



Board of Trustees, July 27, 2016

President's Report

NWCCU update

The accreditation process is complete and the NWCCU Board has found: "that the accreditation of Western Oregon University has been reaffirmed on the basis of the Spring 2016 Year Seven *Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability* Evaluation which was to address Recommendation 1 of the Spring 2013 Year Three Peer-Evaluation Report." In general this reflects a positive outcome, however, the decision also includes direction concerning a special report. As noted in the *Accreditation Handbook*:

"For the evaluation regarding Reaffirmation of Accreditation, the Board of Commissioners may take one or more of the following actions:

1. Reaffirm Accreditation.
2. Request a special report (with or without an on-site evaluation) to address specified areas of concern.
3. Defer action on reaffirmation of Accreditation.
4. Issue, impose, or continue a sanction (*Warning, Probation, or Show-Cause*)
5. Remove a sanction.
6. Terminate Accreditation."

With regard to Recommendation 1 from 2013, the Commission found that expectations had not been met:

"The Evaluation panel recommends that Western Oregon University continue to refine its system of measuring overall mission fulfillment."

Further, the Commission found that WOU does not meet expectation as related to the following recommendations:

1. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the institution clarifies its mission statement to provide better direction for mission fulfillment. [1.A.1.]

Finding: substantially in compliance, but in need of improvement

2. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the institution defines mission fulfillment including identifying outcomes that represent the extent of their accomplishment of mission fulfillment. [1.A.2, ER 22, ER 23]

Finding: does not meet criteria for accreditation, and must be resolved within 2 years

3. The Evaluation Committee recommends the institution establishes objectives for each core theme and identifies meaningful, assessable, and verifiable direct and indirect measures

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(indicators) of achievement that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of the core themes. [Standard 1.B.2, ER 23]

4. The Evaluation Committee recommends the institution establishes student learning outcomes for all courses, programs, and degrees, including general education, wherever offered and however delivered, that are meaningful, assessable, and verifiable and are consistent with the mission. [Standards 2.C.1, 2.C.2, 2.C.4, 2.C.5, 2.C.10, ER 22]

Finding: does not meet criteria for accreditation, and must be resolved within 2 years

5. The Evaluation Committee recommends the institution provides appropriate and adequate technology systems and infrastructure planning with input from constituencies to support its management and operational functions, academic programs, and support services, wherever offered and however delivered. [2.G.5., 2.G.7.]

Finding: substantially in compliance, but in need of improvement

6. The Evaluation Committee recommends the institution designs and implements an ongoing planning and budgeting process that is broad-based, inclusive of all appropriate constituencies, data-driven, includes Core Theme planning and leads to mission fulfillment. [2.F.3, 3.A.1-4, 3.B.1-3, ER 23]

Finding: does not meet criteria for accreditation, and must be resolved within 2 years

7. The Evaluation Committee recommends the institution engages in comprehensive, ongoing, systematic assessment that leads to mission fulfillment through the evaluation of Core Theme objectives and supports continuous improvement. [4.A.1.-6, 4.B.1-2, 5.A.1-2, 5.B.1, ER 23]

Finding: does not meet criteria for accreditation, and must be resolved within 2 years

Steps taken since campus visit

Concern: The current articulation of the mission statement and core themes appears to be out of alignment with institutional passions. Conversations on campus reflect energy and excitement around student access, success, institutional adaptability, innovation, diversity, and environmental sustainability. The institution could benefit from a renewed discussion of mission and core themes; the resulting shared ownership of the mission could then advance future efforts to plan for and fulfill the mission.

Action: WOU launched the SPC and completed an in-depth SWOT, meeting through summer and the next task is Mission, vision, values → outcome will be mission refinement

Concern: *The institution should review the public accessibility and organization of the policies and procedures transmitted from the previous governance structure.*

Action: Minutes and existing policies have been posted to BOT website, formed a Policy Council that is working through OUS policies and revising/adapting to WOU

Concern: *Given the de-centralized approach to distance education, it is not clear that policies and processes meet NWCCU requirements.*

Action: WOU has been in the process of establishing a Center for Academic Innovation whose primary charge is to facilitate development of on-line and hybrid curricular offerings, to assist faculty with development of on-line course shells and to work with academic units to identify specific course/curricular offerings to better serve our student populations.

Concern: *The evaluation committee holds a concern about the current lack of an independent internal audit function to provide assurance of the university's risk management, governance, and internal control processes [2.F.4]*

Action: WOU has contracted with Shared Services, a service for several Oregon universities housed at OSU-Corvallis, for an internal auditor

Concern: *The institution must assess the needs of its end users through a technology planning and budget process that aligns with the educational mission. This is particularly important in the case that the institution plans to expand online course and program offerings.*

And,

Concern: *The Evaluation Committee expresses a concern that the institution needs to develop an ongoing, systematic planning and budgeting process that involves appropriate constituencies.*

Action: As part of the Strategic Planning process, the university is revamping its budget planning process and IT planning. WOU will form a university budget committee that will include representation from all governance groups and IT will form an advisory group that includes faculty

Next steps: leading to Spring 2023 Year Seven *Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability* Evaluation

Spring 2017

- Address Recommendations 1, 2, and 3 in Spring 2017 Year One *Mission and Core Themes* Report

Fall 2017

- Ad hoc Report, with a visit, to address Recommendations 4, 6, and 7 Spring 2017 Year One *Mission and Core Themes* Report

Spring 2019

- Addendum to Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation Report to address Recommendation 5

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A-1 *Summary of NWCCU Reports*

Comprehensive Evaluation - April 2007

Recommendations (Overall)

1. The Committee recommends the full implementation of a broad-based, University-wide, integrated process of planning and evaluation (Standard 1.B.2).
2. The Committee recommends that the University use the results of systematic evaluation and ongoing planning to influence resource allocations and to inform decisions on instruction programs, institutional services, and activities (Standard 1.B.4).
3. The Committee recommends that the University implement the practice of regular and continuous assessment and provide evidence that the assessment activities lead to the improvement of teaching and learning across all academic programs (Standard 2.B1,2.B2, 2.B.3).

Concerns – Standard 1: Mission, Goals, Planning & Effectiveness

The Strategic Planning Process is fragmented and despite progress, is not fully implemented, particularly in its use of information to inform discussions.

Concerns – Standard 2: Educational Programs and their Effectiveness

The University needs to enter into a cycle of continuous improvement- developing academic plans, carrying out those plans, assessing the outcomes, and allowing the data collected to influence future decisions.

Department student learning outcomes are still in the beginning stages of development. –

The curriculum in the “slash” courses in the graduate programs may be too heavily influenced by the enrollment ratio of undergraduate to graduate students.

The complexity of teaching a mixed group of undergraduate and graduate students – and of differentiating the curriculum in appropriate ways- would suggest that release time may be appropriate for them as well.

The University should carefully consider capacity before creating additional graduate-level programs.

The University needs to provide sufficient resources to allow international students to succeed at the graduate level.

Concerns – Standard 3: Students

The institution needs to develop a periodic and systematic evaluation of the appropriateness, adequacy and utilization of student services and programs and use the results of the evaluation as a basis for change (Std. 3.B.6)

The institution needs to develop a plan to create duplicate data and student records and have provision for recovery in the event of a disaster (Std. 3.C.5)

The institution needs to reference the Student Right-to-Know Act in required publications.

The institution needs to offer orientation of new students at the graduate level (Std.3.D.9)

3 others related to: input on bookstore policies, policies and expectations for athletic staff members and administration, policy for planning athletic practice/completion during finals.

Concerns (summaries) Standard 4: Faculty

1. Recommends addressing discrepancies between the CBA and Faculty Handbook.
2. Recommends revisiting student rating of instruction (SIR) from once per year to more frequent system.

Concerns (summaries) Standard 5: Library and Information Resources

1. Staffing for both the library and UCS is at minimal level and below average compared to peers.
2. While UCS provides robust networking environment, it is not engaged in a strategic planning process to determine expectations and needs of campus in terms of software applications and IT services.

Focused Interim Evaluation, April 2009

Recommendations

Two of the three recommendations from 2007 Comprehensive Evaluation Report remained in effect:

1. The Committee recommends that the University use the results of systematic evaluation and ongoing planning to influence resource allocations and to inform decisions on instruction programs, institutional services, and activities (Standard 1.B.4).
2. The Committee recommends that the University implement the practice of regular and continuous assessment and provide evidence that the assessment activities lead to the improvement of teaching and learning across all academic programs (Standard 2.B1,2.B2, 2.B.3).

Concerns

There is insufficient documentation that strategic planning, assessment, and using evaluation results to inform broad-based university decision-making are occurring.

Year 1 Report, May 2011

Recommendations

1. The Panel recommends that WOU clarify its definition of mission fulfillment in the context of expectations. The institutional outcomes that, collectively, will represent an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment need to be articulated in a way that lends itself to that determination (Standard 1.A.2)

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2. The panel recommends that WOU revise its indicators of achievement to ensure that they are meaningful, assessable, and verifiable. (Standard 1.B.2)

Year 3 Report, March 2013

Recommendation

The Evaluation panel recommends that Western Oregon University continue to refine its system of measuring overall mission fulfillment.

Concern

WOU should be encouraged to create student learning outcomes for these four certificate programs and publish them in a way that is easily accessible. (2.C.11)

Year 7 Report, April 2016

Commendations

1. The evaluation committee commends Western Oregon University for its commitment to student access and success.
2. The evaluation committee commends Western Oregon University for its commitment to first generation and low-income students.
3. The evaluation committee commends Western Oregon University's staff and faculty for their resiliency and ongoing commitment to students during transformative changes in governance.
4. The evaluation committee commends Western Oregon University for its commitment to facilities and grounds. The campus is accessible, welcoming, aesthetically pleasing and reflects the commitment to environmental sustainability.

Recommendations

8. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the institution clarifies its mission statement to provide better direction for mission fulfillment. [1.A.1.]
9. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the institution defines mission fulfillment including identifying outcomes that represent the extent of their accomplishment of mission fulfillment. [1.A.2, ER 22, ER 23]
10. The Evaluation Committee recommends the institution establishes objectives for each core theme and identifies meaningful, assessable, and verifiable direct and indirect measures (indicators) of achievement that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of the core themes. [Standard 1.B.2, ER 23]

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11. The Evaluation Committee recommends the institution establishes student learning outcomes for all courses, programs, and degrees, including general education, wherever offered and however delivered, that are meaningful, assessable, and verifiable and are consistent with the mission. [Standards 2.C.1, 2.C.2, 2.C.4, 2.C.5, 2.C.10, ER 22]
12. The Evaluation Committee recommends the institution provides appropriate and adequate technology systems and infrastructure planning with input from constituencies to support its management and operational functions, academic programs, and support services, wherever offered and however delivered. [2.G.5., 2.G.7.]
13. The Evaluation Committee recommends the institution designs and implements an ongoing planning and budgeting process that is broad-based, inclusive of all appropriate constituencies, data-driven, includes Core Theme planning and leads to mission fulfillment. [2.F.3, 3.A.1-4, 3.B.1-3, ER 23]
14. The Evaluation Committee recommends the institution engages in comprehensive, on-going, systematic assessment that leads to mission fulfillment through the evaluation of Core Theme objectives and supports continuous improvement. [4.A.1.-6, 4.B.1-2, 5.A.1-2, 5.B.1, ER 23]

Concerns

Concern: The institution did not develop a system of measuring overall mission fulfillment for the Year Seven Self Study.

Concern: The current articulation of the mission statement and core themes appears to be out of alignment with institutional passions. Conversations on campus reflect energy and excitement around student access, success, institutional adaptability, innovation, diversity, and environmental sustainability. The institution could benefit from a renewed discussion of mission and core themes; the resulting shared ownership of the mission could then advance future efforts to plan for and fulfill the mission.

Concern: The institution should review the public accessibility and organization of the policies and procedures transmitted from the previous governance structure.

Concern: Given the de-centralized approach to distance education, it is not clear that policies and processes meet NWCCU requirements.

Concern: The evaluation committee holds a concern about the current lack of an independent internal audit function to provide assurance of the university's risk management, governance, and internal control processes [2.F.4]

Concern: The institution must assess the needs of its end users through a technology planning and budget process that aligns with the educational mission. This is particularly important in the case that the institution plans to expand online course and program offerings.

Concern: The Evaluation Committee expresses a concern that the institution needs to develop an ongoing, systematic planning and budgeting process that involves appropriate constituencies.

Concern: Evidence of meaningful assessment is anecdotal and decentralized. The decentralized nature of reporting structures, limited access to institutional data, generic mission statement, and campus culture thwart assessment efforts. The WOU faculty, administrators and staff could benefit from challenging their own perspectives, more clearly articulating their strengths, and demonstrating their successes. The institution needs to critically analyze system functions, ways of knowing and beliefs, and devise plans and actions for self-improvement.