

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

WHEREAS: AFT Michigan supports student assessment and institutional accountability models that enhance quality education and student achievement; and

WHEREAS: The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) has for several years mandated onerous and repeatedly revised accreditation requirements, particularly with regard to student assessment and institutional accountability measures; and

WHEREAS: Compliance with HLC accreditation mandates relative to assessment and accountability entails the significant allocation of human and fiscal resources by institutions of higher education, which are already burdened with severe budget constraints caused by decades of State disinvestment in higher education; and

WHEREAS: There is a dearth of research addressing the efficacy of HLC's revisions in its assessment and accountability measures relative to improvement in student achievement; and

WHEREAS: The HLC's recent mandate relative to faculty credentialing contains several features that will create serious staffing problems at institutions of higher education, including:

1. The HLC requirement of a Master's degree or Doctorate in a discipline or subset appears both absolute and discretionary and may diminish the authority of Boards of Trustees, college administrations, and faculty in assessing the credentials necessary for faculty in each discipline;
2. It is unclear whether HLC requires a degree in a discipline or in a subset of a discipline in which someone is teaching (e.g., a degree in English Literature versus a degree in American Literature or a Literature degree versus a degree in Composition). A requirement of a degree in a subset of a discipline has severe consequences for faculty and the course of study of current graduate students;
3. While career related work experience can apply toward HLC credentialing mandates relative to teaching in a career program, it is unclear whether successful teaching experience can apply toward meeting HLC credentialing mandates relative to teaching in academic programs, and it appears that successful teaching experience does not apply in teaching in a dual enrollment program;
4. The timelines in the HLC credentialing policy and guidelines are unclear in that they set a hard deadline of 2017 but also appear to indicate that this hard deadline is secondary to an institution's progress toward the HLC credentialing mandate;
5. While the HLC policy and guidelines indicate that the credentialing mandate should not, in itself, result in the termination of employment, no consequence(s) for an institution terminating or diminishing employment status under this mandate is cited; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

- RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan will call upon the AFT to research the institutional impact and effect on student success of HLC's assessment, accountability, and credentialing policies; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan, in conjunction with the AFT, will confer with State organizations representing colleges and universities as well as professional organizations regarding the institutional impact and advisability of such HLC policies; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan, in conjunction with the AFT, NEA, AAUP, and professional organizations, will develop a strategy to require that the HLC have an equal number of faculty and administrators on each HLC Accreditation Visiting Team, with faculty having the primary responsibility and authority in assessing teaching and learning and formulating recommendations regarding such; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan, in conjunction with the AFT, NEA, AAUP and professional organizations, will develop a strategy to assure meaningful representation of faculty at all organizational levels of the HLC; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**
- RESOLVED:** In the traditions of transparency and accountability, AFT Michigan, in conjunction with the AFT, will conduct a detailed analysis of the revenue and expenditures of the HLC and, if necessary, mount a campaign to secure the information required to do so; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY**
- RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan, in conjunction with the AFT, will formulate recommendations for all affiliates as to how to address HLC mandates.

Submitted by:

Henry Ford Community College Federation of Teachers Local #1650

Revised & Recommended by Legislation & Resolutions Committee

Approved by AFT Michigan 74th Convention (May 14, 2016)