

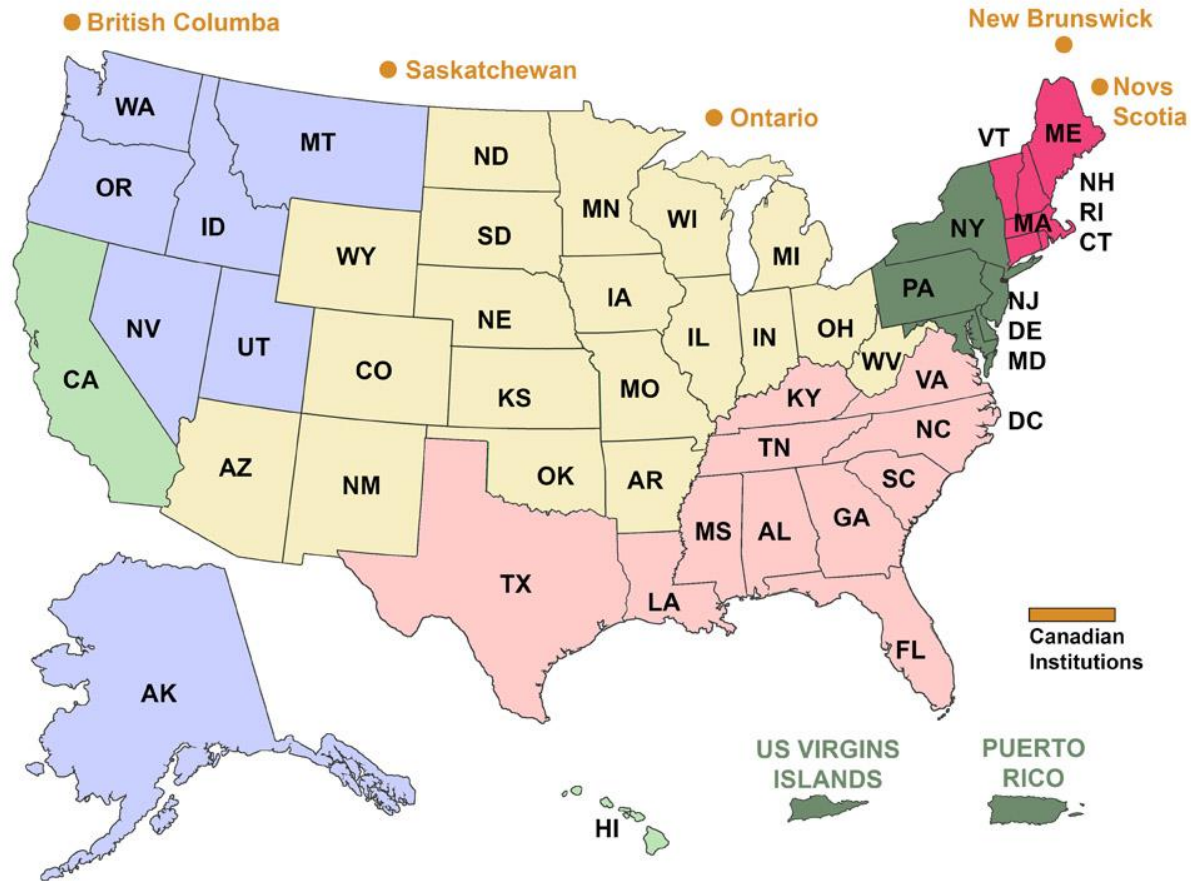
HLC and AQIP

The Basics

What is the HLC?

- Higher Learning Commission
- Responsible for Accreditation in a 19 state geographic area

MAP OF 6 REGIONS OF ACCREDITATION



Source:
<https://www.franklinvirtualschools.com/images/Map-regions-Accreditation-1.jpg>

HLC Pathways

- Standard Pathway
- Open Pathway
- AQIP Pathway

What is AQIP?

- Academic Quality Improvement Program
- six categories against which improvement is measured in terms of *levels of maturity*.
 - reacting
 - systematic
 - aligned
 - integrated
- various processes designed to advance quality and improvement while ensuring accreditation compliance.
- as with all Pathways, evidence must be provided that speaks to the HLC's Criteria for Accreditation.

AQIP Categories

- **Helping Students Learn**
- **Meeting Student & Other Key Stakeholder Needs**
- **Valuing Employees**
- **Planning & Leading**
- **Knowledge Management & Resource Stewardship**
- **Quality Overview**

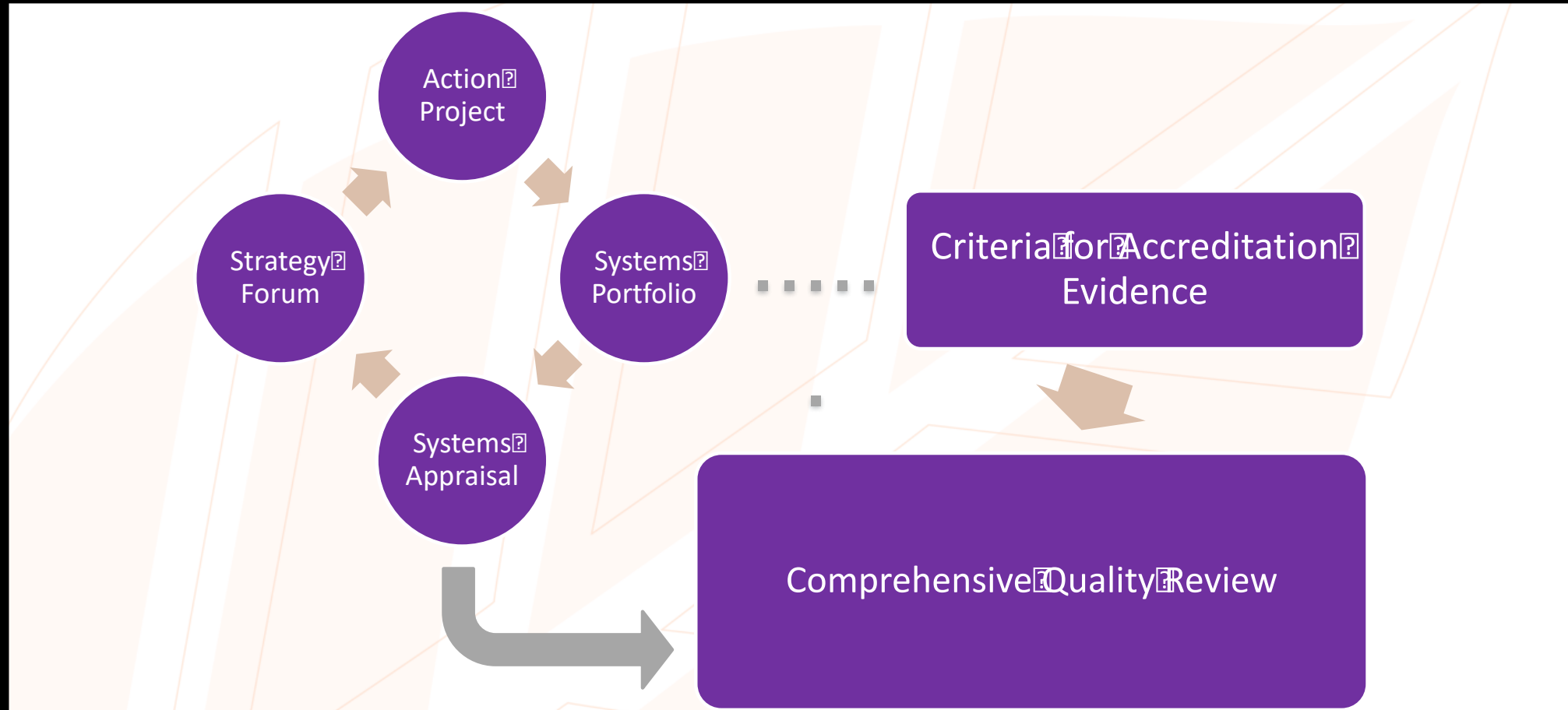
Duration of cycle

- Historically seven-year cycle
- Recalibrated to eight-year cycle
- Required annual activity with feedback
- Required formative reviews throughout cycle
- Summative evaluation at reaffirmation

AQIP PATHWAY



Strategic Cycle



AQIP's core processes

- **Action Projects**
 - One active annually
- **Strategy Forums**
 - Required years 1 or 2 and also 5 or 6
- **Systems Portfolio & Systems Appraisal**
 - Required years 3 and 7
- **Comprehensive Quality Review**
 - Possible in year 4 / Required in year 8
- **Reaffirmation of Accreditation**

Action Projects

- One annually
- Improvement projects centered on those activities the institution believes will have the most impact on quality improvement on campus. Identified, designed and initiated to suit institutional needs.

Strategy Forums

- Years 1 or 2, and 5 or 6
- Enables institution to review feedback from Systems Appraisal reports or upon reaffirmation of accreditation. Helps develop strategies for further progress in quality improvement efforts.

Strategy Forums

- Brings teams into workshop environment to generate new strategies for institutional improvement.
- Opportunity to network with other AQIP institutions and to give and receive constructive feedback.

Systems Portfolio

- Years 3 and 7
- A Systems Portfolio is where an institution amasses evidence in response to the six AQIP categories, derived from traits and behaviors of high performing institutions.

Systems Appraisal

A Systems Appraisal is peer-reviewed feedback on an institution's ongoing efforts to improve its performance. The peer team will also screen evidence that the institution is meeting HLC's Criteria for Accreditation. The institution then has time to attend to issues prior to its Comprehensive Quality Review.

Systems Portfolio and Systems Appraisal

- Focus on improvement. (*Formative*)
- Occurs in relation to six AQIP Categories and the P, R, and I questions.
- Systems Appraisal report does not receive formal Commission action (although may include monitoring recommendations).
- Helps to inform accreditation decisions in Year 8.

Between Years 7 and 8

- Institution carefully reviews the Systems Appraisal report received in year 7.
- Identify areas for strategic improvement and begin to address top priorities.
- If needed, bolster evidence for Criteria for Accreditation and core components.
- Summarize this work in *CQR Quality Highlights Report*

Quality Highlights Report

- Submitted prior to the CQR visit
- Bridge between Systems Appraisal and CQR visit
- Brief and manageable: 12-15 pages

Comprehensive Quality Review

- Possibly year 4 and year 8
- Institution hosts an on-site Comprehensive Quality Review. The peer team will have the entire record of AQIP Pathway activity over the preceding seven years. It looks to see that the institution is advancing in stages of maturity. It will determine whether an institution is meeting Federal Compliance requirements along with the Criteria for Accreditation.

Comprehensive Quality Review

- Provides critical link among all institutional AQIP activities that lead to Reaffirmation of Accreditation.
- Culminates in an inclusive report that supports an institution's reaffirmation process.
- Wide inclusion of institution's stakeholders.

CQR Logistics

- Base team of 4-7
- Typically two days on campus, plus travel time.
- Can require interim monitoring
- Leads to reaffirmation at end of cycle

Pathway Eligibility

- Pathway eligibility is determined when accreditation is reaffirmed.
- The most important consideration is the amount and type of Commission follow-up in the recent past as well as what is to come (but other considerations come into play).

Thank You!

This presentation was adapted from materials provided by **Linnea A. Stenson, Ph.D.** Vice President for Accreditation Relations and Director, AQIP Pathway