



BOARD MEETING PUBLIC SESSION

Bylaw Change Adopted on Second Reading

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) adopted this bylaw on second reading at its meeting on November 1–2, 2018.

Background

The adopted change to HLC’s Bylaws revises Article VII to remove the public session and opportunity for public comment at the Board’s in-person meetings. This change was made to reflect the fact that a Board meeting is a deliberation by the trustees as part of HLC’s decision-making process. There are also a number of other mechanisms in place for receiving input from the public regarding HLC’s policies and institutional actions. These mechanisms include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Public posting of policies on HLC’s website between first and second reading with a comment period and an email address to submit comments.
- The third-party comment process, which allows the public to submit comments about an institution affiliated with HLC at any time via HLC’s website, but specifically in advance of a comprehensive evaluation.
- Meetings with stakeholders during peer review visits to campuses.
- The complaints process, which allows members of the public to submit complaints via HLC’s website about HLC-affiliated institutions regarding their ability to meet HLC’s Criteria for Accreditation.

Each of these mechanisms are detailed in policy or procedure and allow for due process. The feedback collected through these mechanisms is considered by the Board in taking institutional and policy actions.

HLC circulated these policy changes to the membership and other interested parties after the Board’s June meeting. One comment was received, recommending that HLC preserve the public session portion of the Board meeting while eliminating the opportunity for public comment. However, since there are a number of

alternative mechanisms by which the public may be involved in the accreditation process, the Board adopted the bylaw change as it was originally proposed.

Implementation

This policy is effective immediately.

Adopted Policy

Wording that was deleted or revised is shown as strikethrough (~~old wording~~); new language, whether through addition or revision, is shown in bold (**new wording**). These revisions have been made on HLC's website at hlcommission.org.

Article VII: Meetings of the Board of Trustees

Section 1: Regular Meetings of the Board

The Board of Trustees shall conduct at least two (2) regularly scheduled meetings of the Board each year. The meetings shall be at a location and time designated by the Board of Trustees. Such meetings may take place in any format that allows Trustees to communicate simultaneously with one another, including but not limited to teleconference, videoconference or in-person. ~~All in-person meetings are open to the public, unless closed for executive session.~~ At least one in-person meeting will be held each year. Participation in meetings of the Board of Trustees is limited to members of the Board, Commission staff, and others expressly invited by the Board of Trustees to participate. ~~However, each in-person meeting will include an opportunity for audience comment prior to the close of the meeting.~~ As defined in policies adopted by the Board, the Board may meet in executive session ~~closed to the public.~~ All discussion and decisions about institutions, personnel or other confidential matters shall be conducted in executive session.