Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

A Comprehensive Evaluation Report – Year Seven

Western Oregon University
Monmouth, OR

April 11-13, 2016

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Introduction

The purpose of this comprehensive site visit was to evaluate Western Oregon University with regard to all five standards for accreditation. An eight-member evaluation committee, supported from a distance by a staff liaison from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (see page iv of this report for a complete list), conducted an evaluation of Western Oregon University in Monmouth, Oregon on behalf of the Commission. The committee submits this confidential report of its findings consistent with the requirements of a seven-year comprehensive review.

The Year Seven Report was submitted in a timely manner, and Dr. Cat McGrew, who oversaw the institution's preparation of the self-study and details of the visit, was responsive to the committee's logistical needs and requests for interviews, additional materials and documents. The evidence obtained during the visit complemented the report, and the committee's findings rely on the report and visit for its picture of WOU.

Report on Self Study

This Year Seven Self Study Report addresses the Eligibility Requirements and Standards appropriate to the scope of the evaluation. The report provides institutional context; describes steps taken to address the 2011 NWCCU recommendations; describes the institution's changing external and internal environments; and outlines the mission, core themes, objectives, and key performance indicators. The majority of the report responds to Standard 2, with the sections responding to Standards 3, 4, and 5 providing description, but lacking evidence to support the stated conclusions. The report does not articulate a definition of mission fulfillment, nor does it provide a holistic assessment and evidence of mission fulfillment, and it does not show how direct assessment of student learning contributes to that definition and assessment. The report does note some areas of institutional strength, and it discusses some steps the institution has taken and plans to take to address areas it believes are in need of improvement. Particularly, the report focuses on the upcoming strategic planning process as the next step toward a clearer articulation of mission fulfillment.

Numerous supporting documents were made available online, on a flash drive provided to each evaluator, in the work room, and in interviews with key staff, faculty, and administrators. While the report provided many of the facts and descriptions of processes related to WOU's compliance with the standards, the evaluation committee's conversations with faculty, staff, students, and administrators on the WOU campus and the additional documentation were critical to a more complete picture of WOU.

Methods Used to Verify the Self-Study

Evaluation committee members carefully reviewed all supporting materials; toured campus facilities; and conducted interviews with numerous administrators, faculty, staff, and students as well as with members of the Board of Trustees, including a separate conversation with Jim

Baumgartner, Chair of the Board of Trustees. A list of those who were interviewed is included below.

Individuals and Groups Interviewed by the Evaluation Committee

Ryan	Hagemann	Vice President & General Counsel
Carol	Harding	Professor, English; member, Assessment Facilitation Steering Committee
Kella	Helyer	Director, Financial Aid
Stephanie	Hoover	Assistant Professor, Psychology; member, Assessment Facilitation Steering Committee
Shaun	Huston	Professor, Geography; member of General Education Committee
Bill	Kernan	Director, Computing Services
Cecelia 'Cec'	Koontz	WOU Board of Trustees
Melanie	Landon-Hays	Assistant Professor, Teacher Education; Secretary, Faculty Senate
Malissa	Larson	Director, Office for Disability Services
Tommy	Love	Executive Director, Development & Foundation
Erin	McDonough	Director, Strategic Partnerships & University Advancement
Cat	McGrew	Director, Academic Affairs & Operations
Allen	McKiel	Dean, Library & Media Services
John	Minahan	WOU Board of Trustees
Jenny	Mladenovic	WOU Board of Trustees
Sue	Monahan	Dean, Liberal Arts & Sciences
Robert	Monge	Associate Professor, Library; Chair, General Education Committee
Tom	Neal	Director, Physical Plant
Fran	Ni	Associate Professor, Deaf & Professional Studies; member, Graduate Studies Committee
Lori	Palmer	Assistant Director of Admissions for Processing
Cornelia	Paraskevas	WOU Board of Trustees; Professor, English
Mickey	Pardew	Professor, Deaf & Professional Studies; member, Graduate Studies Committee
Mark	Perlman	Professor; President of WOUFT
Ambre	Plahn	Assistant Director, International Education & Development
Stephen	Scheck	Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs
Adele	Schepige	Professor, Teacher Education; Chair, Graduate Studies Committee
Katherine	Schmidt	Professor, Writing; Director, Writing Center; Vice President, Faculty Senate
Tad	Shannon	Associate Professor, Theatre; Past President, Faculty Senate
Darin	Silbernagel	Director, Business Services
Michael	Soukup	Banner SIS Programmer Analyst, Computing Services
Linda	Stonecipher	Director, Graduate Programs
Karen	Sullivan-Vance	Director, Academic Advising & Learning Center
Daniel	Tankersly	Associate Professor, Art; member, General Education Committee

Ella	Taylor	Director, The Research Institute
Louis	Taylor	WOU Board of Trustees
Gay	Timken	Professor, Health & Exercise Science; member, Assessment Facilitation Steering Committee
Judy	VanderBurg	Director, Human Resources
LouAnn	Vickers	Executive Assistant to the President
Alicia	Wenzel	Associate Professor, Teacher Education; member, Assessment Facilitation Steering Committee
Eric	Yahnke	Vice President, Finance & Administration

Additionally, 3 Open Meetings: Staff, Students & Faculty

Eligibility Requirements

The report addresses the Eligibility Requirements appropriate to the scope of the evaluation and integrates them into sections covering Standards 1 and 2. Further detail is included in the review of Standards 1 and 2 below. The recommendations at the end of this report refer to particular Eligibility Requirements.

Response to Prior Recommendations

In reaffirming accreditation in the letter dated July 12, 2013, the Commission requested that Western Oregon University explicitly address Recommendation 1 of the spring 2013 Year Three *Resources and Capacity* Peer-Evaluation Report. The recommendation and the committee review of the responses are listed below:

1. Spring 2013 Recommendation: *The evaluation committee recommends that Western Oregon University continue to refine its system of measuring overall mission fulfillment* (Standard 1.A.2 and 1.B.2).

    Committee Response:

    In its 2013 Year Three Peer Evaluation Report the NWCCU evaluation team found that WOU had made substantial progress in developing useful measurements of mission fulfillment, but that it needed to continue to refine its system of measuring overall mission fulfillment. It found that WOU had "developed a system of weighted measures that will be useful indications of acceptable levels of mission fulfillment."

    Since that report WOU reduced the Core Theme Objectives from nine to five. WOU found its 28 key performance indicators (KPIs) to be "assessable and verifiable," but not "meaningful," and consolidated them into 12 KPIs. The institution could not come to consensus on the weighted measures, and did not use this approach as a way to get at an acceptable level of mission fulfillment. According to the report, while the data relative to the current 12 KPIs show that WOU is performing well compared to peers on indicators with external standards, such as the NSSE, on the whole the indicators are not considered by the

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institution to provide substantive meaning and value. WOU plans to review the indicators again in the upcoming strategic planning process.

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

Standard One – Mission and Core Themes

1.A Mission

Mission:

Western Oregon University is a comprehensive public university, operating for the public good, which:
- *Provides effective learning opportunities that prepare students for a fulfilling life in a global society;*
- *Supports an accessible and diverse campus community; and,*
- *Improves continuously our educational, financial, and environmental sustainability.*

The mission outlines the values of the institution—learning, access and diversity, and continuous improvement as it relates to sustainability, broadly defined. These values appear to be widely held, particularly the values of access, diversity, and environmental sustainability. It is telling that even individuals unfamiliar with the mission statement spoke passionately about these values and others. Clearly, members of this institution have a shared sense of mission based on the evaluators' discussion across the two days' visit. However, the mission statement as written does not appear to give strong direction to the campus community. Moreover, the institution has not defined mission fulfillment in an operational, measurable manner. [1.A.1, 1.A.2].

1.B Core Themes

Western Oregon University has selected three relatively generic core themes (Effective Learning, Supporting Diversity, and Sustainable Institution) with which to frame its sense of mission fulfillment. Nonetheless, if the key performance indicators for each of these themes were defined clearly and measured rigorously, meaningful assessment of institutional success might be obtained. Unfortunately, neither of these tasks has been fully accomplished and thus it is all but impossible to determine if Western Oregon University is serving its constituents in the manner expected.

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.

Standard Two – Resources and Capacity

2.A Governance

WOU has its own governing board, which includes a faculty member, a non-faculty staff member, and a student member. The President serves as an *ex officio* member of the Board, is President of the Faculty, and is also the executive and governing officer of the University. The formal governance structure includes the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and the Associated Students of Western Oregon University. There are also opportunities for informal communication, such as Campus Conversations and Welcome Back events. [2.A.1]

There is evidence, e.g. the Business Plan and Request for WOU Institutional Governing Board, that demonstrates that the institution monitors its compliance with the Commission's Standards for Accreditation, including the impact of collective bargaining agreements, legislative actions, and external mandates. [2.A.3]

Governing Board

Western Oregon University recently transitioned (July 1, 2015) from a system-wide governing board (Oregon State Board of Higher Education) to its own governing board. The new Board of Trustees of Western Oregon University is composed of 15 members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Oregon State Senate, including the President, who serves *ex officio*. This new Board became official on July 1, 2015. The year prior to their official start date, the Board members participated in board trainings, created policies, set up committees, and conducted a presidential search. The Oregon State Board of Higher Education, upon the recommendation of the WOU Board of Trustees and the Oregon University System Chancellor, appointed the new President of the University, who also started on July 1, 2015.

The Board is in the process of transitioning and revising the system policies and processes into university policies and processes. It has developed the Bylaws of Western Oregon University, the Board Resolution on the Responsibilities of Trustees, the Board Statement on Conduct of Public Meetings, the Board Statement on the Performance of Official Business, the Board Statement on Delegation of Authority, the Board Statement on Committees, the Board Statement on Ethics and Conflict of Interest, and the Board Resolution on Shared Governance at Western Oregon University. These documents are posted on the University website and provide evidence that the board, its responsibilities and actions in policy and regulation are clear and are consonant with NWCCU standards.

The Board is in the process of transitioning and revising the remaining system policies and processes into university policies. Although the team was given access to these system documents, they appear to be no longer available to most members of the campus community or to the public. [2.A.4-8, 2.A.10]

Compliment: The review committee was impressed with the Board members' commitment to the institution and to student access and success. The number of volunteer hours they have put into helping the institution transition to its own governing board and to developing policies and

processes is to be commended. The Board chair is to be commended for his role in guiding the Board through this transition.

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

Leadership and Management

The university is administered by a president, a provost and vice president for academic affairs, a vice president for finance & administration, a vice president and general counsel, a vice president for student affairs, an executive director of athletics, and several deans, directors, and division chairs. Specific positions are listed in the online faculty handbook, dated December 2015. The WOU organization chart delineates the lines of authority. The President serves as President of the Faculty; the President is also the executive and governing officer of the University. The current president previously served as the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs at Eastern Washington University. [2.A.9-2.A.11]

Policies and Procedures

Academics

The institution has academic policies that are clearly communicated. Specific details are included in 2.C Education Resources below. [2.A.12-14]

Students

Academic policies regarding rights and responsibilities are provided in the course catalog, as well as online. The Advising and Learning Center also outlines the process clearly from "warning" to a "suspension committee" with a reinstatement process which will determine conditions for returning. Student complaints or grievance procedures are also in place, and could move through a five step process if resolution does not occur in the earlier stages. Procedure and process is defined, and the document was updated in January 2016. This same procedure was stated through the Office of Disability Support Services and included academic and non-academic grievances. The process appears to be consistent and fair, although a follow up or tracking process was not identified. [2.A.15]

An evaluation of prerequisite skills and abilities is in place as part of the admission process. This is clearly stated, including such things as high school completion, a stated minimum high school GPA, minimum scores on the ACT or SAT, etc. In addition, alternatives to these criteria, which may be allowed for admission, are also stated in the catalog. There is a Comprehensive Admission Review process for applicants not meeting the minimum requirement. Again, the steps for this are stated and include a personal essay stating why they want to attend, what resources at WOU they will use to help them succeed, etc. Termination from educational programs follows the process mentioned in Standard 2A.15, and begins with a "warning". Student support programs and a "Learning Seminar" are in place to aid in providing early intervention, and to assist students who are trying to get reinstated. [2.A.16]

Policies for students engaged in co-curricular activities are stated in the Code of Student Responsibility. This document addresses rules and policies specific to students, student organizations, student media and publications, etc. It includes policies on alcohol and drug use, sexual misconduct, and more. It also clearly states possible sanctions for violations of these policies. [2.A.17]

Human Resources

Human Resources policies are covered in 2.B below.

Institutional Integrity

Responsibilities for preparation and review of university publications are designated to ensure consistency of message and appearance of communications. The catalog is relatively easy to use and contains information about degree requirements. Web pages are consistent in look and feel, but finding specific information about policies is not easy. Staff handbooks are outdated. Web links to critical policies, such as ethics policies, don't work because the policies were previously set for the Oregon University System, whose website is no longer active. The Provost's Office has a full set of former OUS policies that have been carried over, but those are not readily available to faculty, staff, students, and the general public. [2.A.21]

WOU abides by ethical rules defined by state statutes and rules governing all public officials and ethical practices formerly prescribed by the now defunct Oregon University System. Ethics statements for AAUP and professions have been adopted where appropriate.

Clearly stated grievance rights and procedures to ensure fair and timely resolution are in place for students, faculty, and staff.
- Students have clear rights, responsibilities, and adjudication processes under the Code of Student Responsibility and the Student Grievance Procedure. Limited categories of grievances against the university are also specified by Oregon Administrative Rules 574-010-0005-through 0060.
- The Faculty Handbook includes a statement of ethical values. The Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement 2015-2017 defines faculty rights and grievance procedures.
- Grievance rights and procedures for classified staff are defined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement 2015-2019. Employee Handbook for classified staff is dated 2014.
- Grievance rights and procedures for unclassified and professional employees are governed by Oregon Administrative Rules, 574-010-0065 through 0070. Somewhat problematically, the Employee Handbook for unclassified staff is dated 2012.

Ethics awareness is not part of routine orientation for new staff. It is addressed in the New Employee Orientation Booklet in three places: pg. 36, expectation "to maintain standard of professional ethics"; pg. 67, regarding financial irregularities; and pg.76, regarding relationships between students and faculty/staff or between supervisors and subordinates. [2.A.22]

WOU, including its Board, abides by rules defined by state statutes and rules for public officials (paid and volunteer) and retains the Code of Ethics previously defined by the now defunct Oregon University System. The WOU Board has also issued its own statement of ethics and conflict of interest. [2.A.23]

WOU adheres to relevant policies of the Oregon State Board of Higher Education regarding all aspects of intellectual property. [2.A.24]

The representation of the institution's current accreditation status is appropriately used in the course catalog. The accreditation on WOU's website should be revised to distinguish university accreditation by NWCCU from program accreditations by other organizations (e.g., NCATE). [2.A.25]

Institutional contracts for products/services are reviewed and signed in the Business Office. WOU has adopted and published purchasing and contract policies that were previously detailed by the now defunct OUS. Of concern, prior to 2012, OUS Internal Audit Division included review of contractual agreements as part of its regular internal audit of WOU financial controls. Presently, WOU, as an independently-governed institution, has not established an independent internal audit function or internal audit schedule. [2.A.26]

Academic Freedom

The Provost's website and the Faculty Handbook have a link to the 1940 AAUP statement on academic freedom with comments from 1970. An Oregon University System policy on academic freedom has been transferred to the University and accepted by the Board of Trustees, but it is not accessible at this point in the transition. Academic freedom is referenced only in an appendix to the Collective Bargaining Agreement in a different context from the intent of the standard.

The Faculty Handbook includes the AAUP statement of professional ethics, which was endorsed by AAUP most recently in 1987. The policy on research misconduct seems thorough. The WOUFT Collective Bargaining Agreement 2015-2017, Article 10, specifies actions that might result in discipline. [2.A.27-29]

Finance

As an independently-governed public institution, fiscal oversight of WOU has shifted from Oregon University System (OUS) and is now directed by the WOU Board of Trustees. The Board has articulated its delegation of authorities and chartered a Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) to ensure operations' effectiveness and financial stewardship. [2.A.30]

2.B Human Resources

The institution employs many qualified personnel. Although a need for additional staff was voiced on several occasions, from needs for administrative assistant support to departmental specific IT support. Procedures for the recruitment and selection of personnel are now

"centralized" through the HR office and are now online, with duties, responsibilities and authority of the position clearly stated. [2.B.1]

Performance evaluations of administrators and staff are the responsibility of the supervisors or leadership in each operational area, in compliance with federal and state laws, as well as bargaining unit agreements (where appropriate). The HR department offers training and support to implement this annual process. [2.B.2]

Staff development opportunities consist primarily of in-house, local training, often offered by the HR department and including things such as Banner training. Staff development funds are limited to $250 per employee. Staff are "cross trained" and associated that with "staff development." [2.B.3]

The institution employs appropriately qualified faculty in what appears to be sufficient number to ensure the integrity of their programs. It is challenging to discern whether this is "consistent with its mission, core themes." [2.B.4]

Faculty responsibilities are clearly stated in the WOU Faculty Handbook (2015-16 Edition). This publication reflects WOU policy, as well as the Oregon Administrative Rules of the Board of Higher Education (OAR), the Faculty Senate and its committee, the Faculty Governance Charter, the Collective Bargaining Agreement between WOU Federation of Teachers and the University. This includes everything from professional standards of conduct, to policies on tenure, to academic scheduling and workload. [2.B.5]

The systematic process for faculty (tenure and non-tenure) evaluation, tenure and promotion is stated in Article 8: Evaluation, Tenure and Promotion of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between WOU and the WOU Federation of Teachers Local 2278. Included are details on: timelines, procedures for promotion and tenure, grievances and arbitration, faculty development, scholarship, and service. [2.B.6]

2.C Education Resources

General

  ☐   *Academic Programs*

The institution's academic programs are appropriate in content and rigor and consistent with its mission. Many programs have clearly identified student learning outcomes; however some still remain without student learning outcomes. Programs lead to collegiate-level degrees or certificates appropriate to the field of study, though they do not uniformly demonstrate a coherent design with appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing of courses, and synthesis of learning. Faculty, administrators and staff reported concerns about excessive credit accumulation. A majority of WOU graduates exceed the minimum degree requirement of 180 credits. Conjectures about causes for excess credit accumulation included the second language requirement for ESL students, required minors, hidden prerequisites, and transfer credit policies. [2.C.1, 2.C.4]

Graduate and undergraduate courses require 30 hours of student work per quarter credit hour or an equivalent amount of student work under an alternative schedule. Verification of appropriate contact hours and awarded credits for face-to-face courses occurs while scheduling courses in Banner. [2.C.3]

☐ *Learning Outcomes*

Course level student learning outcomes are published in syllabi. The consistency of inclusion and use of measurable student learning outcomes is variable, with consistent use in the College of Education and more variable use in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (some classes had none and others did not have measurable ones). Moreover, the institution does not have a process of regular program review. Without regular program assessment and review across the institution, it is not possible to determine if programs continue to meet the institution's mission of continuous improvement. [2.C.2, 2.C.3]

☐ *Admissions*

The institution has clear policies and procedures for admissions, published on the website and in the Course Catalog. Admission requirements, graduation requirements, and program and degree requirements are published in the Course Catalog. [2.A.16, 2.C.4, 2.C.13, 2.D.13]

☐ *Faculty Role and Authority*

Within a shared governance model, the faculty at Western Oregon University play an appropriate role in creating, approving and implementing the curriculum as well as in hiring, promoting and retaining faculty colleagues. With respect to curriculum, there are ample opportunities for faculty input, ranging from departmental committees, divisional review and university evaluation. At the departmental level, for departments that have embraced assessment activities, faculty are at the center of all assessment activities. For university-wide assessment activities, the situation is less clear given that, to date, very little of such assessment has been conducted. The faculty have, however, adopted the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes of the Association of American Colleges and Universities and plan to use this as a framework for general education moving forward, suggesting that faculty are indeed playing a central role. The Faculty Senate has been an active and engaged participant in all things curricular. [2.C.5]

☐ *Library and Information Resources*

The library has an active instruction program whereby librarians and classroom faculty collaborate on integrating library materials, research processes, and applicable library sources into course assignments and instruction. Where appropriate librarians provide class instruction, but more often they work with faculty to embed resource guides, learning objects, and links to pertinent resources in course materials. [2.C.6]

□   *Credit for Prior Experiential Learning*

Western Oregon University does not award credit for experiential learning. The Oregon legislature has asked its public universities to implement a process for awarding such credit and thus WOU will need to develop a policy. Preliminary discussions are in the nascent stages. [2.C.7]

□   *Transfer Credit*

The transfer credit policy and procedure is available online and the transfer credit database provides students a useful tool. General education transfer credit determination is split between Admissions (for incoming students) and the Registrar (for continuing students). Admissions and the Registrar have just begun to work together to provide greater standardization of transfer credit decisions. New course substitutions are reviewed by faculty and faculty can request a change in the substitution database. [2.C.8, 2.A.14]

Undergraduate Programs

□   *General Education*

General Education at Western Oregon University is a mix of as many as eleven components: eight components in the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum (LACC: Communication, Creative Arts, Health and Physical Education, Laboratory Science, Literature, Philosophy or Religion, Social Science and Writing) along with other baccalaureate requirements that may include Writing Intensive (W), Cultural Diversity (D), Mathematics/Computer Science (Q) or a Second Language.

The faculty has recently chosen to use the LEAP student learning outcomes for their general education program. The alignment of the LEAP outcomes to the General Education courses has only just begun. The outcomes alignment is being planned hand-in-hand with the assessment process. To date no assessment data or assessment processes have been conducted on the General Education program. The newly-formed Faculty Senate Subcommittee on General Education is conducting this transition. Subcommittee members and administrators voiced concern about the lack of institutional resources and support to collect and document assessment data. [2.C.9, 2.C.10]

WOU does not offer undergraduate certificate programs. The applied baccalaureate programs exclude traditional students and require enrolled students to have completed an A.A.S. degree. Other WOU undergraduate degree programs require completion of the LACC. [2.C.11]

Graduate Programs

The University's graduate programs are small and professional in nature, fitting the University's mission. They seem to have appropriate levels of depth and rigor. Learning outcomes are generally appropriate and in most cases readily assessable. The graduate admission, retention,

and transfer-of-credit policies are published in the Course Catalog and easily accessible. Admission policies do not require testing, relying on undergraduate GPA. Retention policies have appropriate rigor. Graduate advisors review applications for transfer credit. The University does not award credit for experiences gained outside its degree programs. This policy is published in the Course Catalog. Experiential learning credit-bearing opportunities are administered by the individual graduate programs. Graduate programs can be found in separate sections of the Course Catalog and website. The programs are intended to prepare students for professional practice. Although stacked courses are listed in the Course Catalog, most programs do not rely on them for a significant number of required credits. [2.C.12-15]

Continuing Education and Non-Credit Programs

In 2014 WOU consolidated its Division of Extended Studies and Center for Teaching and Learning into the Center for Academic Innovation (CAI). The CAI is described as providing resources and services for faculty that reinforce WOU's core mission as a teaching institution and bolster its commitment to serving the evolving educational needs of students and the region. In creating the CAI, WOU discontinued the granting of non-transcripted non-credit "continuing education credits" (CEUs) and revised Credit Overlay credit hour requirements to ensure academic rigor. WOU's continuing education programs are compatible with the institution's mission, they are reviewed and approved by appropriate academic programs, and they result in transcripted post-graduate credits. [2.C.16-19]

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

2.D Student Support Resources

The self-study report is very clear in identifying the variety of programs and services to support student learning at WOU. The Academic Advising and Learning Center houses many of these services and staff which include peer tutoring, academic and bilingual advising, and an International English Learning Specialist. Advisors are members of NACADA. Clearly articulated Learning Outcomes for the students using these services, as well as the responsibilities of the advisor and advisee, are accessible, and presented in an Academic Advising and Learning Center syllabus. Other learning environments and services include the Math Center, the Writing Center, the Office of Multicultural Student Services, the Office of Disability Services, the Veterans Success Center, the Student Enrichment Program (TRIO), and the Student Health and Counseling Center. [2.D.1]

Adequate provisions for safety and security exist. Crime statistics and campus security policies are available in the Annual Security and Fire Safety Report, which is produced in compliance with the Jean Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy, the Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act, and Higher Education Opportunity Act. The Monmouth Police Department and WOU have a long history of cooperation, with Monmouth police conducting investigations and arrests if and when necessary. Campus Public Safety also offers a variety of training programs including self-defense, first aid/CPR, and personal safety for faculty, students and staff. [2.D.2]

The institution actively recruits students, both from the local communities, as well as internationally. Campus tours are led by Student Ambassadors. Summer orientation and advising events (SOAR) are offered to assist students in the transition to campus life, and for students to learn about student resources, meet other students, and engage in campus activities. There is also an International Student Orientation offered by the office of International Education and Development; a Summer Bridge orientation is offered for students in the Student Enrichment Program and TRIO programs which target first-generation, low income, and under-represented students. Graduate student orientation is also available but more individualized. [2.D.3]

The process to be utilized in the event of a program elimination or change in requirements could be more clearly articulated. The catalog does state that students have the option to apply to graduate under program requirements as of the year they enter, or in effect as of a later catalog no more than seven years old. (Course Catalog, pg. 10). The only other statement in the catalog related to this reads: "…circumstances constantly change within an institution. New decisions may affect the accuracy of the details appearing here. The information is subject to change without notice and does not constitute a contract between WOU and a student…." [2.D.4]

The institution's catalog is online at their website and also available in a hard copy, and is published every year. The mission and core themes are listed, as well as entrance requirements, grading policy, information on programs and course descriptions. Also noted is that degree program and graduation requirements are valid only for seven years. The Financial Aid office advises students on course load and successful course completion rate requirements to remain eligible for aid. At the back of the catalog is a list of administrators and faculty, along with their degrees and conferring institutions. Student code of conduct, rights, and responsibilities are stated. Estimated costs for program tuition and fees, based on 15 credits of undergraduate and 12 credits of graduate work, are listed, including the nonresident rate. The Tuition Promise and Tuition Choice programs are explained which offer undergraduate students a choice in tuition plans. Both offer different opportunities for saving money on tuition. Policies on withdrawals and refunds are stated. An overview of Financial Aid is offered, with the FAFSA website listed as well. WOU disperses financial aid to 78% of its student body; students are well informed and receive helpful assistance with the process of applying for aid. [2.D.5]

Publications are available in various departments describing educational programs, and in some cases (i.e. Nursing, Education) provide national and/or state legal requirements for licensure; the Service Learning and Career Development Center offers information regarding employment, volunteer, or community service opportunities as well as requirements for employment and advancement in various occupations. [2.D.6]

FERPA guidelines are strictly followed with student records. [2.D.7]

The Financial Aid office offers financial literacy services, assistance with applying for aid, and has a very clear presence on the WOU website. Students can check the status of their financial aid application, view awards and loan history, and estimate a term budget. A variety of scholarships are listed. Deadlines are stated and a link to the application is available. [2.D.8]

Information on repayment plans is available on the Financial Aid website, as well as the federal formula for return of Title IV funds if a student withdraws before the 60% point of the term. An "Early Alert" program is in place whereby faculty can notify the Student Success Specialist of an at-risk student (missing class or other reasons). The SSS then contacts the student to offer assistance and advising. Often, the student may be receiving financial aid and can then be advised regarding the financial aid implications of dropping the course, among other things. [2.D.9]

Academic advising is assigned to faculty within the specific departments related to the degrees. Professional and friendly staff work at the Academic Advising and Learning Center and serve students with undeclared majors. Advisor responsibilities include understanding and communicating LACC, BA or BS degree requirements and academic policies and procedures, assisting students with academic and personal resources, with several of the advisors being bilingual. The Center's mission includes "Support[ing] students in developing collaborative relationships that foster student success." The staff is welcoming, works as a team to insure student success, and the Center houses a Student Success program. [2.D.10]

Co-curricular activities include Greek life, which is relatively new to this campus, as well as clubs, service opportunities, the student government association (ASWOU), a Campus Recreation Department, and Abby's House (which is not a house, but a center which offers programming, information, and referral services to promote equity and non-violence). Abby's House is staffed with a center director as well as student workers, and shares a space with the Stonewall Center, a Student Leadership and Activities program which offers support for LGBTQ students, and runs the SAFE program. The Residence Hall Association also offers opportunities for co-curricular activities, as does the Multicultural Student Union. [2.D.11]

Auxiliary services include a campus bookstore, student housing, on-campus coffee shops, and campus dining. These services are located in multiple locations, including the Werner University Center and the Valsetz, and Ackerman buildings. An advisory board consisting of students, staff, and faculty offers feedback on these operations. Independent of this is the Western Oregon Food Pantry located on campus at the Academic Programs and Support Center Building. All students are entitled to free food from the food pantry, if needed. [2.D.12]

NCAA Division II intercollegiate sports are offered at WOU. Admission, academic standards, financial aid requirements, etc. for students participating are consistent with those for other students. Eligibility for practice and competition are established by the NCAA and monitored by the Director of Athletic Compliance; WOU student athletes graduate at a higher rate than the general student population, and the department collaborates with the staff of the Advising and Learning Center. [2.D.13]

The identity verification process for distance students consists of assigning a secure and unique login identification and password to access online Portal, WolfWeb, and Moodle. [2.D.14]

2.E Library and Information Resources

The Hamersly Library is an attractive and inviting facility in the central area of the Western Oregon University campus. It is a convenient and comfortable place for study and research. It is also furnished, equipped and staffed to support students and faculty in the use of materials and services held onsite and in gaining electronic or physical access to a wide array of resources located elsewhere. Using technology effectively for communication and access to collections, the library makes its services and collections accessible to students and faculty, wherever they may be. In addition to electronic materials, the Hamersly Library provides courier delivery of materials from 37 academic libraries in Oregon and Washington whose combined holdings exceed 9 million unique books plus other media.

Through effective collaboration with the libraries of 37 colleges and universities in Oregon and Washington that make up the Orbis Cascade Alliance, WOU's library provides access to electronic books and journals that adequately serve the full array of disciplines taught at a this university. The shared traditional print resources provide further support. Physical items requested from another Alliance library typically are available within 48 hours via courier to designated drop-off sites. In addition to sharing its collections with Orbis Cascade, WOU's library contributes unique resources through its depository collection of adopted textbooks as well its participation in the shared digital archive. [2.E.1]

Though the library has no formal needs assessment program, librarians and staff engage in regular and systematic analysis of data about the use and costs of electronic resources, and make adjustments to purchasing and subscription contracts in response. Evaluation of users' requests and discussions with teaching faculty drive purchases of traditional print and non-print materials. Data inform decisions about space allocations and services in the library. Some of the data are generated routinely by library systems or equipment (such as circulation figures, gate counts, etc.). Other data are collected as needed by librarians and staff through specific studies, surveys, or observations designed to elicit information. [2.E.2]

WOU's library has an active and growing instruction program that primarily focuses on students. Course-based instruction takes various forms ranging from librarians' creation of online resource guides that are embedded in course syllabi or other material to formal instruction to classes engaged in writing and research. Librarians collaborate with classroom faculty to define course requirements and most effective methods of incorporating information literacy into specific classes. Students and faculty are asked to evaluate the usefulness of instruction sessions. [2.E.3]

As noted in earlier sections of Standard 2.E, WOU's librarians and staff routinely use data to evaluate the level of use relative to cost of specific electronic resources and make decisions about continuing, modifying or cancelling specific subscriptions and contracts. Librarians and staff use surveys, observations, and other short-term studies to gather opinions and data that will inform individual decisions. Effective security measures for the facilities, collections, and electronic records are in place. Through these established practices, the library regularly and systematically assesses the utilization and security of collections and use of the building. Services are not routinely or systematically evaluated, though some feedback is sought about instruction sessions, and there is no systematic or regular evaluation of the quality of collections

overall or adequacy of collections for individual disciplines. Overall, the WOU library collects and uses data that are useful in stretching its budget to make the best possible decisions about access to journals, monographs and similar resources. Systematic and continuing data collection designed to assess services and users' needs broadly is not yet part of library practice. [2.E.4]

2.F Financial Resources

As an independently-governed public institution, fiscal oversight of WOU has shifted from Oregon University System (OUS) and is now directed by the WOU Board of Trustees. The Board has chartered a Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) to ensure operations' effectiveness and financial stewardship. WOU's FY 2015 audited financial statement reported an increase in total net position. For FY 2015, the University maintained a fund balance that exceeded the Board's target of 15 percent. This fund balance (described as WOU's financial "north star) and sufficient cash flow allow the university to address unexpected fluctuations in "revenues and expenditures.

Financial management and planning is proactive, fiscally conservative, and informed by assessment of various risks to revenue (i.e., enrollments, funding formula) and expenditures (i.e., PERS rates, personnel expenses). Student FTE enrollments have declined by 12 percent since 2011-12, despite 2011 planning that anticipated substantial enrollment growth of over 50 percent by 2020. This decline has resulted in less revenue from tuition and fees and increased attention to student recruitment and retention. Under its new governance, WOU has responsibility for enrollment forecasting and associated revenue modeling. Given the new Student Success and Completion Model (SSCM) for allocating state tax funds, competition among Oregon's colleges/universities will increase. Initial implementation of SSCM benefitted WOU due to its success in degree and certificate completions (outcomes), particularly among historically underserved populations.

WOU's investments are administered by Oregon State University with investment management performed by the Oregon State Treasury investment team. Indirect cost recovery revenue projections are informed by the most recent three-year average. [2.F.1, 2.F.2]

Annually, the Budget Office communicates the budget development process timeline and guidelines to Deans, Directors and Department Chairs. This annual process includes an opportunity for Vice Presidents to prioritize requests within their divisions and then present requests to the President and VP for Finance and Administration (and others as relevant) for funding consideration. Though the fiscal year begins on July 1 and preliminary budgets are entered into the BANNER finance system, the operating budget is not finalized or presented to the Board for approval until September/October (or later). While the annual operating budget and quarterly fiscal status reports are public, budget requests, budget hearings, and the outcomes of budget decisions are much less transparent or widely understood. Of concern, faculty, staff, and some mid-level administrators report feeling excluded from the budget development process.

In accordance with statute, students have input on tuition-setting providing feedback to the university during the process. The Incidental Fees Committee, a recognized committee of the Associated Students of Western Oregon University, is responsible for making budget allocation

recommendations related to Incidental Fees collected from each student. Affordability is a guiding fiscal principle, which the evaluation team heard expressed by leaders, faculty and staff across campus. [2.F.3]

WOU follows Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). The university uses BANNER for financial accounting and reporting utilizing COGNOS to produce more easily understandable budget management reports for the institution and departments. The FY 2015 audited financial statements included no audit findings. WOU utilizes a third-party reporting system and uses a set of effective internal control practices to minimize financial risk. Prior to WOU's independent governance, OUS provided internal audit reviews. Presently, WOU has not established an independent internal audit function or internal audit schedule. [2.F.4]

Capital facility planning is guided by WOU's 2011 Master Plan and its 2013 update, which support the academic mission of the institution. Typically, the facility master plan is reviewed every five years. In order to be informed by WOU's strategic planning and academic master plan, the five-year review is being held.

Every biennium, WOU provides Oregon's Council of Presidents with a prioritized list for funding which includes total project costs as well as operation and maintenance funding needs. This list is reviewed and prioritized by the state's seven institutional presidents prior to submission to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for submission to the legislature for funding.

Debt service is reviewed at least annually. Adequate revenue to support debt service comes primarily from incidental student fees and housing. [2.F.5]

Auxiliary enterprise revenues and expenditures are budgeted and monitored separately from general operations. Auxiliaries are expected to generate sufficient revenues to cover their operations and provide sufficient reserves for building repair, equipment replacement and other expenses. WOU charges auxiliary enterprises administrative overhead of 7-8 percent annually. [2.F.6]

WOU's Annual Financial Report is audited annually and in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards by an auditor contracted by the WOU Board of Trustees. The external audit report and auditor's opinion letter is presented annually to the WOU Board of Trustees. [2.F.7]

Fundraising activities of the WOU Foundation receive daily operational management through the University Advancement Office. Professional standards for fundraising ethics and practices are subscribed to and evidenced in their policies and procedures, communications, and training programs. The Western Oregon University Foundation is a separate 501(c)3 organization which oversees the acceptance and receipts of gifts, the management and investments of gift funds, and collaborates with University Advancement. The WOU Foundation's relationship with the university is clearly defined in a Foundation Agreement, which was reviewed and renewed in 2015. [2.F.8]

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]

2.G Physical and Technological Infrastructure

Physical facilities provide a vibrant, welcoming, safe and healthful environment for students, faculty, staff, and visitors. The physical facilities are well-maintained, accessible, secure, and sufficient to support the university's educational mission, programs, and services.

As a residential campus, particular attention has been given to walkability, path lighting, and a designated Wolf Path walking route for after dark. Reflective of the university's commitment to educate underserved populations, particular attention has been given to meeting the needs of those with physical disabilities.

Consistent with its core theme on environmental sustainability, a number of facilities meet LEED ratings. Physical Plant is upgrading lighting (LED and motion sensors) and uses a number of strategies to reduce waste (and costs) through recycling efforts involving student groups and community partners. [2.G.1]

WOU has adopted and published policies and procedures for hazardous or toxic materials. WOU is dedicated to the practice of using alternative non-hazardous chemicals, whenever possible, to minimize exposure to individuals and the environment. Compliance is monitored through regular inspections conducted by Occupational/Environmental Safety (O/E Safety) and Campus Public Safety officers. The Hazard Communication Information to Employees' policy describes WOU's compliance and procedures for chemical hazards and related safety precautions in the workplace. O/E Safety reviews policies regularly to ensure compliance with state and federal rules and regulations including a complete review of each policy at least once every 3 years. Training is provided to all new classified and unclassified employees during new employee orientation. [2.G.2]

The university has a facilities master plan, which was initially developed in 2011 through a collaborative process involving members of the university community as well as the local Monmouth community. This master plan guides campus improvements toward achievement of six primary goals:

1. Provide for a campus population of 7,800 FTE by 2020 by envisioning a high quality living and learning environment.
2. Increase residential and academic density on campus while preserving the existing intimacy and character of WOU.
3. Improve the quality of life on campus in order to provide social opportunities for residential students on evenings and weekends.
4. Maintain vehicular use of Monmouth Avenue for local and campus-related traffic while investigating alternatives for general traffic.

5. Create a framework for development of the west side of campus to better accommodate current and projected athletic needs, while maintaining capacity for other development needs, such as family housing.
6. Design for walkability throughout campus by improving pedestrian connectivity and locating vehicular parking along the campus perimeter.

Significant capital investment has occurred since the master plan was adopted to meet educational needs and to prepare for planned student growth. A new education center is currently under construction and will open in Fall 2016. Additionally, WOU receives capital repair funds from the state to meet deferred maintenance needs including infrastructure such as electrical and steam systems.

The significant capital investment in new construction and remodeling projects has contributed to improving in-classroom and laboratory equipment. University classrooms are equipped with instructional technology with 77 percent distinguished as Smart rooms. WOU provides necessary specialty equipment and space to meet discipline requirements. [2.G.4]

WOU utilizes Moodle as a learning management system. The Center for Academic Innovation is responsible for the management and operation of Moodle. Online student authentication is ensured using a WOU PawPrint username and password. [2.G.4]

University Computing Services (UCS) focuses on supporting the effective integration of technology into academic and administrative activities of WOU. The network infrastructure supports the data needs of WOU with redundant paths to data structures and adequate bandwidth. The data center is almost completely virtualized. System security utilizes multiple tactics to manage and restrict attempts at network penetration. Additional security has been added to prevent digital content copyright infringement. The primary administrative system is BANNER with Moodle Learning Management System facilitating online and technology-enhanced courses. BANNER upgrades and programming is supported by the BANNER team comprised of three staff members with deep expertise in BANNER embedded in the organizations which they support.

UCS purchases and maintains computing equipment for employee workstations and follows a replacement cycle schedule.

UCS seeks input from the President's Staff, Academic Infrastructure Committee, Student Technology, and Technology-Extended Campus Committee on information technology needs. While acknowledging the quality of service and support provided by UCS for existing technology systems and infrastructure, faculty, staff, administrators, and students expressed concern regarding lack of attention to the automation of paper-based processes and other program/service needs, support for new automation in response to evolving regulatory changes, use of "free" systems that may be labor intensive and inadequate for current and planned needs, and overall strategic planning and prioritization for technology systems. Employees were unclear as to the process for providing input or making requests for technology enhancements they had identified as critical for the success of their program/service. [2.G.5, 2.G.7]

Currently, WOU does not have a written technology update and replacement plan. WOU's Board of Trustees has created a Finance and Administration Committee (FAC) whose charter includes "ensure effective operations and sound stewardship of the university financial, human, technology, and physical assets in support of the university's mission." In the future, UCS will be developing and vetting such a plan through the FAC. [2.G.8]

Training and support for Moodle and online teaching is provided by the Center for Academic Innovation. Additional academic technology support is provided by the Digital Media Center. UCS provides training on administrative systems and web services, particularly as new products/updates are installed. UCS provides end-user support and provides a Service Request Desk to respond to technical issues. [2.G.6]

The self-evaluation report identifies a sufficient quantity of equipment to support institutional functions (computer lab facilities, wireless access, smart classrooms, etc.). [2.G.4] The report also describes CAI and UCS services that support effective use of technology [2.G.6]. However, the institution does not demonstrate how technology planning aligns with institutional mission, core themes and academic programs' needs, wherever offered and however delivered [2.G.5]. One example of misalignment is the campus learning management system and desire to grow the number of online courses offered. WOU utilizes Moodle, a free shareware, to host its online courses. Although Moodle is free, the shareware requires a team of support staff to manage the front-end user interface for accessibility and authentication, design courses for effective pedagogy, and assure back-end systems integration (plug ins, enterprise system data, storage management, etc.). Campus leaders (trustees, provost, and deans) articulated a desire to expand online course and program offerings; however, the institution currently does not have adequate technology systems and infrastructure supports to be successful. [2.G.5, 2.G.7]

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._

Standard Three – Planning and Implementation

3.A Institutional Planning

The committee recognizes the external environmental factors that have caused the University to be more focused on its immediate future and more reactive in its decision-making processes. With its situation somewhat stabilized, the University appropriately is ready to embark on a strategic planning process that likely will lead to a new University mission statement and Core Themes.

However, the committee found no evidence of an ongoing planning and budgeting process at the institutional level that involves appropriate constituencies at more than a superficial level. Some planning was accomplished in _ad hoc_ ways to address specific issues, such as the dissolution of the Oregon University System. There was no evidence, though, that the University engages in a process that allows meaningful input from constituencies at multiple levels of the organization as

well as a link between planning and budgetary decisions at the institutional level; nor was any evidence found of data informing such decisions, except for a focus on maintenance of end-of-year fund balances at a specified level. There seems to be no opportunity for public review and comment on such budgetary decisions as they are made, and the committee found a lack of general knowledge at the institution of any such processes that may exist. [3.A.1-4]

WOU has developed and implemented emergency preparedness plans including an emergency operations center to protect life and property and continue operations immediately following a major emergency. University Computing Services has developed a disaster recovery plan including a mini-data center to provide core services in support of continuity of operations. Further, WOU has implemented an annual Business Continuity Plan process involving numerous departments with 37 plans currently completed for integration into a comprehensive guiding document. [3.A.5]

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

Standards 3.B, 4.A, 4.B – Core Theme Planning, Effectiveness, and Improvement

WOU has three core themes: (1) Effective Learning, (2) Supporting Diversity, and (3) Sustainable Institution. The following narrative presents the committee's findings relative to core theme planning, assessment, and improvement processes. Each core theme is addressed separately.

Core Theme One: Effective Learning

Introduction

One could easily argue that ensuring that students are learning effectively during their time on campus is the single most important measure of an institution's success. Indeed, WOU states that "Effective student learning is the primary mission of the university." Assessing whether or not such learning is taking place is no simple task and it is imperative that multiple measures, both qualitative and quantitative, as well as objective and subjective, are utilized. Unfortunately, such a diversity of strategies has not been employed by Western Oregon University. Additionally, the original plan for assessing this Core Theme was cut dramatically. The three objectives under this Core Theme were collapsed into two objectives and, more tellingly, the nine key performance indicators were reduced to four. More importantly, however, the first key performance indicator, assessing growth in higher order competencies over the course of a student's career, was abandoned without explanation. Without this measure of learning, all that is left are indicators of student satisfaction. While the data suggest that students are largely satisfied with their academic experiences, such satisfaction tells us nothing about either actual learning or competency. In the absence of any information assessing student learning, it is all but impossible, based on what was presented in the Year Seven Self Study, to determine whether WOU is educating students effectively.

Despite the lack of data presented, the review committee found some positive indicators during the site visit. WOU has made a commitment to adopt the LEAP (Liberal Education and America's Promise) Essential Learning Outcomes promoted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. There is reason to believe that if progress is made on this front, the university might well be in a far stronger position to assess the efficacy of its general education program. Additionally, evidence was presented indicating that some, but not all, departments and programs have been regularly assessing student learning, aligning course outcomes with programmatic outcomes. Finally, the sentiment expressed about assessment on campus during the team's visit was mixed. On the positive side, many faculty members made it clear that they were already participating in serious assessment activities and that they were confident that such efforts were in the best interests of their students. On the negative side, there seemed to be fairly strong antipathy toward assessment activities by the faculty union.

Even with the most positive interpretation of the evidence related to Core Theme One, however, there is no way to gain any perspective on what might be the most critical aspect of student learning efficacy, as articulated by WOU as the first KPI in their Year One report: "Assess students' growth in higher order competencies between freshmen and senior years."

Core Theme One
3.B Core Theme Planning

No evidence was presented to suggest that planning was done appropriately for this Core Theme. The report was very clear on this point relative to growth in higher order competencies saying simply that "The institution did not use Collegiate Learning Assessment as initially planned and did not choose an alternative standard by which to ascertain performance on this objective." Because this critical measure of success was ignored, it is not clear that broader curricular decisions are being made in a fashion designed to maximize, or even facilitate, student learning.

Core Theme One
4.A Assessment

Western Oregon University has developed standard practices for meta-level assessment including appropriate reporting of IPEDS data, participating in NSSE, and conducting program reviews, although these reviews are not being performed uniformly and, except for accreditation purposes, rarely involve outside evaluators. Evidence was presented indicating that some of the programmatic assessment information has been used to alter curriculum in an attempt to improve student success.

Two critical points were missing, however: any sense of longitudinal growth in students over the course of their careers; and any sense of student success in the general education program. Most frustratingly, there was no sense that the institution, while aware of this problem, was taking any concrete steps to address it. The addition of a new position for a director of institutional research may help, but the incumbent will not be able to shape institutional priorities on her/his own.

Core Theme One
4.B Improvement

The institution uses some student learning data and some data reflecting student opinions to redeploy resources in an attempt to enhance student success. Without meaningful measures of actual student learning, however, there appears to be no accurate or meaningful way to match resources with needs. It is clear from the report as well as discussions with members of various constituent groups that the desire to improve is real. What appears missing, though, is a mechanism to move beyond anecdotal decision-making.

Core Theme Two: Supporting Diversity

Introduction

Supporting Diversity as a Core Theme is an essential element of the University's mission, paralleling the second bullet point in that mission: "Supports an accessible and diverse campus community." The University, both collectively and in its individuals, evidences a substantial and enduring commitment to diversity in its students, faculty, and staff, and rightly is proud of its efforts in this area. However, the Core Theme's description is: "By providing a diverse and multicultural community, WOU offers students the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to function effectively within and beyond their cultural boundaries as required in today's global society." This, as a vision, is somewhat incoherent (the University can offer its students knowledge but can only offer them the chance to examine and change attitudes and develop skills); it also goes beyond what seems to be the mission statement's intent by implying the diversity of the campus community is a means to an end. In this it does link to the mission's first bullet point and the first Core Theme, but indirectly and implicitly.

The University has identified one objective for this Core Theme: "WOU is an institution that promotes diversity through student academic success, on campus to faculty and staff as well as students, and through community partnerships." This objective seems to be a combination of several and could be split apart to make it more understandable. Further, its statement of an institution that promotes diversity is not congruent with the Core Theme description of providing a diverse community, nor with the offering of knowledge, attitudes, and skills.

The University has two indicators of achievement, which it labels as KPI-1 and KPI-2. KPI-1 is: "Achieve and maintain persistence (freshmen to sophomore), and graduation rates for Hispanic, first-generation, and underrepresented minorities at least equal to that of non-minority students." This indicator is assessable and verifiable. The extent to which it is meaningful, however, is less clear. Retention and graduation rates have some relation to student success, but the relationship of retention and graduation to student success is confounded by many other variables.

KPI-2 is: "Greater diversity in faculty and staff applicant pools." This indicator is assessable as well, despite the University's statement that it has no "quantifiable measure of fulfillment." Whether it is verifiable is questionable, given the voluntary nature of demographic reporting by applicants for positions. Its meaningfulness also is questionable. Diversity in pools does not necessarily lead to hiring of diverse candidates, which is the only way of having a diverse employee base. It may lead to a promotion of diversity to faculty and staff; however, there are myriad other approaches to that objective.

Core Theme Two
3.B: Core Theme Planning

There is little evidence that the University engages in planning for the Core Theme of Supporting Diversity, although there is much activity aimed at supporting students from diverse populations. A statement and plan on diversity was published by a university-wide committee and the then-president in 2012, but there is no indication that it was used in planning. There also is little evidence given that Core Theme of Supporting Diversity drives program/service selection or that data are used properly in any planning that does take place.

Core Theme Two
4.A: Assessment

It is unlikely that data reported by the University would be sufficient to measure accomplishment of Objective 1 for the Core Theme of Supporting Diversity as defined, or of KPI-2. In addition, there is no evidence faculty are involved in the evaluation of the primary academic component of Objective 1 for the Core Theme of Supporting Diversity, student academic success, or that course-level assessment plays a role in measuring fulfillment of Objective 1. This is measured by retention and graduation rates, not by assessment of student learning objectives related to general education. Having adopted the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes should help in gaining faculty involvement of the assessment of this objective through course-level assessment. Other aspects of Objective 1 were not evaluated for accomplishment by the University. The University seems to have reviewed its assessment processes related to the Core Theme of Supporting Diversity. However, this review seems to be ongoing, so it is difficult to evaluate the review process or outcome.

Core Theme Two
4.B: Improvement

Indicators of achievement of Objective 1 of the Core Theme of Supporting Diversity do not seem meaningful generally, as mentioned earlier. There is little evidence of their use in planning and resource allocation. Examples of use of assessment results in program enhancement do not specifically relate to the Core Theme of Supporting Diversity. Also, none include the use of student learning outcome assessment.

Core Theme Three: Sustainable Institution

Introduction

This Core Theme brings together three important facets of institutional effectiveness: educational, financial and environmental practices and is clearly tied to WOU's mission. Each facet is critical in its own way if the institution is to remain viable well into the future. As with Core Theme One, a number of the original key performance indicators have been removed from the report. Some of those that remain provide minimal insight into whether or not WOU is meeting its goals, particularly of continuous improvement.

The environmental goals outlined are the most comprehensive portion of this Core Theme. Four separate key performance indicators were distilled down to a single KPI that included measurements of the original four indicators to provide evidence of objective completion. Without trend data, however, it is not possible to know what the trajectory has been for these measurements and therefore the data do not provide support of the mission's interest in continuous improvement.

The educational practices objective presents only two measures: student/faculty ratio and student satisfaction with advising. Without minimizing the importance of either of those items, sustainability is a function of a far wider array of factors, such as recruitment, retention, tuition and fee rates, and student debt load. Originally, WOU recognized the importance of student enrollment in their discussion of institutional sustainability, though this was considered to be a business rather than an educational factor.

The financial sustainability objective has been reduced to one KPI: maintaining an appropriate fund balance. Trend data has been provided for this indicator which is helpful as this provides evidence that speaks to sustainability. The institution is meeting the fund balance approved by their Board. We note that the decline of the percentage over the past five years may be a sustainability issue of concern. This single KPI is an outcome indicator, however, and doesn't provide strategic guidance about the best way the institution might reach its goal. There is no discussion of why the KPI focused on improving alumni participation and rates of philanthropy, for example, were removed from discussion.

In summary, minimal data were presented in support of these Core Theme objectives and KPIs to lead to a conclusion that WOU is fulfilling its mission for continuous improvement of educational, financial and environmental sustainability.

Core Theme Three
3.B Core Theme Planning

No evidence was presented to suggest that planning was done appropriately for this Core Theme. There were limited specifics presented to demonstrate the operational aspects associated with this Core Theme.

Core Theme Three
4.A Assessment

No information directly related to the assessment of this Core Theme was presented. Additionally, as mentioned above, all of the environmental data that were presented, were for a single year and thus it is impossible to evaluate the efficacy of the efforts being undertaken.

Core Theme Three
4.B Improvement

Because no information was presented assessing where WOU was in relation to where it wants to be for any of the key performance indicators, there was no sense that steps were being taken to improve any measureable outcomes. The impression was that the issues raised by Core Theme 3 were ancillary to daily operations of Western Oregon University.

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.

Standard Five – Mission Fulfillment, Adaptation, and Sustainability

5.A Mission Fulfillment

Without a clear definition of mission fulfillment, the institution was not able to demonstrate an acceptable extent or threshold of mission fulfillment, based on an analysis of accomplishment of its core theme objectives.

5.B Adaptation and Sustainability

Given the major changes the institution has undergone, it has demonstrated that it is capable of adapting. The new Board of Trustees has clearly engaged in establishing the foundation for appropriate guidance and oversight of the institution's operations. As it transitions to higher-level oversight, the Board should guide the institution in establishing regular evaluation of its resources, capacity, and effectiveness of operations relative to mission fulfillment. The evaluation team's findings relative to Standard 2 confirm that WOU has the potential to remain relevant, sustainable, and viable over time.

As evidenced by President Fuller's recent (March 11, 2016) report to the WOU Board, the institution (at least at the senior administrative and Board level) is monitoring its external environment for trends, expectations, top issues, and forecasts, which will influence and impact the university. This report also provided evidence of monitoring of internal trends, particularly related to enrollments and tuition.   The findings communicated in President Fuller's report can

inform assessment of WOU's strategic position as the university launches its strategic planning process. [5.B.3]

General Compliments, Commendations, and Recommendations

Western Oregon University's faculty, staff, students, alumni, Board members, and community members took the time and effort to meet with the evaluators and conveyed a commitment and passion for the institution that was palpable. The campus visit clarified for the committee that this is a viable institution with many achievements, of which it should be proud. While it appears that the institution and its constituencies have a shared set of values and goals, they have not managed to articulate these into a coherent mission that provides direction and drives decisions. The evaluation committee repeatedly heard from different constituencies that they are excited about the upcoming strategic planning process as a way to more clearly articulate mission and mission fulfillment, as well as processes that more fully support and demonstrate systematic planning, implementation, evaluation, and improvement.

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

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

2. As noted in Recommendation 1 of the Spring 2013 Year Three Peer-Evaluation Report, 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]

3. As noted in Recommendation 1 of the Spring 2013 Year Three Peer-Evaluation Report, 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. [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.   [2.C.1, 2.C.2, 2.C.4, 2.C.5, 2.C.10, ER 22]

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]

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]

7. 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]