors) offered by academic departments have met this requirement.

3. That Knox have in place a plan for assessing the new curriculum by providing evidence that each of the five components [*Foundations, Specialization, Key Competencies, Educational Plan, Experiential Learning*] is achieving stated goals.

The levels of assessment activity discussed above for Expectations 1 and 2 enable the College to meet this requirement. Of the assessment activities reported, 16 departments/programs report using both direct and indirect measures. One program reports using only an indirect measure. The remaining programs have reported using direct measures.

4. That a majority of academic departments and college-wide programs have at least one year of data collected and analyzed, using a mix of both direct and indirect measures, including a written plan for using lessons learned for continuous improvement of student learning.

In February of 2012, the Knox College faculty affirmed learning goals for Knox graduates. These ten learning goals represent a clear articulation of the mission, vision and curricular requirements of the college. Knox has implemented assessment for components of the new curriculum and has a plan in place to assess the remaining components, enabling the College to meet this requirement. In April of 2013, the faculty approved two new Foundations area: Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning and Natural and Physical Science, which replace the Quantitative Literacy Key Competency and the Math and Natural Science Foundation. The new Foundation areas represented the result of articulating learning goals for the areas they replaced. With this latter approval, foundation learning goals were completed.

The Curriculum Committee approved the processes and the calendar recommended by the Assessment Advisory Group (AAG) to assess general education and other distinctive features of a Knox Education.

Thus, it is clear that Knox College has fulfilled the comprehensive visit team's expectations for this report.

In addition, the monitoring report provided a great deal of information on the foundational documents that guided program review, as well as some data reports on assessment of selected programs. Further, the monitoring report explained how the practices and projects were organized and implemented in order to advance continuous assessment of learning at Knox College.

The process for programs to develop their learning goals generally followed several stages, including the participation of program faculty in one of the assessment workshops, the drafting by program faculty of program learning goals, an iterative process involving consultation with the Director of Assessment, and the consideration of the program learning goals by the AAG.<sup>3</sup> The process of

writing and refining program learning goals began to help faculty understand a traditional tenet of the academic culture at Knox,—the “Freedom to Flourish”—in a new light. That statement has implied strongly the value of self-directed discovery as a key characteristic of learning; it carries with it the necessity of always taking stock, of taking responsibility for one’s academic path. Accordingly, assessment within the Knox culture is seen as consistent with this precept.

With a focus on departmental majors, in 2009-2010, departments began to provide documentation of their ongoing, i.e., annual, assessment activities. In 2010-11, under the leadership of the AAG, The faculty Curriculum Committee had granted the authority to the AAG to provide review for program learning goals, recognizing that in the formal reviews scheduled for each department and program those goals would be reviewed and potentially revised. The process of reporting ongoing assessment activities by departments was formalized, further strengthening assessment in the academic culture at Knox. In 2010-2011, 19 of 22 departmental programs completed and documented annual assessment activities.

Knox has made progress with regard to formal assessment of programs (majors and minors). In academic year 2009-2010 the College began by developing the process by which academic departments and programs would complete a comprehensive program review and planning process. Then the program review cycle and timeline were established so that all programs were scheduled to be reviewed within the 10 year accreditation cycle. Each program undergoes the process once every seven years, with all programs being reviewed at least once by Academic year 2016-17. The calendar for program review was included in the appendix of the monitoring report.

As program assessment becomes more embedded in the Knox culture, faculty and administrators at the College have been aware of a need for assessment of broader college goals and their outcomes. To this end, Knox has worked on three major assessment initiatives since 2010: (1) the articulation and affirmation of mission-based college-wide learning goals; (2) the development of learning goals in the General Education Program and (3) the assessment of the First-Year Preceptorial and other special programs.

The full faculty endorsed the following goals for a Knox education:

### ***Aspirations for Knox Graduates***

*Knox graduates will:*

*Live personal and professional lives characterized by integrity, intellectual curiosity, creativity, imagination, thoughtful reflection, and critical thinking.*

*Engage effectively with the challenges and opportunities of the wider world in order to contribute to the lives of others, whether locally, nationally, or globally*

*Live their lives with competence, confidence, and a sense of proportion*

### ***Learning Goals for a Knox Education***

*In order that graduates are able to achieve the above aspirations, Knox students will be able to:*

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <i>GKE-1</i> | <i>Engage with the central questions and methods used within the broad areas of liberal arts learning: arts, humanities, social sciences, science</i> |
| <i>GKE-2</i> | <i>Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of at least one academic field</i>   |
| <i>GKE-3</i> | <i>Use technology appropriate to your major field(s)</i>  |
| <i>GKE-4</i> | <i>Locate, assess and synthesize a wide range of sources of information</i>   |
| <i>GKE-5</i> | <i>Reason quantitatively</i>  |
| <i>GKE-6</i> | <i>Communicate effectively through writing and speaking</i>   |
| <i>GKE-7</i> | <i>Read, speak and/or write in a second language</i>  |

GKE-8            *Engage intellectually and empathetically with cultural and social diversity*  
GKE-9            *Recognize and engage with ethical issues*  
GKE-10          *Initiate and carry out independent, self-directed learning*

The monitoring report detailed the measures by which the College has been able to determine its success in achieving these goals for a Knox education.

As well, the monitoring report addressed the College's activities related to assessing important College-wide programs, such as "Foundation Learning Goals, First-Year Preceptorial, The Honor Code, College honors Program and New Student Orientation.

Staff comment: Knox College submitted an excellent monitoring report that gave strong evidence of great progress in addressing assessment and program review issues at the College. The College is commended for such a strong report and for the significant progress it has made since the comprehensive visit in 2009.

STAFF ACTION: Accept the report on program review and student learning outcomes. No further reports are required. The institution's next reaffirmation of accreditation is scheduled for 2019 - 2020.

## STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

KNOX COLLEGE  
2 East South Street  
Galesburg, IL 61401

*Affiliation Status:* Candidate: Not Applicable  
Accreditation: (1913 - .)

### Nature of Organization

*Control:* Private NFP  
*Degrees Awarded:* Bachelor's

### Conditions of Affiliation:

*Stipulations on Affiliation Status:* None.

*Approval of New Additional Locations:* Prior Commission approval required.

*Approval of Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs:* The institution has not been approved to offer its degree programs or more than four of its certificate programs through distance education or correspondence education as defined in Commission policy. Commission policy does permit the institution to offer up to four certificate programs as well as a limited number of courses leading to degree programs through distance education or correspondence education without seeking prior approval.

*Accreditation Activities:* None.

### Summary of Commission Review

*Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation:* 2009 - 2010  
*Year for Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation:* 2019 - 2020  
*Last Date of Information Change:* 05/14/2013