

# UNDERSTANDING THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS



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# Who is the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)?

## Independent | Non-profit | Membership-driven

- NWCCU is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as the authority on the educational quality and institutional effectiveness of higher education institutions in the Northwest region of the United States, including the states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington, as well as Canada.
- NWCCU recognizes higher education institutions for performance, integrity, and quality to merit the confidence of the educational community and the public. Our accreditation of postsecondary institutions is a voluntary, non-governmental, self-regulatory process of quality assurance and institutional improvement.
- Accreditation or preaccreditation by NWCCU also qualifies institutions and enrolled students for access to Title IV federal funds to support teaching, research, and student financial aid.





## Who is the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)?

- **The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities** is one of seven regional organizations recognized by the U.S. Department of Education to accredit postsecondary institutions within the United States.
- NWCCU is us! UCC is an accredited member of NWCCU, and one of 162 institutions sharing our voices to drive the peer review process.
- NWCCU's decision-making body consists of up to twenty-six Commissioners who represent the public and the diversity of higher education institutions within the Northwest region.





# Who are the evaluators and why do they visit?

Commission evaluators, reviewers, and observers consist of NWCCU staff, teams of peer evaluators, and the Board of Commissioners. They regular check in to ensure that the institution is:

- continuing to address recommendations given to UCC during previous visits,
- remaining compliant with NWCCU standards for being recognized as an effective institution of higher learning,
- offering high-quality education (academic programs, certificates, transfer programs), and
- engaging in ongoing fulfillment of its mission and core themes.





# What are our obligations to the NWCCU?

Accreditation under the NWCCU is ongoing, inclusive of campus wide constituents, and operates in a seven year reporting cycle, consisting of:

- a yearly institutional update report;
- scheduled self-study reports in the first, third, and seventh year of the institution's cycle;
- any additional reports requested by the Board of Commissioners, and
- reporting any changes that fall under the Commission's Substantive Change Policy.





# STANDARDS

Colleges are required to adhere to a set of standards that guide and underpin operations, academics, student services, assessment, and effectiveness. Each standard has several indicators that we must achieve in order to remain compliant as an institution of higher learning.





# STANDARD ONE

## *MISSION AND CORE THEMES*

The institution articulates its purpose in a mission statement, and identifies core themes that comprise essential elements of that mission. In an examination of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations, the institution defines the parameters for mission fulfillment. Guided by that definition, it identifies an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.





# **STANDARD TWO**

## ***RESOURCES AND CAPACITY***

By documenting the adequacy of its resources and capacity, the institution demonstrates the potential to fulfill its mission, accomplish its core theme objectives, and achieve the intended outcomes of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered. Through its governance and decision-making structures, the institution establishes, reviews regularly, and revises, as necessary, policies and procedures that promote effective management and operation of the institution.





# STANDARD THREE

## *PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION*

- The institution engages in ongoing, participatory planning that provides direction for the institution and leads to the achievement of the intended outcomes of its programs and services, accomplishment of its core themes, and fulfillment of its mission. The resulting plans reflect the interdependent nature of the institution's operations, functions, and resources.
- The institution demonstrates that the plans are implemented and are evident in the relevant activities of its programs and services, the adequacy of its resource allocation, and the effective application of institutional capacity.
- In addition, the institution demonstrates that its planning and implementation processes are sufficiently flexible so that the institution is able to address unexpected circumstances that have the potential to impact the institution's ability to accomplish its core theme objectives and to fulfill its mission.





# STANDARD FOUR

## *EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPROVEMENT*

- The institution regularly and systematically collects data related to clearly defined indicators of achievement, analyzes those data, and formulates evidence-based evaluations of the achievement of core theme objectives.
- It demonstrates clearly defined procedures for evaluating the integration and significance of institutional planning, the allocation of resources, and the application of capacity in its activities for achieving the intended outcomes of its programs and services and for achieving its core theme objectives.
- The institution disseminates assessment results to its constituencies and uses those results to effect improvement.





# STANDARD FIVE

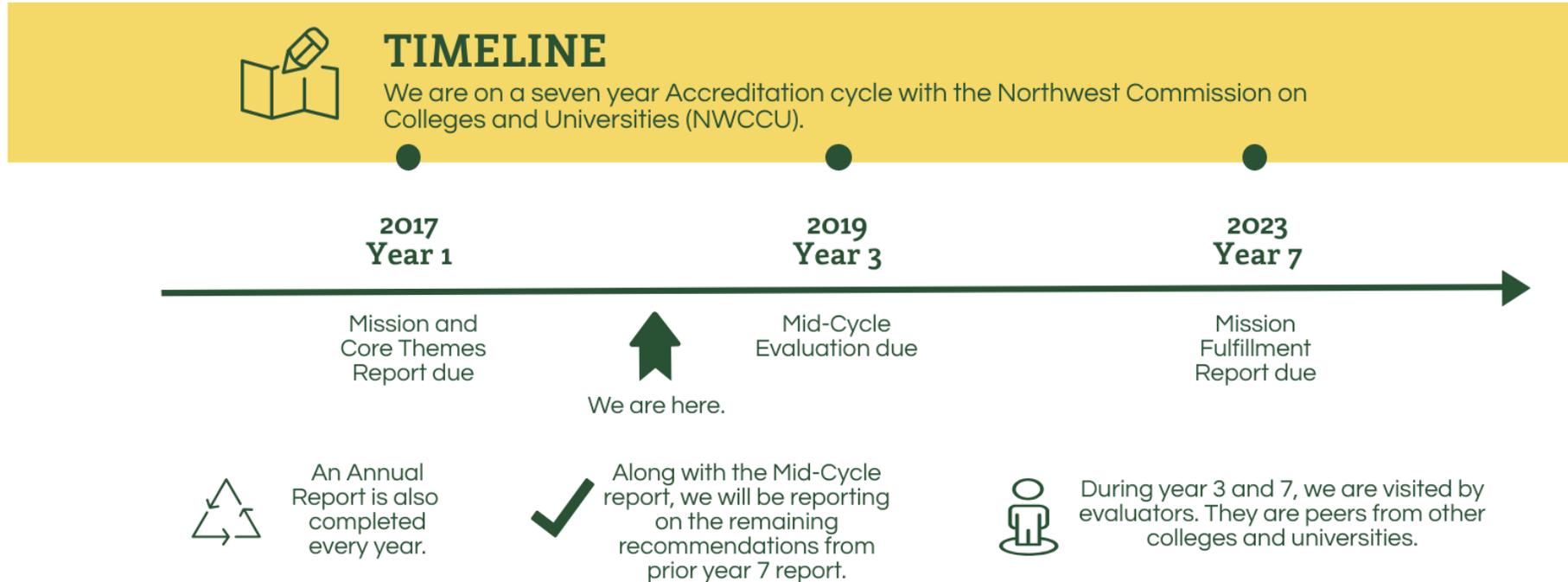
## *MISSION FULFILLMENT, ADAPTATION, AND SUSTAINABILITY*

- Based on its definition of mission fulfillment and informed by the results of its analysis of accomplishment of its core theme objectives, the institution develops and publishes evidence-based evaluations regarding the extent to which it is fulfilling its mission.
- The institution regularly monitors its internal and external environments to determine how and to what degree changing circumstances may impact its mission and its ability to fulfill that mission.
- It demonstrates that it is capable of adapting, when necessary, its mission, core themes, programs, and services to accommodate changing and emerging needs, trends, and influences to ensure enduring institutional relevancy, productivity, viability, and sustainability.





# What is Accreditation cycle?





## **How does what I do on a daily basis relate to accreditation?**

It's all about ensuring our daily operations are aligned with the strategic plan, mission, and core themes. We must document how we meet each indicator of achievement to show processes and continual improvement.





# What is our current status?

Our Mid-cycle Evaluation (MCE) is due March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 along with an ad-hoc report addressing recommendations 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7 from the 2017 NWCCU report.





# Recommendation 1

(Mission Fulfillment)

Ensure that core themes reflect and encompass the mission; provide indicators that measure mission fulfillment.





## Recommendation 3 (Governance)

The institution will identify internal and external factors that contribute to administrator turnover and formulate a plan to increase institutional stability through effective leadership.

The institution demonstrates an effective and widely understood system of governance with clearly defined authority, roles, and responsibilities.





# Recommendation 4

## (Leadership and Management, Administration)

The institution's major support and operational areas, including instruction, student services, and administrative services, work collaboratively with faculty, students, and staff to foster fulfillment of the institution's mission.

In addition to a chief executive officer, the institution employs a sufficient number of qualified administrators who provide effective leadership and management for the institution's major support and operational functions and work collaboratively across institutional functions and units to foster fulfillment of the institution's mission and achievement of its core themes.

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# Recommendation 6

## (Human Resources)

The institution will

- clearly identify duties, responsibilities, and authority of each administrative and staff position,
- adopt a system that provides for regular evaluation of administrative and staff positions,
- develop formal procedures and resources to provide professional development for exempt staff,
- employ a sufficient number of qualified personnel to maintain its support and operations functions,
- evaluate administrators and staff regularly with regard to performance of work duties and responsibilities, and
- provide professional growth and development.





# Recommendation 7

## (Education Resources, Educational Program, Institutional Effectiveness)

The institution will:

- encourage will work collaboratively to develop a systematic approach to assessing student learning, including institutional student learning outcomes, at the College, program, and course level;
- provide one or more educational programs which include appropriate content and rigor consistent with its mission and core themes;
- ensure educational program(s) culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes, and lead to collegiate-level degree(s) with degree designation consistent with program content in recognized fields of study;
- systematically apply clearly defined evaluation and planning procedures, assesses the extent to which it achieves its mission and core themes, uses the results of assessment to effect institutional improvement, and periodically publishes the results to its constituencies;





# Recommendation 7 *continued*

## (Education Resources, Educational Program, Institutional Effectiveness)

- provide programs, wherever offered and however delivered, with appropriate content and rigor that are consistent with its mission;
- publish expected course, program, and degree learning outcomes. Expected student learning outcomes for courses, wherever offered and however delivered, are provided in written form to enrolled students;
- ensure credits and degrees are offered in consistency with institutional policies that reflect generally accepted learning outcomes, norms, or equivalencies in higher education;
- ensure degree programs demonstrate a coherent design with appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing of courses, and synthesis of learning. Admission and graduation requirements are clearly defined and widely published, and





## Recommendation 7 *continued*

### (Education Resources, Educational Program, Institutional Effectiveness)

- demonstrate that faculty exercise a major role in the design, approval, implementation, and revision of the curriculum, and have an active role in the selection of new faculty. Faculty with teaching responsibilities take collective responsibility for fostering and assessing student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes.





# How is the Board of Education involved in the Accreditation process?

1. Understand the key standards put forth by NWCCU.
2. Periodically, make sure all BOE members know, understand, and can articulate the mission and core themes of the college.
3. Review strategic plan updates on a quarterly basis and ask questions where applicable to ensure the strategic priorities are met.
4. Review institutional effectiveness updates on a quarterly basis and ask questions where applicable to ensure a broad understanding of the college's engagement, ongoing planning, assessment, effectiveness, and sustainability.
5. Determine specific ways that the BOE would like to demonstrate fulfillment of the mission and core themes.
6. Provide evidence and documentation of efforts related to items 1-5.





# Q & A

