Ad Hoc Report Spring 2025

Western Oregon University

Submitted February 21, 2025

Introduction **2**
Recommendation 1 ..... **4**
Ongoing & Systematic Planning and Evaluation Processes 4
Planning 4
Evaluation 6
Improvement, Resource Allocation, & Student Learning 8
Academic Affairs Strategic Plan Initiatives 9
Continuous Improvement 9
Enhancing Services in Academic Affairs 9
Foundations of Online Teaching Course 10
Institutional Research Program Evaluation 10
Resource Allocation 10
Instructional Budgeting 10
Student Learning & Achievement 11
Revised Academic Program Review 11
Revised Annual Program Student Learning Outcomes Reporting Process 12
NWCCU MFS Fellows - General Education Student Learning Outcomes Assessment 12
Academic Grading Regulations 13
Student Affairs Strategic Plan Initiatives 13
Continuous Improvement 13
Student Development Initiatives 13
Student Engagement 14
Transformational Diversity 14
Resource Allocation 14
Supervisory Capability 15
Destination Western 15
Student Learning & Achievement 17
Coordinated Care Network for Students 17
Recommendation 1 Conclusion 17

Recommendation 3.....18
Evaluating Professional Staffing Levels & Expectations.....18
HR & Payroll Restructure: Enhancing Efficiency, Compliance, and Service Delivery.....19
Key Changes and Improvements.....19
Creation of the Director of Payroll Services.....19
Enhanced Access and Accommodation Services for Faculty & Staff.....19
Restructured HR Leadership for Efficiency and Oversight.....19
Increased Strategic Focus for the CHRO.....20
Impact and Future Outlook.....20
Restructuring in Academic Affairs.....20
Enrollment Management & Student Success.....20
Academic Effectiveness.....21
Leadership in General Education.....21
Honors Program.....21
Academic Effectiveness Office.....21
Institutional Research.....22
Partnerships & Strategic Initiatives Specialist.....22
Operations Specialist.....22
Research & Sponsored Programs.....22
Optimize & Promote Efficiency.....22
Banner Optimization Project.....22
Navigate Expansion.....24
Slate Optimization.....25
Staff Training for Technology Initiatives.....26
Banner Optimization.....27
Navigate 360.....27
Slate.....28
Recommendation 3 Conclusion.....28
Report Summary.....28
Conclusion.....29

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Introduction

This ad hoc report is submitted in response to the July 21, 2023 letter from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) regarding the Spring 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness of Western Oregon University (WOU). The official record of action taken by NWCCU at its meeting on June 21-23, 2023 included the reaffirmation of accreditation with two commendations, three recommendations, and future evaluations, including this ad hoc report with a visit in Spring 2025.

We are framing our responses to these recommendations in an adaptation of the Bersin by Deloitte's (2012) High Impact Learning Organization (HILO) Maturity Model. This adaptation applies the HILO Maturity Model to organizational learning in higher education institutions. We appraise the level of maturity of Western Oregon University at the Emerging level.

The HILO Maturity Model provides a roadmap for organizations to evolve their practices and achieve higher levels of impact. Moving through the levels requires a shift from a focus on establishing structures that promote compliance to a focus on organizational capability development. Key elements of high-impact learning organizations include:

- leadership support
- a strong learning culture
- effective use of technology
- continuous measurement and improvement

Organizations at higher levels of maturity are more likely to achieve better outcomes, such as financial stability and sustainability, student, employee, and community engagement, and innovation. The HILO Maturity Model emphasizes that learning should not be a one-time event but rather an ongoing process that is aligned with organizational goals and empowers both individuals and organizational units to continuously grow and develop. Our adaptation of the model to higher education suggests that an emphasis on ongoing and aligned learning through planning, assessment, and evaluation both empowers programs and services to continuously improve and creates the conditions for student success and achievement.

This report outlines our efforts to promote the maturity of the institution to more fully satisfy the NWCCU (2020) Standards referenced in Recommendations 1 and 3.This report highlights the ways in which Western Oregon University is developing aspects of these key elements in response to each of the NWCCU Recommendations.

Recommendation 1

Spring 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Continue its efforts to establish an ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning process that supports the demonstration of continuous improvement and to inform and refine its effectiveness, assign resources, and improve student learning and achievement objectives and measures. (2020 Standard(s) 1.B.1)

Ongoing & Systematic Planning and Evaluation Processes

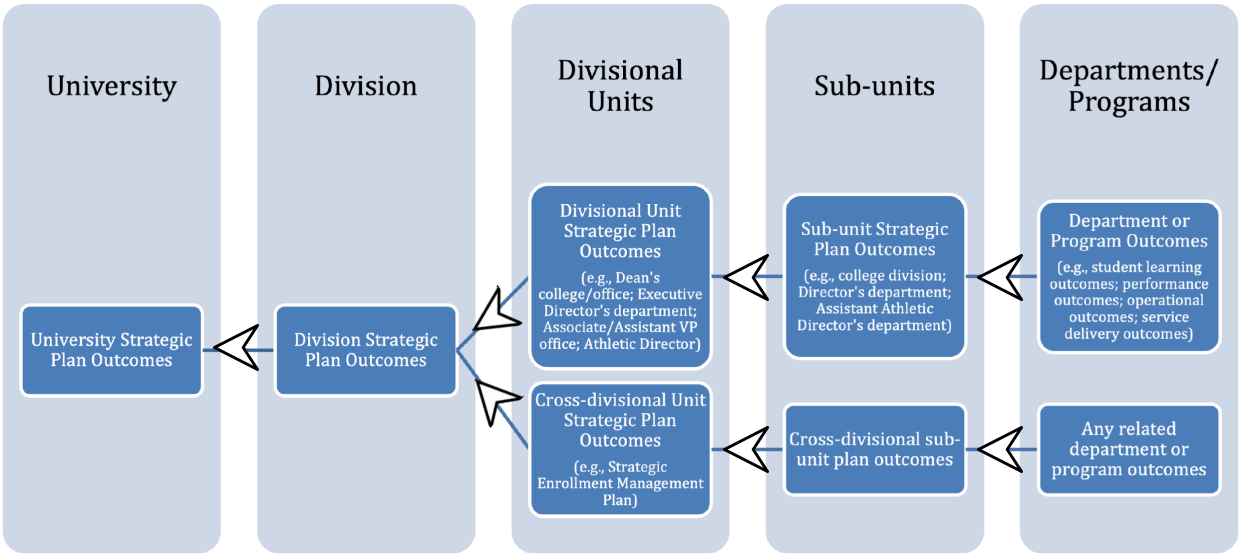
Western Oregon University's strategic planning, implementation, assessment, refinement, and evaluation processes are designed to establish a foundation for continuous improvement aligned with institutional goals. These processes empower organizational units to grow and develop, fostering the university's maturity as a learning organization. Crucially, this development requires leadership commitment. Leaders at all levels must champion organizational learning by articulating a vision and goals for learning that directly support the university's mission. Furthermore, they must actively participate in learning activities, serving as role models for their respective units. The following planning process facilitates leadership engagement in championing organizational learning throughout the institution.

Planning

In 2023, Western Oregon University undertook a comprehensive institutional strategic planning process, culminating in the Board of Trustees' unanimous approval of the new strategic plan, *Education. Innovation. Community.* on February 14, 2024. The plan's updated mission statement subsequently received approval from the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) in April 2024.

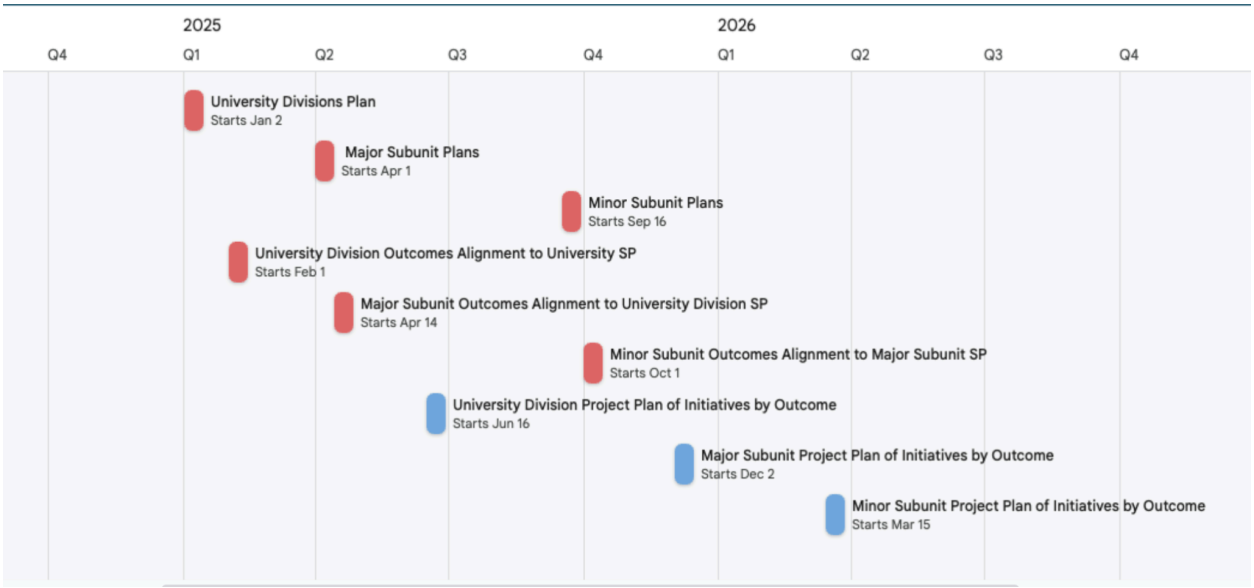
Following the plan's adoption, implementation began immediately. The implementation and assessment framework is designed to track progress from the program level up to the university

level. Individual programs and departments contribute to subunit outcomes, which then inform unit-level progress. Divisional outcomes, aggregated from their units, demonstrate progress toward divisional goals, and ultimately contribute to the achievement of the university's strategic plan goals and outcomes. In the graphic below, this flow of information should be considered from right to left.



Aligning divisional and institutional strategic plan goals and outcomes is crucial for effective action. This alignment provides the strategic rationale for the strategies and tactics employed by each division, ensuring that all activities, from high-level planning to on-the-ground implementation, directly contribute to the university's mission and goals. Without this alignment, strategies and tactics risk becoming disconnected from the institution's overall direction. This alignment is documented in matrices maintained by the President's office and accessible here, with finalized versions also to be made available on the strategic plan webpages. To further extend this alignment, the Division of Academic Affairs has developed a template demonstrating how the goals and outcomes of its major units align with its own divisional strategic plan.

The implementation framework illustrated in the figure below includes a timeline for both strategic plan development and the creation of project plans for initiatives designed to achieve identified priorities and outcomes. As of this report, the Division of Academic Affairs has completed its strategic plan and implemented a tracking system for strategies and tactics to monitor and support the effectiveness of its initiatives.



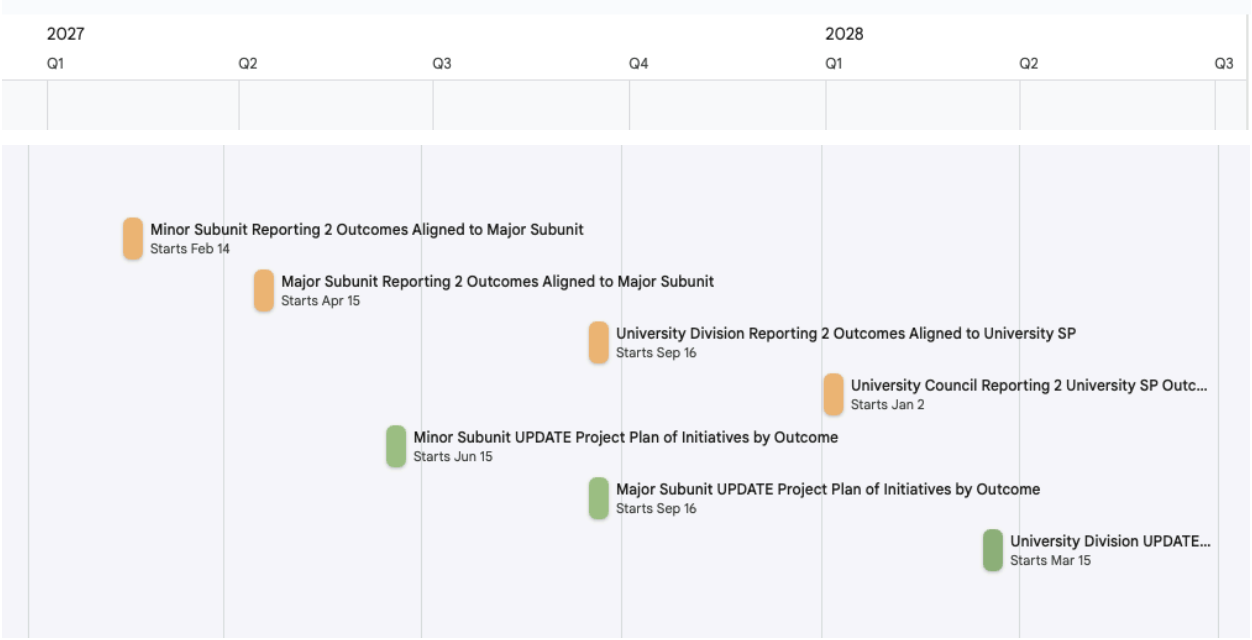
Evaluation

Developing a mature learning organization requires leaders to cultivate a culture of continuous improvement that values and incentivizes organizational learning, and effectively measures and communicates its results. Western Oregon University is currently in the initial stages of this cultural shift.

Regarding strategic planning, the university has begun defining a learning structure that clarifies responsibilities for capturing, synthesizing, applying, and disseminating knowledge. The proposed strategic plan assessment framework, developed by the 2023 Strategic Plan Development Committee, embodies many of these principles. It includes coordinated reporting tactics designed to ensure timely information flow among relevant stakeholders.

As departments and programs within each university division develop their plans and align their goals and outcomes with those of their respective parent units, program-level outcomes related to student learning, service, and operations will inform unit-level outcomes, ultimately contributing to the achievement of university-wide goals.

The following timeline incorporates reporting based on documented progress within project plans at the division, unit, and subunit levels, as well as documentation of improvements resulting from that reporting.



The long term plan for completing the assessment cycle for each of the outcomes and goals of *Education. Innovation. Community.* Is illustrated in the image below.

Strategic Plan Outcomes Alignment & Assessment

	Timeline:	2023-24 2024-25 2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32 Self Study
	University Strategic Plan Outcome:							
Institutional Sustainability	Western adapts to changes in the higher education landscape and implements strategic responses to emerging trends.	*Plan*	do	do	do	check	act	do
	Streamlined and efficient processes enhance teaching methods, research capabilities, resource allocation, and administrative efficiency.	*Plan*	do	do	check	act	do	check
Transformational Diversity	The overall quality and richness of the Western community is enhanced by diverse and talented students and employees.	*Plan*	do	check	act	do	check	act
	Western Establishes positive, collaborative, and accessible learning and working environments that promote creativity, innovation, and effective teamwork.	*Plan*	do	do	check	act	do	check
	Students are supported in a way that fosters satisfaction, belonging, engagement, and empowerment.	*Plan*	do	check	act	do	check	act
Student Success	Students complete their educational goals and develop a lifelong learning mindset, preparing them for continuous education and professional development throughout their careers.	*Plan*	do	do	do	check	act	do
	Students feel connected to a larger community and see the real-world relevance of their academic pursuits.	*Plan*	do	do	check	act	do	check
Community Strength	The Western Oregon University community and community partners work with a sense of shared interest and mutual benefit, navigating external factors, such as economic shifts, policy changes, and global events, with a proactive and adaptive approach.	*Plan*	do	do	do	check	act	do

Key:

Plan: Develop unit strategic plan including outcomes for each goal as well as measures or evidence that will be used to inform the assessment of each outcome. Establish a logic model to monitor the dynamics of resource allocation, strategies, tactics, interventions, or initiatives and outcomes to inform decision-making and a project plan with roles and responsibilities to collect, assess, report, and implement changes for ongoing improvement. Align sub-unit outcomes to unit outcomes and establish a timeline for assessment that informs the assessment of University Strategic Plan Outcomes.

Do: Initiatives will be implemented and outcome evidence will be collected and summarized, and compiled for review

Check: evidence will be assessed relative to the outome resulting in some interpretation of the ways in which the outcome is being realized and implications for improvement in support of maximizing the impact and achieving the aligned goal. Implications will be prioritized and recommendations will be shared to determine alignment with available resources and/or requests for resource allocation or reallocation.

Act: Any recommendations accepted and funded will be implemented and the assessment cycle continues

The impact of *Education. Innovation. Community.* will be measured by assessing the achievement of its intended outcomes among key stakeholders: students, employees, and the communities the university serves. This assessment will leverage the alignment of divisional strategic plans with the institutional plan. The evaluation will consider both the aggregated results of divisional outcomes aligned with specific institutional outcomes and updated summaries of the metrics associated with each institutional goal. Detailed information about the institutional goals, metrics, and outcomes can be found on the Strategic Planning website.

Western Oregon University has embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning process, culminating in the adoption of *Education. Innovation. Community.* This plan, approved by the Board of Trustees and HECC, establishes a framework for continuous improvement through aligned divisional plans, implementation timelines, and robust assessment strategies. The framework emphasizes the leadership's commitment to organizational learning, a bottom-up flow of information from program level to university goals, and data-driven evaluation of impact on key stakeholders (students, employees, and the community). While the university is in the early stages of developing a mature learning culture, the established plan and implementation framework provide a solid foundation for achieving its strategic goals.

Strategic clarity around the "why" of organizational learning can bridge the first gap in the learning cycle. But creating a culture that motivates each person in an organization to capture and share knowledge actively requires a rewards system beyond the clarity of a compelling goal. This is the next challenge we can expect to encounter. We have a clear and compelling strategic plan and implementation framework that currently lacks explicit incentives. In our current culture, we are supporting and facilitating the planning in each unit of the organization and we can illustrate the alignment of goals and outcomes that drive the university goals and outcomes

Improvement, Resource Allocation, & Student Learning

The strategic planning process, described in the previous section, establishes a continuous cycle of evaluation and planning to drive improvement and inform resource allocation as well as student learning and achievement objectives. The following examples illustrate how this system has been implemented, showcasing strategic continuous improvement efforts, the impact of strategic priorities on resource allocation, and strategic initiatives designed to enhance student learning and achievement.

Academic Affairs Strategic Plan Initiatives

The Western Oregon University Division of Academic Affairs strategic plan, centers on providing a high-quality, accessible education that empowers students to achieve their full potential. The plan's mission focuses on investing in people—students, faculty, staff, and community partners—and partnering with the region to provide necessary resources. The vision emphasizes Academic Affairs as the driving force behind transforming lives through a balanced liberal arts education, fostering a thriving community, and ensuring graduates are prepared for

lifelong learning. Three key goals guide the plan's implementation: (1) integrating core liberal arts competencies with effective instruction to develop essential skills in all students; (2) establishing a collaborative decision-making framework for Academic Affairs, promoting transparency and shared ownership; and (3) increasing the efficiency of academic processes to reduce administrative burdens and enhance satisfaction. Each goal includes specific, measurable outcomes and indicators to track progress and guide implementation. Underlying all goals are the priorities of decreasing equity gaps and evidence-informed decision making. The plan aims to produce graduates with marketable skills, foster a dynamic and equitable learning environment, strengthen community engagement, and ensure effective resource allocation within Academic Affairs.

Continuous Improvement

The following initiatives showcase Western Oregon University's commitment to enhancing its programs and services through continuous improvement. Developed in alignment with the Division of Academic Affairs Strategic Plan, these examples illustrate how the university is working to achieve its strategic goals and improve outcomes for students and other stakeholders.

Enhancing Services in Academic Affairs

Western Oregon University has undertaken strategic restructuring of student support services to enhance teaching and learning, aligning with the Academic Affairs mission and vision. Recognizing a need for increased faculty support, the university reimagined the Center for Academic Innovation in the Library in 2024, transforming it into the Center for Teaching & Learning and hiring a full-time Director dedicated to faculty development.

To enhance student support, the Writing Center relocated to the Library in 2024 and is expanding its services. A stakeholder-driven process resulted in a new vision for a Research and Writing Center, creating a dynamic hub for reading, writing, research, and creativity. This includes converting the part-time faculty-led Writing Center Director role to a full-time professional staff position, filled in 2025, and integrating services with Student Success and Advising for greater efficiency and a more cohesive student experience.

Foundations of Online Teaching Course

In support of the Academic Affairs goal of excellence in teaching and learning, Western Oregon University is investing in faculty development initiatives, such as the Foundations of Online Teaching course offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning. This program focuses on equipping faculty with the skills and knowledge needed to design, deliver, and improve high-quality online and hybrid courses. The course emphasizes aligning course design with instructional goals, leveraging technology for enhanced engagement, and implementing inclusive practices for diverse learners. By providing a "student-like" experience, the course fosters empathy and a deeper understanding of the student experience. Additionally, the program builds community among faculty from across the university, encouraging collaboration and potentially leading to the development of enhanced co-curricular opportunities for students.

Institutional Research Program Evaluation

Western Oregon University is taking steps to strengthen its Institutional Research (IR) Office to better support the Academic Affairs mission and vision. In 2024, the university transitioned from a half-time to a full-time IR Director and added analyst positions. Following the appointment of a full-time Director in June 2024, it became clear that a more in-depth review of the office's operations was necessary. To this end, the university commissioned an external program evaluation, selecting Dr. Muriel Lopez-Wagner, a Chief Information Officer with extensive experience building and leading IR offices at similar institutions. Dr. Lopez-Wagner's evaluation, currently awaiting final contract approval, will assess the IR Office's current state, evaluate its relationships with key stakeholders (including data sharing needs and stakeholder satisfaction), and provide recommendations for improvement. These recommendations will include a revised vision for the IR Office, strategies for enhanced collaboration, and a detailed implementation roadmap.

Resource Allocation

Assigning resources strategically begins with aligning resources to strategic priorities. The assignment of the instructional budget is aligned to the mission of the division of Academic Affairs centered on providing a high-quality, accessible education that empowers students to achieve their full potential.

Instructional Budgeting

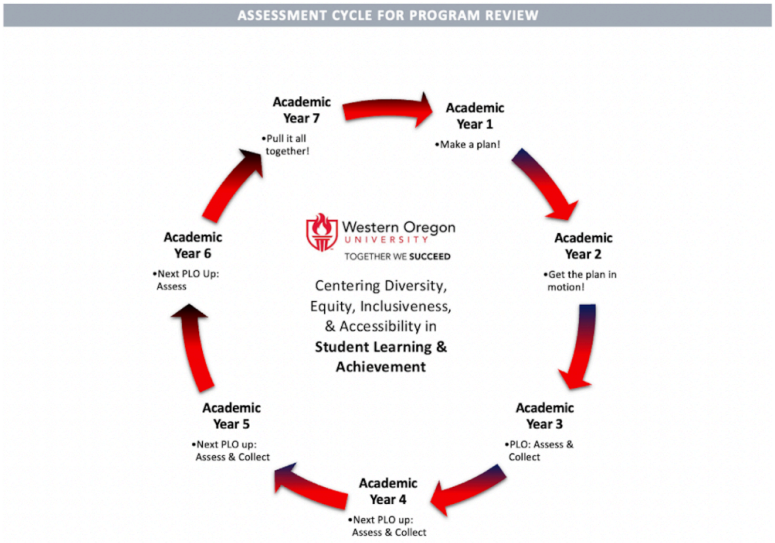
Western Oregon University is committed to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of its instructional budget allocation process, directly supporting both Academic Affairs' strategic goals and institutional goals for financial stability and sustainability. The previous system, while a step towards aligning resources with student demand, fell short of its goals. Its reliance on historical student credit hour (SCH) data and its approach to class-size targets proved ineffective in addressing curriculum changes and the prevalence of small classes. The new system, implemented for the 2025-26 academic year, takes a more strategic approach by prioritizing student success and evaluating the necessary courses for timely program completion. This data-driven approach, combined with factors like realistic class size targets, program size, and expected enrollment duration, informs budget allocations more effectively. For General Education, where historical enrollment is a more reliable indicator, a new SIS report ensures accurate calculations by preventing double-counting students enrolled in courses within their major's department, further enhancing efficiency and supporting the strategic goals of Academic Affairs.

Student Learning & Achievement

Improving student learning and achievement objectives and measures involves a multi-faceted approach focused on defining clear goals, implementing effective strategies, and rigorously assessing progress. The following examples of strategic initiatives aimed at improving student learning and achievement outcomes were implemented in service to Academic Affairs’ mission and strategic plan goals to enhance shared governance and excellence in teaching and learning.

Revised Academic Program Review

To strengthen academic program review and promote continuous improvement, Western Oregon University has implemented a phased revision of its process over the last three academic years. The initial phase, implemented in 2022-23, built upon the existing process (self-study, external review, executive summary using 2016 templates) by adding the Strategic Action Plan as the foundation for the next seven-year cycle and integrating ongoing student learning outcomes assessment. The second phase, in 2023-24, focused on enhancing the self-study process. The revised template encourages programs to use inquiry-based methods to comprehensively evaluate their programs, identify opportunities for growth, and inform both the Strategic Action Plan and resource allocation. Finally, in 2024-25, the university invested in additional support for faculty and staff by expanding the Office of Academic Effectiveness. The new Office Specialist manages the logistics of the program review process and the annual assessment reporting, while the Partnership and Strategic Initiatives Specialist provides faculty with the technical expertise needed for effective inquiry and assessment.



Academic Program Review Features

A **Self-study Report** developed by program faculty

A **Campus Visit and Report** by a peer external reviewer

A **Executive Summary** that incorporates the findings from the self-study and the external reviewer's report

An **Action Plan** developed in collaboration with the Division Chair, Dean, and Provost for program improvement

Details on all aspects of Program Review can be found on the Guides and Resources page.

Revised Annual Program Student Learning Outcomes Reporting Process

Western Oregon University utilizes student learning outcome assessment as a key tool for enhancing the effectiveness of its academic programs in promoting student learning and success. Assessment data informs program practices, ensures alignment with stated outcomes and mission, and provides evidence of mission fulfillment for stakeholders. The university's assessment process involves several key steps for all academic programs: First, programs define Program-level Student Learning Outcomes (PLOs). Second, they align course goals (and course-level student learning outcomes) with one or more PLOs (and General Education Learning Outcomes [GELOs] where applicable), clearly indicating this alignment on course syllabi. Third, programs select at least one PLO annually for assessment, employing appropriate instruments and strategies, analyzing and interpreting the results, and reporting

their findings. Fourth, these annual PLO assessment findings are integrated into the self-study component of the regular 7-year program review cycle.

In 2023, after ending the Watermark contract, the university transitioned to a Google Docs-based reporting template for annual program student learning outcome assessment. This revised template emphasizes the analysis of student learning data rather than simply demonstrating the data collected, and facilitates aggregation of information for department chairs and college deans to inform program strengths, needs, and opportunities. Starting in 2024, programs in year two of the revised academic program review cycle are using updated reporting templates that include fields for progress updates on strategic action plans and any program improvement initiatives.

NWCCU MFS Fellows - General Education Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

Western Oregon University has taken several steps to strengthen the assessment of student learning outcomes, particularly within its General Education (GE) program. In 2023, two faculty members participated in the NWCCU Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability (MFS) Fellowship, focusing on aligning GE course SLOs with GE program SLOs to improve assessment practices.

During the 2023-24 academic year, these fellows shared their expertise by training faculty on curriculum mapping and designing learning experiences for authentic SLO assessment. This initiative aimed to address shortcomings in the 2019 GE curriculum adoption process, which lacked clear criteria and resulted in inconsistent SLO development. Also during 2023-24, the GE program underwent its first program review, including a faculty-led self-study, an external review with a virtual site visit, and an executive summary. The MFS fellows contributed to this effort by completing a GE course alignment census and drafting a GE curriculum map.

Building on these activities, the GE program is now developing a strategic action plan that will include implementing the curriculum map, designing a GELO-focused assessment plan, establishing criteria for GE course re-evaluation, and exploring the potential of GE course strands. The effectiveness of the MFS fellows' project will be evaluated by the implementation and outcomes of the GE assessment plan, which will be aligned with the Academic Affairs strategic goal of Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

Academic Grading Regulations

Western Oregon University has adopted new academic grading regulations, effective in the 2024-25 academic year, to prioritize student success and foster a learning environment focused on mastery. The regulations shift the focus from simply assigning grades to measuring student strengths and requiring demonstration of competency in areas where learning has not yet been achieved. This approach is intended to boost retention and graduation rates by supporting student learning, not by lowering standards. The new system provides a more accurate and nuanced picture of student achievement, ensuring that GPAs reflect true course mastery and that past struggles do not overshadow current abilities. The NC grade gives faculty and advisors a valuable tool for guiding students toward academic programs that may be a better fit, promoting exploration and discovery. These changes are designed to alleviate the pressure of

grading, encourage academic exploration, and shift the focus to student potential and strengths. By encouraging students to persist in challenging courses, the new regulations are also expected to improve retention. WOU data demonstrates the importance of this, showing a 60% lower retention rate for students receiving an F in their first two quarters.

Student Affairs Strategic Plan Initiatives

The Student Affairs strategic plan outlines the Division of Student Affairs' vision for the future, emphasizing sustained growth and alignment with WOU's institutional goals. It highlights our commitment to fostering a supportive and enriching environment for students through strategic goals such as holistic student development, student engagement, diversity, and investment in people and resources. By collaborating within the division and with campus partners, we aim for continuous improvement to meet and exceed student expectations. Core values of belonging, holistic success, community collaboration, and data-driven decision-making guide our efforts to ensure the Division of Student Affairs remains central to the WOU experience.

Continuous Improvement

The following initiatives showcase Western Oregon University's commitment to enhancing its programs and services through continuous improvement. The following initiatives illustrate how the university is working to achieve its strategic goals and improve outcomes for students and other stakeholders.

Student Development Initiative

One of the goals in the Student Affairs Strategic Plan is Holistic Student Development. This goal is centered on creating a student-centered environment that nurtures growth, dignity, and talent, preparing every student for lifelong learning, leadership, and success.

Recognizing that career readiness is most effective when integrated into the curriculum, the Title III Career Readiness Team has launched three pilot programs during its first year. These initiatives aim to achieve the following: (1) Enhance Career Readiness Curriculum: A three-year license for the Career Readiness Inventory+ (CRI+) was secured, providing a standardized assessment tool aligned with NACE competencies and Social Capital. This will provide valuable baseline data and benchmarking opportunities. The CRI+ was used in eight courses during the 2024/2025 academic year. (2) Improve Experiential Learning: A Community of Practice is working to standardize processes, develop resources, and facilitate employer partnerships to enhance experiential learning opportunities for students. (3) Develop Micro-credentials: A micro-certificate is being developed and piloted in three career readiness courses, with plans to expand the pilot to TRIO program FYS courses. These combined efforts are designed to ensure that all WOU students have access to the career readiness skills and experiences they need to succeed.

Student Engagement Initiative

One of the goals in the Student Affairs Strategic Plan is Student Engagement. This goal is centered on enhancing the student experience and sense of belonging through meaningful engagement and high-impact practices.

An initiative currently in development is the creation of a Cultural Center in the Werner University Center, led by a committee formed in 2024 to explore culturally relevant spaces on campus. In response to student feedback gathered through surveys, meetings, focus groups, and the equity assessment, the committee's goal is to transition the existing Freedom Center into a Cultural Center. This space will provide students and friends of racial and ethnic-based ASWOU chartered organizations with a place for collaboration, socializing, studying, hosting events, and relaxation. The student-centered Cultural Center will also support recruitment and retention by offering a shared environment where students with similar experiences and interests can connect. The development of the Cultural Center aligns closely with Student Affairs' strategic goal of enhancing student experience and sense of belonging through meaningful engagement and high-impact practices.

Transformational Diversity Initiative

Another goal in the Division of Student Affairs Strategic Plan is Transformational Diversity. This goal is centered on cultivating a sense of respect and dignity for all students, and fostering a commitment to understand and learn from each other.

Restorative Justice practices in Student Conduct are centered on fostering accountability and healing by encouraging dialogue, understanding, and mutual respect between students involved in conflicts or violations of conduct. These practices focus on repairing harm, rebuilding relationships, and promoting personal growth, rather than solely on punitive measures. By prioritizing empathy, reflection, and reconciliation, Restorative Justice aligns directly with the Strategic Plan goal of Transformational Diversity by cultivating a sense of respect and dignity for all students. It creates a space where students learn to understand diverse perspectives, engage in constructive dialogue, and collaboratively practice productive conflict-management skills. This approach nurtures a community of inclusivity, helping students to value differences and develop a deeper commitment to learning from one another.

Resource Allocation

Assigning resources strategically begins with aligning resources to strategic priorities. A goal in the Division of Student Affairs Strategic Plan is Organizational Investment. This goal is centered on intentionally focusing on building an organization that meets student needs and uses resources wisely to improve both student and staff experiences.

Supervisory Capability

Building supervisory skills for those who supervise students is a key initiative aimed at strengthening leadership within our organization and enhancing the overall student experience.

This initiative focuses on equipping supervisors with the tools and knowledge needed to effectively guide, mentor, and support student employees.

A working group of student supervisors was formed in August, 2024 to address gaps in student employee onboarding and training. Success and challenges in supervision, summer student projects, and improving the onboarding process through clear manuals, training, and well-defined expectations were the primary topics for this group to address. Additionally, preparing for Fall term and evaluating the effectiveness of supervision throughout the year allows supervisors to make continuous improvement in their approaches to supervision.

This work aligns with the Strategic Plan goal of Organizational Investment by fostering an environment that meets student needs, while using resources wisely. By continuing to invest in the professional growth of supervisors, we enhance both student and staff experiences, ensure that students receive meaningful guidance and support, and promote an efficient and effective organizational structure.

Destination Western

Destination Western (DW) is a bridge program that allows students to arrive early to campus to acclimate to college life before the official orientation week.. Destination Western is an application-based program aimed to help approximately 150-200 fall-admitted new students build the skills needed to succeed in college-level writing and math as well as get them connected to others socially. The entirety of the program is based on the “Gradual Release of Responsibility” framework that allows students to work within their Zone of Proximal Development. The program is aimed at serving students that come from historically marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds/identities, including but not limited to, First-Generation students, BIPOC/Latine students, and students from rural communities. Throughout the program, participants engage in a math experience and a writing experience. These are non-credit bearing classes aimed for new students to “practice college.” Additionally, student participants take part in social activities (i.e., evening activities, excursions, community events, and non-structured cohort time).

Destination Western participants are divided into cohorts centered around a theme of 20 students or less. The cohort themes are determined by other department collaborations, such as TRiO Program cohorts and Diversity Scholar cohorts. Additional cohort themes are determined by incoming class needs, such as Exploratory Majors, First Generation, Transfer Student, etc. Each cohort is led by trained student leaders called Destination Western Peer Advisors (DWPAs or simply PAs). Amongst those PAs, is a “Cohort Lead” which is a student leader that is a returner PA or has fulfilled a different student leader role in the past (e.g., Resident Assistant, WOU Crew Orientation Leader, etc.). Each cohort also includes a volunteer professional staff member to help guide the student leaders PAs and program participants.

Within these cohorts, students participate in daily morning meetings, attend academic experiences, and take part in social experiences together. Cohorts are also paired together to foster a collaborative environment throughout the program. As the program progresses, DWPAs

spend less time providing structured guidance for the participants and more time letting students explore and get to know the campus on their own. This is in alignment with the Gradual Release of Responsibility framework.

Data from the first three years of the Destination Western program shows higher retention of participants vs. non-participants.

Updated Last: Fall 2024, Week 4	**2021 Cohort**	**2022 Cohort**	**2023 Cohort**	**2024 Cohort**
Strong Start Participants: All Years: Urban 61%, Rural 30%, Frontier 1%, OOS 9%	**135**	**185**	**166**	**148**
Institution Data				
Retention Rate - First Fall to Winter				
DW Participants	96.30%	96.76%	92%	97%
Non-DW First Years	89.36%	92.51%	89%	90%
Non-DW Transfers	93.12%	96.19%	94%	98%
Retention Rate - First Winter to Spring				
DW Participants	85.92%	91.39%	90%	
Non-DW First Years	81.81%	83.57%	83%	
Non-DW Transfers	91.53%	92.37%	91%	
Retention Rate - Current				
DW Participants	46%	71%	82%	97%
Non-DW First Years	55%	68%	74%	90%
Non-DW Transfers	21%	49%	87%	98%
Average Total Institution GPA - Current				
DW Participants	2.63	2.92	2.89	2.86
Non-DW First Years	3.01	3.03	2.96	3.29
Non-DW Transfers	3.32	3.35	3.33	3.46
Overall Institution Hours Earned - Current				
DW Participants	86	71	38	13.41
Non-DW First Years	61	51	29	11.97
Non-DW Transfers	75	65	35	12.5

While the State of Oregon stopped prioritizing bridge funding in its budget in 2024, WOU recognizes the impact Destination Western has on the retention of underrepresented students who participate in the program. To demonstrate the commitment to this program, WOU identified resources within the general fund budget to permanently fund Destination Western beginning with FY25.

Student Learning & Achievement

Improving student learning and achievement objectives and measures involves a multi-faceted approach focused on defining clear goals, implementing effective strategies, and rigorously assessing progress. The following example of a strategic initiative aimed at improving student learning and achievement outcomes is being implemented in service to Student Affairs' mission to foster students' academic, personal, and professional growth; educate students to recognize, respect, and appreciate diversity; and prepare students to be responsible and engaged citizens in a global community..

Coordinated Care Network for Students

In alignment with the Division of Student Affairs Strategic Plan goal of Holistic Student Development, developing and implementing comprehensive support programs that foster growth and address individual student needs is paramount to student success. Student Affairs' commitment to this goal is demonstrated through the newly implemented Coordinated Care Network. This network includes a dedicated team of representatives from both Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, focused on enhancing student access to support services. The team collaborates with advisors, administrators, faculty, and other key stakeholders across campus to streamline referral processes, improve coordinated support, and strengthen communication practices. Currently, the team is working to better leverage existing technologies (Navigate, Wolfie Chatbot, etc.) to consistently track interactions, share documentation, and manage case progress through reports and alerts—ultimately fostering student success, well-being, and retention.

Recommendation 1 Conclusion

In conclusion, Western Oregon University has made significant strides in developing and implementing a robust framework for continuous improvement across all levels of the institution. From the comprehensive strategic plan, *Education. Innovation. Community.*, to targeted initiatives within Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, the university has prioritized evidence-informed decision-making, stakeholder engagement, and a commitment to enhancing student learning and achievement. The examples provided, including the restructuring of academic support services, the implementation of a new instructional budget allocation model, the evolution of the academic program review process, the NWCCU MFS Fellows project, the revised grading regulations, and the various student development and engagement initiatives, demonstrate a systemic approach to improving effectiveness, refining processes, and strategically assigning resources. While the university acknowledges the ongoing need to cultivate a stronger learning culture and address challenges such as incentivizing knowledge

sharing, the foundation established through these efforts positions WOU for continued progress toward its mission and goals. The commitment to data collection, analysis, and transparent reporting will be crucial in measuring the impact of these initiatives and informing future refinements to ensure WOU remains a student-centered and success-oriented institution.

Recommendation 3

Spring 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Deploy current higher education best practices, including the effective use of technology, to ensure attainment of industry standard practices to achieve its organizational responsibilities and the integrity and continuity of its educational programs (2020 Standard(s) 2.F.3)

The best practices that Western Oregon University (WOU) is implementing as described below directly inform how we can work toward progressing through the levels of our adapted HILO Maturity Model for higher education. These efforts are, in part, the mechanisms by which WOU may move from the Emerging and Progressing levels to the more impactful Developed and Optimized levels. Effective technology integration, for example, is not just a tactical addition; it's a strategic driver that enables continuous learning, facilitates collaboration, and supports data-driven decision-making, all of which are hallmarks of higher maturity levels.

The efforts that follow are organized by the concerns related to the 2020 Standard 2.F.3 that were articulated in the Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (Year 7) Peer-Evaluation Report dated April 12-14, 2023.

Evaluating Professional Staffing Levels & Expectations

Based on the Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (Year 7) Peer Evaluation Report, the evaluation team did *not* observe that the institution was evaluating professional staffing levels and expectations to ensure the university conducts it work in a best practices or industry standard model where possible given resources. The overview of initiatives taken to address this observation are summarized in the sections that follow. Each of these initiatives inform strategic plans at their unit level and contribute to our collective evaluation of outcomes related to the Institutional Sustainability goal in the university strategic plan, *Education. Innovation. Community.*

HR & Payroll Restructure: Enhancing Efficiency, Compliance, and Service Delivery

As part of Western Oregon University's commitment to operational excellence, we conducted a comprehensive evaluation of our Human Resources and Payroll functions. This assessment identified key opportunities to streamline processes, enhance compliance, and improve service accessibility. As a result, we implemented a strategic reorganization that optimizes leadership roles, strengthens functional oversight, and fosters a more effective division of responsibilities.

Key Changes and Improvements

Creation of the Director of Payroll Services

To enhance payroll operations and ensure regulatory compliance, we established the Director of Payroll Services position, which has been filled since October 2024. This role oversees payroll operations, regulatory adherence, and process improvements, ensuring consistency and accuracy in payroll functions. The Director of Payroll Services directly supervises a Payroll Coordinator and two Payroll Technicians, reinforcing compliance with labor and tax regulations while improving payroll efficiency.

Enhanced Access and Accommodation Services for Faculty & Staff

Recognizing the need for a more integrated and proactive approach to accessibility, we restructured our services to better support faculty and staff accommodations. American Sign Language (ASL) staff interpreters now report to the newly established Director of Faculty and Staff Access Services, who is responsible for developing policies and procedures that strengthen accessibility. In addition to managing accommodations, this role will expand to include leave management, ensuring compliance with ADA regulations and fostering an inclusive work environment.

Restructured HR Leadership for Efficiency and Oversight

To improve operational efficiency and strengthen HR oversight, we eliminated the Associate Director of HR position and established the Director of Human Resources role, The incumbent in this role has over eight years of direct HR experience at WOU, Oregon State University, and the University of Idaho.

The Director of Human Resources provides oversight of:

- Benefits Management
- Talent Acquisition
- Training & Development
- Title IX Coordination
- Administrative Support, including an APA and a future OS2 hire for HR paperwork processing

This restructuring allows HR to operate with greater agility, ensuring that operational and compliance tasks are handled efficiently while fostering a more strategic and proactive HR service model. A new team meeting structure has been introduced to enhance collaboration, streamline workflows, and continuously refine HR processes to better serve the university community.

Increased Strategic Focus for the CHRO

By refining leadership roles and operational oversight, the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) can now focus on:

- High-level strategic initiatives
- Long-term workforce planning

- Institutional alignment with best practices and industry standards

Impact and Future Outlook

This restructuring positions HR and Payroll Services to operate with enhanced efficiency, clearer accountability, and improved support for employees and leadership. By aligning leadership roles with institutional goals and best practices, WOU's HR functions are now more accessible, compliance-driven, and strategically focused. Moving forward, this structure will support continuous improvements in service delivery, workforce planning, and institutional support, ensuring HR remains a dynamic and responsive resource for the university community.

Restructuring in Academic Affairs

In reflecting upon the feedback from our peer reviewers during the Spring 2023 Year 7 site visit and developing the Academic Affairs Strategic Plan, the division prioritized a focus on building capacity to address student enrollment, retention, and graduation through academic planning and efforts to promote continuous improvement through evidence-informed decision making. Staffing levels and expectations were examined and decisions were made to restructure several units in the division.

The first effort described in this section is the restructuring of existing units in Student Affairs and Academic Affairs to form a new unit called Enrollment Management and Student Success led by a new role, the Assistant Provost of Enrollment Management and Student Success. The second unit restructuring described in the following sections is Academic Effectiveness. The priorities in restructuring this unit are driven by Academic Affairs Strategic Plan goals for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and Shared Governance. The third unit restructure is Research and the Sponsored Programs Office. The goals informed by this restructure include Excellence in Teaching and Learning and Effectiveness and Efficiency.

Enrollment Management & Student Success

In summer 2024, Western Oregon University (WOU) restructured its recruitment and retention functions under a chief enrollment officer in part to inform outcomes associated with goals for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Previously, enrollment management was overseen by a 30-member committee—a collaborative but diffuse approach that often led to unclear accountability. Now, admissions reports to the Assistant Provost of Enrollment Management and Student Success within Academic Affairs, aligning with advising and retention efforts. A smaller Enrollment Management Advisory Committee has replaced the former group, streamlining responsibilities, clarifying roles, and improving accountability for enrollment and retention goals.

The Graduate Office, which typically has focused mostly on recruiting, will report to the Assistant Provost for Enrollment Management to align our enrollment strategic plan under one vision. This will also allow us to centralize our recruiting and marketing resources to increase our ROI.

Academic Effectiveness

Leadership in General Education

The General Education Director reports to the Associate Provost for Academic Effectiveness. In summer 2024, the new Director of General Education assumed their position following a comprehensive review of the General Education Program. It quickly became apparent that the responsibilities and roles of the General Education Director needed to evolve to better serve the needs of undergraduate students identified as first-time first year students and of transfer students. In order to execute changes suggested by the program review, the roles and responsibilities and the compensation for the role were changed. Key changes included a change to the title of the faculty directorship to Director of General Education and Student Transitions, and expansion of responsibilities to oversee the First-year Seminar as well as play a more active role in developing and supporting retention efforts as well as efforts to support seamless articulations for transfer students. The change of the position to a 12-month faculty contract with opportunities for additional instructional reassignment to lead retention and student success efforts with the support of the Title III *Retention and Student Success Project* funding round out changes made to the compensation for faculty who serve in the role.

Honors Program

The Honors Program Director reports to the Associate Provost for Academic Effectiveness. The Honors Program Director role is being converted from a part-time faculty position to a professional staff position to transform the program as an enrollment driver and specialized program to promote and support academic achievement. The transition began 2024 and has been engineered to ensure that students in the Honors Program have the opportunity to complete their degrees in the Honors Program while a new Director reimagines and transforms the program. The New Director of the Honors program is currently in the final stages of recruitment and we expect to hire no later than June 30, 2025.

Academic Effectiveness Office

The Academic Effectiveness Office is a key unit that supports strategic planning and evaluation, student learning outcomes assessment for academic programs including General Education, Interdisciplinary Studies, and the Honors Program and institutional accreditation as well as support for programs with external accreditation. The unit has been restructured and allocated resources to support these activities. Under the leadership of the Associate Provost for Academic Effectiveness, the office includes the office of Institutional Research, and staffing to support strategic planning, assessment for continuous improvement, academic program evaluation, and evidence-informed decision-making. This restructuring provides clarity in professional staffing levels and expectations to ensure the university conducts this work in a best practices or industry standard model.

Institutional Research

The role of the Institutional Research Director was expanded from a part-time to full-time professional management position. The office has two analysts including a senior analyst whose roles are being converted to Research Analyst classifications

Partnerships & Strategic Initiatives Specialist

The full-time Partnership & Strategic Initiatives Specialist moved to Academic Effectiveness to facilitate the implementation of systematic and ongoing planning and evaluation initiatives in Academic Affairs

Operations Specialist

The full-time Operations Specialist provides administrative support to the Associate Provost for Academic Effectiveness and their direct reports and coordinates processes and procedures for academic program review, learning outcomes assessment reporting, evidence to inform accreditation reporting, and curriculum that requires Board of Trustees and other external approvals

Research & Sponsored Programs

Research and the Sponsored Programs Office formerly reported to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. This position was vacated and the decision was made to restructure the offices that reported to it and eliminate the position. One component of this restructuring was to move the Graduate Office, that primarily focused on graduate recruitment and admissions, to Enrollment Management and Student Success. The roles and responsibilities of the Director for Sponsored Research were expanded and a new position is being developed to focus on grant accounting and invoicing which will allow the institution to increase its grant invoicing rate.

Optimize & Promote Efficiency

Based on the Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (Year 7) Peer Evaluation Report, the evaluation team did *not* observe that technology platforms were being fully utilized, to optimize and promote efficiency in business practices. The overview of initiatives taken to address this observation are summarized in the sections that follow. Each of these initiatives inform strategic plans at their unit level and contribute to our collective evaluation of outcomes related to the Institutional Sustainability goal in the university strategic plan, *Education. Innovation. Community.*

Banner Optimization Project

WOU is aggressively deploying current higher education best practices through its Banner Optimization project. Over the next 3 years, WOU will modernize its Banner environment to current industry standards. In some areas, this will mean a leap forward of as much as 30 years from the current state.
WOU's degree of commitment to this is demonstrated by our decision to use 100% of sustainability dollars on optimizing Banner. Our primary expenditures will be in these areas:

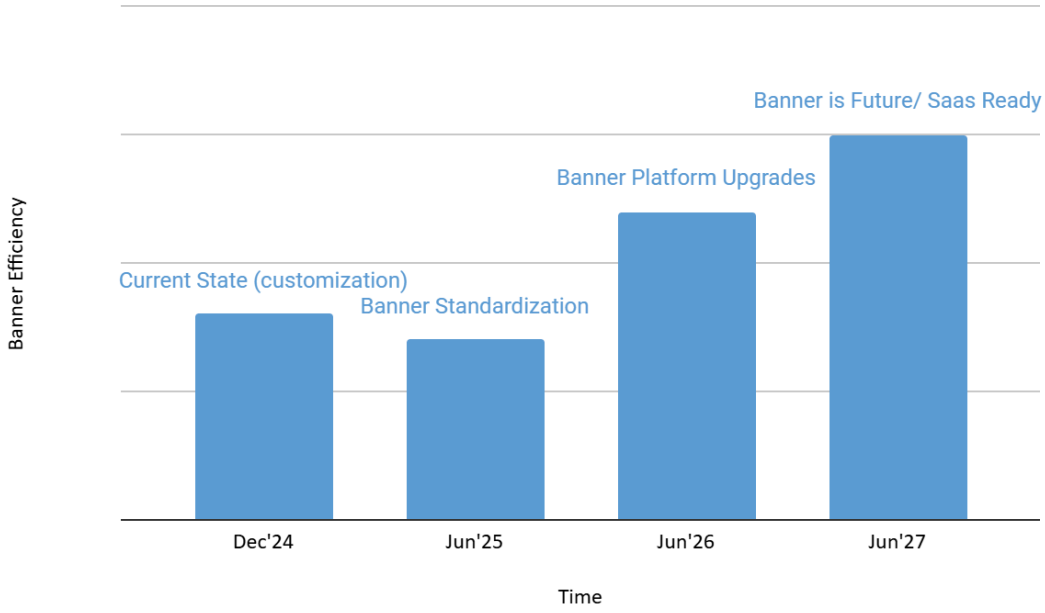
1. Business process analysis consulting (Strata Information Group)
2. Limited duration backfill employees
3. Software licensing
4. Change / project management hours

Success on this project will register as:

1. WOU aligned with modern tools and best practices.
2. WOU Banner is SaaS ready.
3. WOU campus operations, including Banner, capability is materially more efficient with significantly less risk.

Each Banner group at WOU (Financial Aid, HR, Student, Finance, and Accounts Receivable) will go through the stages below at their own pace:

1. Standardize
2. Optimize standardized base (apply platform upgrades)
3. Future/Saas readiness



Our prioritized list of modernization areas is:

Fiscal Year 2025

1. Modernize Web Access to Banner
2. Reorganize Banner HR and deploy all payroll features
3. Finish deploying all features of Banner Financial Aid
4. Implement a computer/software inventory and approval management system

Fiscal Year 2026

5. Improve Banner Student processes, including utilizing online forms
6. Deploy a new Identity and Access Management system
7. Align Portal to match Banner's new web interface
8. Remove Banner Finance modifications by utilizing baseline Banner

Fiscal Year 2027

9. Document and update Banner Accounts Receivable processes
10. Add the Banner Grants module for TRI
11. Expand Portal into an Intranet for WOU

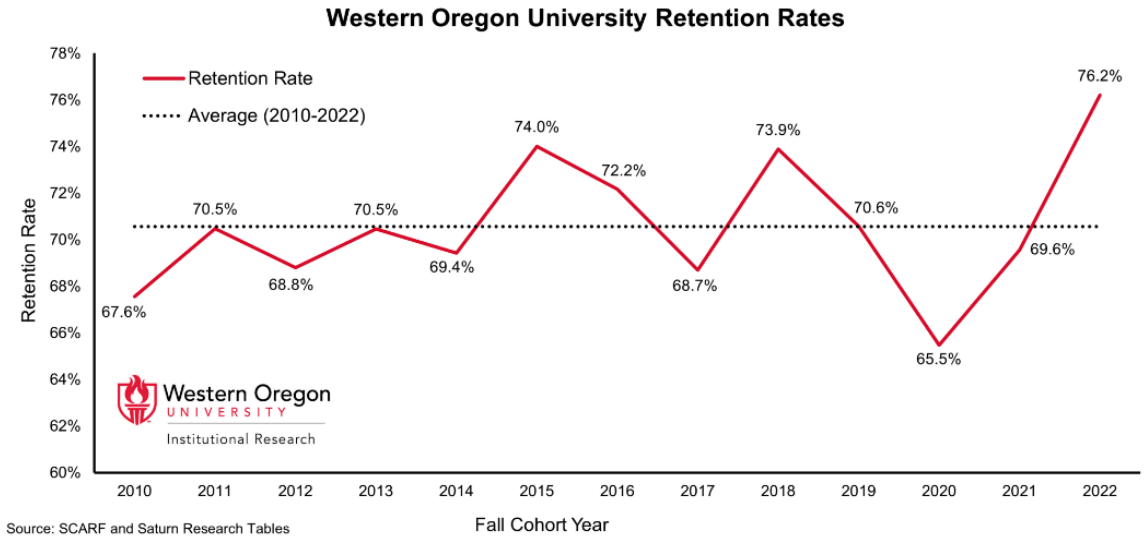
Navigate Expansion

Western Oregon University implemented EAB's Navigate360 Student Success Platform in 2019. While the tool saw widespread use by advisors, faculty, and staff across campus, its initial implementation lacked proper documentation, had several broken data feeds, and did not achieve its full potential. In 2022, the Student Success & Advising Office initiated a comprehensive audit to document the implementation process and address the data feed issues. These efforts aimed to restore full system functionality, enabling the platform to better support student services operations and facilitate data-informed interventions to improve key student success metrics, such as retention and persistence.

The following activities and strategies have been made possible, in part, by leveraging various functionalities of the Navigate360 platform:

- **Overhauling Orientation and New Student Advising Processes**: Redesigned processes to increase access to professional advising for incoming first-year students, ensuring a smoother transition to university life.
- **Relaunching WOU's Early Warning System**: Enhanced early intervention efforts by targeting high-enrollment gateway courses to address early academic challenges.
- **Expanding Academic Support Programs**: Implemented services such as Peer Academic Coaching and Supplemental Instruction, in addition to centralizing tutoring, to provide robust academic support.
- **Identifying High-Support Students Early**: Utilized historical data to identify students needing additional support early in the enrollment cycle, enabling proactive communication and targeted interventions.

Maximizing human resources, developing processes, and leveraging Navigate360 and other technologies were critical in achieving increasing our first year retention rates.



With Title III funds, WOU has invested in additional Navigate360 modules to enhance student support and institutional efficiency, with the goal of increasing key metrics for student success and institutional effectiveness (ie. first year retention and 4/6 year graduation rates). These investments include historical analytics dashboards, integration with the university's LMS to improve early alerts and interventions, and a student-facing app designed to simplify access to university resources, facilitate help-seeking, and support educational planning through degree planning tools. Below is an update on the progress of these initiatives:

- **Implementation of historical and predictive analytics**
  The launch of our historical and predictive analytics is in testing and will be pushed to the production environment by the end of January 2025. End user training for advisors and academic leadership will follow in Winter 2025.
- **Launching Student Empowerment Tools**
  Staff is currently undergoing training and orientation to the content administration tools that control the student-facing side of Navigate360. Launch of these tools are anticipated by the end of June 2025.
- **Degree Planning Tools**
  The ability for students and advisors to create technology enabled term by term plans, in service of increasing term to term persistence and graduation rates, in addition to better data to inform course scheduling, is planned for the 2025-2026 academic year.

Slate Optimization

Similar to Navigate360, Western Oregon University began using Technolutions' Slate CRM in 2021 to manage and enhance the recruitment life cycle. While the platform offers powerful tools, its full potential has yet to be realized. Recognizing the opportunity to optimize Slate for greater impact, WOU has recently initiated efforts to improve system configurations, data integrations, and the utilization of advanced features. These efforts aim to align Slate's capabilities with institutional goals for an effective, efficient, and data-informed recruitment and admissions process.

Current Progress:

- **Process Documentation and Assessment:** Initial audits are underway to document existing workflows and identify gaps or inefficiencies in the current use of Slate.
- **Enhanced Data Integration:** Steps have been taken to refine data feeds and ensure seamless integration with other university systems, such as the SIS and financial aid systems.
- **Training and Professional Development:** Staff training sessions have been launched to build familiarity with Slate's features and foster a shared vision for its use across campus.

Future Goals:

- **Streamlining Application Management:** Implement automated workflows to improve efficiency in application review, communication, and decision-making processes.
- **Developing Personalized Communication Strategies:** Create targeted, data-driven communication plans to engage prospective, admitted, and current students more effectively.
- **Expanding Event Management Features:** Leverage Slate's event management tools to optimize recruitment events, campus visits, and virtual engagement opportunities.
- **Supporting Transfer Student Engagement:** Build tailored workflows and communication plans to enhance the experience of prospective and admitted transfer students.
- **Leveraging Analytics for Recruitment Insights:** Utilize Slate's reporting and analytics features to inform data-driven recruitment strategies and enhance enrollment outcomes.
- **Integrating Financial Aid Communication:** Collaborate with the Financial Aid Office to implement workflows and campaigns within Slate, ensuring timely and personalized communication about financial aid processes, awards, and deadlines.

Staff Training for Technology Initiatives

Based on the Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (Year 7) Peer Evaluation Report, the evaluation team determined that while the university has invested in technology platforms, the evaluation team was unable to discern whether staff has had adequate training on these tools. The overview of initiatives taken to address this observation are summarized in the sections that follow. Each of these initiatives inform strategic plans at their unit level and contribute to our collective evaluation of outcomes related to the Institutional Sustainability goal in the university strategic plan, *Education. Innovation. Community.*

Banner Optimization

For Banner optimization, funding is in the budget for training over the next three years. The Sustainability Funds provide $35,000 in fiscal years 2025 (now), 2026 and 2027.

So far this year three people from the Banner development team will be attending off site training. Consultants have been and plan to be onsite to train the Banner functional users (Financial Aid, Registrar, and HR). Consultants are also training UCS on how to use new cybersecurity, account management, and inventory management systems as they are implemented.

For the general computer user on campus, our plan for changes to processes will be intuitive and gradual. Improved login security will be a simple change in the look of the login screen. The new online web timecard will require the same information as the paper timecards, except it is online. Transition to the new online Portal will be very gradual, allowing website users to choose between the old and new Portal over a long transition period. Portal users will choose to move to the new Portal because they like it better, not because it is forced.

The Banner Optimization project has a Change Manager, Sean Bangs. Their role is to communicate to affected users and sometimes to the whole campus the plans, changes, and impacts. Communication about available training will be part of the communication package when needed.

As the Banner Optimization project continues through its 11 subprojects over the next three years, training for the departments and users will be included within each phase. Online documentation and training, onsite consultant training, and on the job consulting and experience. Budget is available through the Sustainability Funds for this level of training.

Navigate 360

Navigate, our primary student success platform at WOU, is used consistently and on a daily basis by professional and select faculty advisors, financial aid and business services staff, tutoring and academic support staff, teaching faculty, administrative assistants, Student Affairs professionals, campus safety, and many others across campus. Access, training, and ongoing professional development related to Navigate is managed by Student Success and Advising. Below are examples of training materials and workshops we regularly offer to the WOU community, all accessible and maintained on the SSA Website:

- New Advisor Training (specifically, module 2)
- Navigate Resource Hub
- Early Alerts
- Faculty Advisor Training Recording, Slidedeck, and Summary Handout

We are also currently working on a dedicated Navigate webpage that pulls together all Navigate references, access forms, trainings, requests for training, etc. in support of the expansion of our Navigate to encompass all areas of student support.

Slate

As outlined in our Enrollment Management Project Planning, and in alignment with our Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, our Admissions Office has identified the optimization of our recruitment CRM, Slate, as a key activity. To date, we have re-purposed existing FTE to develop and hire a Slate application administrator (ie. Slate Captain). Previously, WOU has been without this role for over two years and the individuals who held this role previously had no data analytics or computer science background, making it difficult to leverage the tool appropriately. Similarly, we are building role-appropriate Slate expertise on the admissions team through training and development opportunities within and outside of admissions. For example, professional advisors at WOU were recently given access and training on how to access prospective transfer student transcripts to better inform advising conversations around transfer articulation and course selection. Admissions has also started collaborating with select faculty members on developing guidance on how faculty can plug into key recruitment activities, supported by Slate.

Recommendation 3 Conclusion

In conclusion, Western Oregon University is actively addressing the recommendations from the 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness by strategically investing in its human resources and technology infrastructure. The restructuring of key administrative units, including HR and Payroll, Enrollment Management and Student Success, Academic Effectiveness, and Research and Sponsored Programs, demonstrates a commitment to aligning staffing levels and expertise with institutional priorities. Furthermore, significant investments in technology optimization projects, such as Banner, Navigate 360, and Slate, aim to modernize operations, enhance efficiency, and improve evidence-informed decision-making. The university's focus on training and professional development ensures that faculty and staff are equipped to effectively utilize these resources and contribute to a culture of continuous improvement. These combined efforts, driven by best practices and aligned with the university's strategic goals, will strengthen WOU's ability to fulfill its mission, enhance student success, and ensure the long-term sustainability of its educational programs.

Report Summary

This ad hoc report responds to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) recommendations following the Spring 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness at Western Oregon University (WOU). Framing its response within an adapted High Impact Learning Organization (HILO) Maturity Model, WOU acknowledges its current "Emerging" level of organizational learning maturity and details its progress in addressing Recommendations 1 and 3. The report emphasizes WOU's commitment to continuous improvement through strategic planning, resource allocation, and a focus on student learning and achievement. Key themes include the implementation of the institutional strategic plan, *Education. Innovation. Community.*, the restructuring of key administrative units (including HR, Academic Affairs, and Student Affairs), investments in technology optimization (Banner, Navigate 360, Slate), and various initiatives aimed at improving teaching and learning, student support, and operational efficiency. The report highlights specific examples of these initiatives, demonstrating WOU's efforts to enhance its programs and services, strengthen its infrastructure, and promote a culture of evidence-informed decision-making.

Conclusion

Western Oregon University has demonstrated significant progress in addressing the NWCCU recommendations and advancing its institutional effectiveness. The adoption and implementation of *Education. Innovation. Community.* provides a clear roadmap for continuous improvement, emphasizing aligned divisional plans, implementation timelines, and robust assessment strategies. The university's commitment to evidence-informed decision-making is evident in the various initiatives described, from the restructuring of administrative units to the investments in technology optimization. WOU's focus on student learning and achievement is reflected in the numerous programs and services designed to enhance student support, promote academic success, and foster a sense of belonging. While WOU recognizes that the

development of a mature learning culture is an ongoing process, the actions described in this report demonstrate a strong commitment to continuous improvement and to positioning the university for continued growth and success. The university acknowledges the need to further develop its capacity for engaging the entire assessment cycle and to implement explicit incentives for knowledge capture and sharing. The next steps will involve continued implementation of the strategic plan, ongoing assessment of its impact, and further refinement of processes and practices to ensure WOU effectively serves its students and achieves its mission.