

HLC and LLTC: Questions and Answers

What is the HLC?

The HLC is the Higher Learning Commission which is the accrediting agency for the Leech Lake Tribal College. The HLC is one of seven accrediting agencies in the United States and, through accreditation, help provide consistency and equity to students attending all (not just tribal) institutions of higher education. It is through accreditation that credits you earn at LLTC will transfer to other institutions and it is also through accreditation that colleges become eligible for financial aid and other grants.

Why is LLTC on Probation? What happened?

During a site visit to the campus in 2017, the HLC made the determination that LLTC was not complying with their standards and placed LLTC on probation. There were a few areas of concern, some minor (website update) and some major (timely budget approval), but the biggest was in Program Review. Simply put, LLTC was not documenting the process that determines whether an academic program is meeting the needs of the community and the students and how best to continuously improve in that effort.

Please note: this does not mean that LLTC wasn't doing what it was supposed to, what it means is that LLTC did not properly document what was being done. For the HLC, it's all about the process, and LLTC did not document that process. So, it's not about what LLTC is doing or not doing, it's about making sure that LLTC is properly documenting that it's being done.

Even though LLTC is on probation, it remains fully accredited. All credits, diplomas, etc. earned while at LLTC are recognized as coming from an accredited institution. LLTC continues to offer Financial Aid and continues to live up to its recognition (by WalletHub) as the best community college in the nation.

Where is LLTC in the probation process?

Leech Lake Tribal College has been working diligently to ensure that the issues that the HLC found in 2017 are corrected and properly documented. Most of the work on these issues is taking place 'behind the scenes', so students will notice little if any impact in the classroom (aside from frazzled instructors and administrators).

As of July of 2019, LLTC has already completed several steps that were mentioned by the HLC, including timely budget approval, updates on policies and procedures, and implementation of program review to certify that all programs at LLTC meet the needs of the community and are responsive to the community should their needs change. We fully expect to address all concerns of the HLC well before the deadlines set by them.

LLTC will undergo a formal review in April of 2019 at which the HLC will send a team consisting of fellow higher education professionals to review what LLTC has done to document the processes that the HLC found wanting previously. This team will then report back to the HLC who will then make a decision as to whether to remove LLTC from probation (which we are confident will happen).