



**For Immediate Release**

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**The Higher Learning Commission Places Morton College on Accredited-On Notice Status**  
*Morton College Remains Accredited*

Morton College announced today that it has been placed on 'Accredited-On Notice' status by its regional accreditor, The Higher Learning Commission (HLC).

In their Public Disclosure letter, the HLC noted that Morton College has been placed on 'Accredited-On Notice' status because the HLC Board determined that the College is at risk of being out of compliance with HLC's Criteria for Accreditation related to Criterion Two-Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct, as well as Criterion Five-Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness. For more details, please see the [HLC's Action Letter](#).

On Notice is a sanction meaning that an accredited institution is at risk of not meeting one or more of HLC's Criteria for Accreditation. The On Notice period is not more than two years. While On Notice, the institution remains accredited and has the opportunity to remedy the issues that led to the sanction. In most cases, other colleges and universities will continue to accept the institution's credits in transfer or for admission to a higher degree program.

"Morton College recognizes and values the important role the Higher Learning Commission has in upholding and protecting the integrity and quality of higher education for students and the community we serve," said Dr. Stan Fields, President of Morton College. "Morton College is 100% committed to the accreditation process, and we look forward to working with the entire college community to strengthen our institution by resolving these issues."

Morton College acknowledges that its accreditation relationship with the HLC has been problematic for several years. HLC evaluation teams have repeatedly cited significant concerns with the institution's governance structure.

In response to concerns identified during the HLC January 2018 Focused Visit to Morton College and subsequent Institutional Actions Council reviews, Morton College's Board of Trustees has to date taken the following actions, as recommended by the College President:

- Approved a four-year contract extension for the college President
- Termination of contractual agreements with four vendors—Fundraising, Graphic Design/Advertising, Finance and Accounting Consulting Services and Communications Professional Services
- Approval of the new Administrative Organizational Structure
- Board membership with the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
- Adoption of a new Board Policy that stipulates the parameters for communication between vendors of the college and the Board of Trustees
- Agreement to return to a consistent schedule of Regular Meetings of the Board of Trustees on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of every month.

“We are committed to devoting the time and resources necessary to work closely with the HLC between now and our next evaluation in the Spring of 2020 to demonstrate our ongoing progress in addressing governance concerns,” said Frank Aguilar, Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Founded in 1895, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) is one of six regional institutional accreditors in the United States. HLC accredits degree-granting post-secondary educational institutions in the North Central region, which includes 19 states. Recognized by both the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, the HLC accredits approximately one-third of U.S. regionally accredited public and private institutions.

The HLC will revisit Morton College in the Spring of 2020 to see firsthand the progress the school has made and planned in the areas of Criterion Two-Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct, as well as Criterion Five-Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness.

***About Morton College***

*Founded in 1924 to meet the educational demands in the growing communities of Berwyn, Cicero, Forest View, Lyons, McCook, Stickney and other near-western suburbs, Morton College is the second oldest community college in Illinois. Its mission is to enhance the quality of life of its diverse community through exemplary teaching and learning opportunities, community service, and life-long learning. Morton College is governed by a locally elected Board of Trustees, and is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. For more information on Morton College, visit [www.morton.edu](http://www.morton.edu).*

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### **Why is Morton College on ‘Accredited-On Notice’ status?**

In their Public Disclosure letter, the HLC noted that Morton College has been placed on ‘Accredited-On Notice’ because the HLC Board determined that the College is at risk of being out of compliance with HLC's Criteria for Accreditation related to Criterion Two-Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct, as well as Criterion Five-Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness. For more details, please see the [HLC’s Action Letter](#).

### **Will Morton College lose its accreditation?**

Institutions that have been placed on “Accredited-On Notice” status remain fully accredited.

### **Will I lose my financial aid?**

**No.**

Institutions on sanction remain eligible for Title IV financial aid.

### **Will my credits transfer?**

In most cases, other colleges and universities will continue to accept the institution’s credits in transfer or for admission to a higher degree program. All colleges and universities define their own transfer and admission policies. Students interested in pursuing a higher degree or transferring should contact the college or university they plan to attend so that they are knowledgeable about their admission and transfer policies.

### **Will Morton College’s status of Accredited On Notice appear on my transcript?**

**No.**

Morton College’s status with the HLC will not be reflected on College transcripts.

## **What is Morton College doing about these sanctions?**

In response to concerns identified during the HLC January 2018 Focused Visit to Morton College and subsequent Institutional Actions Council reviews, Morton College's Board of Trustees has to date taken the following actions, as recommended by the College President:

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- Approval of the new Administrative Organizational Structure
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- Adoption of a new Board Policy that stipulates the parameters for communication between vendors of the college and the Board of Trustees
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## **What is the Higher Learning Commission?**

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) is one of six regional institutional accreditors in the United States. HLC accredits degree-granting post-secondary educational institutions in the North Central region, which includes 19 states. Recognized by both the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, the HLC accredits approximately one-third of U.S. regionally accredited public and private institutions.

## **Why is accreditation important?**

Accreditation is important for two principle reasons: – first, it allows schools to award federal financial aid and eases transfer of credits from one regionally accredited institution to another; and second, The HLC's peer review process makes sure an institution's academic programs are high quality. The process assures the public that the institution provides a quality education.

## **Who I can contact or where I can go for more information?**

Please contact the [Blanca Jara](#), Director of Public Relations and Community Outreach, for more information about the College's accreditation status.