

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

**Western Washington University
Bellingham, Washington**

Comprehensive Evaluation Committee Report

April 7-9, 2008

*A confidential report prepared by the Evaluation Committee for the Northwest
Commission on Colleges and Universities*

TABLE OF CONTENTS
WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

| | |
|--|-----------|
| EVALUATION COMMITTEE | 3 |
| INTRODUCTION | 4 |
| SELF-STUDY | 5 |
| STANDARD ONE – INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND GOALS..... | 6 |
| STANDARD TWO – EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS..... | 9 |
| COLLEGE OF BUSINESS & ECONOMICS | 15 |
| GRADUATE SCHOOL | 17 |
| COLLEGE OF FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS | 20 |
| THE COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES: | 22 |
| FAIRHAVEN COLLEGE | 24 |
| WOODRING COLLEGE OF EDUCATION | 27 |
| COLLEGE OF SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY | 29 |
| HUXLEY COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT | 32 |
| STANDARD THREE - STUDENTS..... | 34 |
| STANDARD FOUR – FACULTY | 39 |
| STANDARD FIVE – LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES..... | 40 |
| STANDARD SIX – GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION..... | 43 |
| STANDARD SEVEN - FINANCE | 44 |
| STANDARD EIGHT - PHYSICAL RESOURCES..... | 46 |
| STANDARD NINE – INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY | 48 |
| GENERAL COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS | 49 |

**EVALUATION COMMITTEE
WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

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INTRODUCTION

Western Washington University (WWU), located in the idyllic coastal city of Bellingham, Washington, was founded as a normal school in 1899. WWU now stands as a major regional university of over 12,000 students offering a wide range of programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Increasingly selective in admissions and regularly recognized for its academic quality, the University has made significant progress since its last comprehensive evaluation report.

The Evaluation Committee, consisting of 11 individuals selected by the Northwest Commission, visited on April 7-9, 2008 and conducted an extensive series of meetings and conversations with selected groups and dozens of individuals on campus including the Board of Trustees. Separate open forums were held for faculty, staff, and students. Assisting the Committee was a representative of the Northwest Commission. In preparation the Committee received a detailed and comprehensive self-study as well as a hefty volume of attached documents. At the university, the Committee found an excellent collection of supporting documents in the Exhibits Room. The preparation by the university was excellent, the materials helpful, and all the staff enormously accommodating.

This report is organized according to the Standards and Policies found in the current Handbook for Accreditation. Each committee member prepared a portion of the report based on the specific Standard assigned. Overall editing and assembly of the report were the responsibility of the chair.

The institution works very hard to achieve its mission and takes great pride in its work. This is reflected in the many Commendations found throughout this report. The Concerns and Recommendations found in the chapters and at the end of the Evaluation Committee's Report are intended to help the university enhance its effectiveness and quality as defined in the Commission's Standards and Policies, but they must be addressed to do so.

Eligibility Requirements

The Evaluation Committee believes that WWU continues to meet the Commission's eligibility requirements.

SELF-STUDY

Western Washington University's (WWU) Self-Study was comprehensive and touched on all aspects of the university's activities and programs. Organized according to the Standards, it provided the Committee with a thorough description of WWU. Clearly a great deal of work went into the study; it is a handsome document that speaks eloquently with a single voice. Inquiries verified that hundreds of individuals had the opportunity to write and/or edit the report. The report's initial chapters were drafted at the unit level and then forged into a single coherent document as deadlines neared. The Committee found the report highly useful but would have liked to have seen more analysis; the focus tended to be primarily descriptive. That said, the report was an essential resource for the Committee in meeting its responsibilities.

STANDARD ONE – INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND GOALS

In 2005 Western Washington University (WWU) revisited its 1987 mission statement and its 1997 Strategic Action Plan. The university leadership felt that in light of the growth in students, programs, scope and impact that the university had achieved over the past decade, there was a need for a serious review of how it defined itself and what it saw as its key purposes and objectives. President Morse convened a 17 member Strategic Planning Committee representing all key constituencies.

After a year of discussion, data gathering, analysis and reflection the committee produced a new Mission Statement, a Vision Statement, and a statement on core values (Excellence, Engagement, Diversity, Community, Integrity and Innovation). These drove the ten new Strategic Actions:

1. Recruit and retain high-quality students
2. Recruit and retain high-quality faculty and staff
3. Maintain growth trajectory and improve enrollment management
4. Build collaborative relationships with off-campus communities
5. Become more diverse and enhance opportunities for students to understand and participate in different cultures and diverse societies
6. Develop and maintain campus infrastructure
7. Improve communication throughout the University
8. Promote the effective management of resources
9. Increase and diversify funding
10. Self-Assess and Develop Outcomes

Combined these formed the comprehensive “Engaged Excellence: Strategic Action Plan, 2006.” It was approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2006.

There is widespread awareness of this document across campus. The phrase “Engaged Excellence” appears in publications, documents, and reports. Considerable attention is also given to the Vision Statement where it is stated that WWU intends to “become the premier public comprehensive University in the country through engaged excellence.”

Clearly the broad-based planning effort was successful in bringing progress and aspirations together in a single place. Interviews and discussions with faculty leadership, students, and administrators suggest there is confidence that this can be attained. (Defining it may be more difficult.) Still, the University has received recognition in a number of publications including a high ranking in U.S. News and World Report.

The new detailed strategic plan when combined with the planning and accountability expectations of the Legislature and the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) results in a heady and, according to some faculty groups and unit level managers, potentially confusing mixture of goals, objectives, and measures. (This is also addressed in Standard 2 and Policy 2.2) The Accountability Plan is intended to address some of the interaction. It tends to focus on input measures despite the apparent growing number of reports authored by the Office of Institutional Assessment, Research and Testing

(OIART). In some interviews it became clear that there are gaps in getting the information gathered by OIART into the dialogue of planning and assessment.

As will be noted in later sections of the report, the university has made considerable investment in its analytic capacity. The merger that resulted in OIART has been helpful in giving structure to this work. These offices are well staffed with sophisticated researchers and they are very productive. It is not clear that the information is consistently being used to its full potential, particularly in the feedback aspect of an effective planning process.

Budget building also has become a highly complex process as described in the Self-Study and verified in conversations on campus. There are several committees and ample opportunities for comment by all constituencies. Timing and coordination of discussions and inputs can be challenging. Faculty Committee members report that they sometimes feel they are making input late in a process or that they are not sure of the role of their input. At the unit or college level the Evaluation Committee found a greater level of comfort for the workings of annual planning processes.

These comments and those found in other sections are about process. The university clearly has effective plans, has set out an updated and challenging mission and vision, launched efforts to move ahead on its plans, is increasing in quality and reputation, is building new facilities, is gaining operational and capital support from the State, and has made difficult decisions about programs and organizational structure. There is general praise and recognition that the President is successful in gaining support for the university and ensuring that external audiences are aware of the rising quality and effectiveness of the university. The issue at hand falls under the broader and harder to define issue of transparency. Although transparency is the currently popular phrase, this issue was raised in the 1998 Report, particularly in the section on Standard 6 – Governance and Administration.

Decision-making process are complex, detailed, sometimes appearing convoluted to the outside observer. It would appear that multiple good faith efforts to provide opportunities for input and participation have resulted in the accretion of structures and processes. This needs attention. According to faculty and administrators in some units it can unintentionally produce some confusion and sometimes tension. Simplification and clarification of these fundamental processes would increase the transparency of and support for critical decisions. The University Trustees will soon appoint a new president effective Fall, 2008. It would be in his or her interest to attend to this issue early on.

Commendations

1. The University successfully completed a thorough review of its mission and plans that systematically involved the entire university community.
2. The University has made significant investments in its institutional research and analysis capacity.

Concerns

1. The extensive and high-quality planning, measurement and evaluation processes have a limited and inconsistent impact on program changes and resource allocations. (1.B.4)
2. The institution has not done a thorough assessment of its evaluation and planning activities to document their effectiveness (1.B.)

STANDARD TWO – EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS

Policy 2.1: General Education/Related Instruction Requirements

In response to the 1998 NWCCU accreditation report for Western Washington University (WWU), a taskforce was convened (the QUE) and a review was conducted of WWU's GER. The result was a report in 2000 that recommended five qualities that should be part of a WWU undergraduate student's education. Work continued with various committees over the next few years to develop a statement of purpose for the GER, revise the GER, and debate various models for consideration. In 2004 WWU made major changes in its General Undergraduate Requirements (GUR) that all WWU students must take (excluding Fairhaven students) as of 2005.

WWU's GUR includes an appropriate distribution of humanities and fine arts, natural sciences, mathematics, and social and behavioral sciences. A variety of committees on campus are involved in curriculum approval and recommendations regarding the GUR. In addition to department and college committees that recommend courses for GUR inclusion, the Evaluation Committee identified 5 committees at the university level that have some input into the creation and/or approval of GUR courses. These include the Academic Coordinating Commission (ACC), the Committee on the Assessment of Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning (QRS), the Writing Assessment Group (WAG), the Committee on the Assessment of Teaching and Learning (CATL), and the General Education Requirements Committee (GER). The faculty and staff on all these committees demonstrated an enthusiastic appreciation for the GUR. The Evaluation Committee had a difficult time grasping the relationship that each of these committees has to the GUR and to each other. Although there appears to be a lot of good work and conversation about the GUR taking place, the efforts are not systemically coordinated and some committees had little knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of the other committees involved.

In 2006 WWU did conduct a study to analyze the degree to which students were being exposed to the eleven academic competencies and perspectives of the GER. The study was designed to serve as a baseline since it was the first study conducted at WWU on the GER. It had 2 components: a survey of targeted faculty teaching GER classes and a group of students taking GER classes. Although a report was published on the results of the study and it was summarized in the institutional self study, there were some on campus that the Evaluation Committee met with who play a direct role in GUR that were unaware of the study. This leads the Evaluation Committee to wonder how this data and report are being used to assess and modify the requirement.

The University has also incorporated additional survey tools to provide information about the GUR. WELS (Western Educational Longitudinal Study) and the Alumni Survey are examples of such tools. The integration of this information to inform decisions about the GUR is commendable, but again the Evaluation Committee believes that the information is not being used to its fullest to close the assessment loop.

In addition, the Evaluation Committee heard on more than one occasion a concern over GUR course availability to students and the difficulty some students faces in registering for GUR classes. There was also a concern voiced by faculty as to the number of departments that do not have any tenured or tenure tack faculty teaching any of their GUR courses.

Concern

There is evidence of a tremendous amount of activity and energy related to the GUR, but little coordination in what various committees are doing, and how their work will impact the assessment and campus level responsibility for the GUR (policy 2.1, General Education/Related Instruction Requirements and Policy 2.2 Education Assessment)

Policy 2.2: Assessment

WWU's self study describes assessment, survey and reporting activities coordinated by the Office of Institutional Assessment, Research and Testing (OIART). This office reports to the Provost and appears to be a well-staffed unit made up of the Office of Survey Research, Office of Institutional Assessment, Office of Institutional Research, and Testing Services. Collectively these offices publish a significant number of technical reports, focused research summaries, distribute data to departments, respond to requests for information, and bring together campus groups to discuss issues related to data and assessment.

OIART has developed a five-year timeline for introducing and promoting a campus-wide assessment plan that commits all departments, programs, and faculty to advancing student learning outcomes assessment (pgs 2.21-2.22 of self study). This appears to be in response to Recommendation 1 of WWU's 1998 NWCCU accreditation report. At that time the Commission stated "However, while there are numerous assessment activities that have been conducted and planned, there is no overall formal institutional assessment plan."

In the first phase of the plan (2007-09) OIART has created two handbooks for developing program and course-level assessment practices: *Tools & Techniques for Course Improvement: Handbook for Course Review & Assessment of Student Learning*, as well as *Tools & Techniques for Program Improvement: Handbook for Program Review & Assessment of Student Learning*. These handbooks are available in print and on the web and were created to provide WWU's faculty with assessment tools and information on how to develop course and program assessment plans. The deans commented to the Evaluation Committee on the usefulness of these publications as excellent resources for faculty and departments.

Other goals outlined in phase I calls for OIART to:

- Develop and administer periodic faculty surveys to monitor the development of course-level assessment and provide support and resources as needed.
- Complete and install Calypso, an on-line syllabus-building tool.
- Integrate Calypso into an on-line program and course level tracking system.
- Create mechanisms for providing technical assistance to instructors.

The Evaluation Committee was provided information that demonstrated the on-line syllabus tool was in development and will soon be integrated with an online program and course-level student tracking system (Western Assessment Data Management System (WADMS)) that will ensure alignment of learning outcomes, curriculum, and assessment measures. The project is an outgrowth of the needs and initiatives the Woodring College of Education and the College of Business and Economics and is currently being piloted by these two colleges. This tool has the potential to provide a rich set of data to faculty

and the institution, and to meet and assess course and program learning objectives and outcomes. It was not clear to the Evaluation Committee whether there had been conversations outside of these two colleges to gauge whether the faculty in the other colleges will embrace this tool, find it useful, and be willing to use it to advance learning at WWU.

Phase II of the campus-wide assessment plan lists completion of the development of course level assessment plans and annual reviews and evaluations of plans. Phase II of the plan calls for campus-wide review and distribution to all departments of student learning assessment practices and recommendation for improvement. There is a concern by the Evaluation Committee of the ability for OIART to follow through regarding much of what is listed in these phases for the following reasons:

1. Although the university's Self-Study has a matrix that lists each academic department and the assessment tools (portfolio, standardized tests, licensure, etc.) that each department uses to measure success of learning outcomes, there still exists variability across the university in the progress and impact of these plans.
2. The Evaluation Committee learned that there are differing perceptions on campus as to how well academic units have achieved their assessment goals. Some members of the campus community state that all departments are at the mature stage of assessment. Others stated that some departments have not implemented their plans, while others were not even aware of the taxonomy being used by the OIART to categorize the stages of assessment a department is in.
3. More troubling to the Evaluation Committee was the lack of clarity as to where the responsibilities lie on campus to make sure plans are in place and followed. The Self-Study states that "Departments will develop and submit course-level assessment plans to their respective Deans, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the OIART," and that "Annual reviews and evaluations of the plans will be submitted in the spring of each year. Technical assistance needs will be evaluated at that time. OIART, in conjunction with CII and CATL, will provide oversight for this process." Although these activities are scheduled to take place in 2008-12, it was unclear to the Evaluation Committee as to whether many on campus are even aware of this review process or how feedback would be provided.
4. There appears to be a great focus on providing reports and conducting surveys and less on understanding what departments need in order to conduct their assessments.

As a university, WWU conducts many surveys of their students. The Evaluation Committee had difficulty getting specific information from the many groups of faculty, staff, and administrators they met with as to how the data from surveys are used to make changes. That is not to say that some examples were not provided; they were. However, the Evaluation Committee feels the information is not being disseminated in an effective

way and the data is not sparking the type of campus, college, and department dialog that is required to close the assessment loop. There is also a concern that some data and reports are not driven by strategic questions and are not linked to advancing the strategic mission of the campus, but rather designed to address questions of interest for a small subset of clients.

Commendation

1. The OIART handbooks on Tools & Techniques for Course Improvement: Handbook for Course Review & Assessment of Student Learning, and Tools & Techniques for Program Improvement: Handbook for Program Review & Assessment of Student Learning are excellent resources.
2. WWU's Western Assessment Data Management System is a robust tool for linking articulated course assessments to student performance.

Concerns

1. The institution still does not appear to base its planning of educational programs on regular and continuous assessment (Standard 2.B Educational Program Planning and Assessment).
2. Although the institution has articulated a campus-wide assessment plan there is concern that there is more focus on collecting data and conducting surveys than on using the data in a continuous process of academic planning, influencing the planning process by assessment, and measuring impact (Policy 2.2 Education Assessment and Standard 2.B.1 Educational Program Planning and Assessment).
3. It appears that institutional assessment efforts have more of a teaching focus than a learning focus (Standard 2.B.3 Educational Program Planning and Assessment).

Standard 2G and H; Policy 2.6

Extend Education and Summer Programs (EESP) provides leadership and management for the outreach endeavors of WWU including distant degrees, certificates, and courses – both credit and non-credit bearing. EESP is also responsible for summer sessions, conference services and youth programs. In AY 2006-07 EESP generated \$12,096,795 with 64,580 SCH (1,141.52 FTE) (Extended Education and Summer Programs by the Numbers). The director has been on the job since January 2008 and reports to the provost.

In 2001 the University and Extended Programs was merged with Woodring College of Education Extension Services to create the Extended Education and Summer Programs (EESP) office. The merger aimed at providing a more coordinated effort in serving the many stakeholders found in the Bellingham community and the Puget Sound Region. The coordination of services has been enhanced but all parties believe it is a work still in progress. Off Campus sites are found in Everett, Mountlake Terrance, Seattle, Bremerton, Oak Harbor and Port Angeles. EESP is also responsible for providing the administrative support for the University's on-campus Summer Session (Institutional Self-Study Report; IR).

Fourteen degree programs are offered through the Woodring College of Education, Huxley College of the Environment, and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Site based, telecommunication, and hybrid pedagogical modalities are used to deliver degrees, certificates, courses and non-credit courses.

Mission and Vision statements that align with the Institution's Mission are provided in the catalog, on the web and the Exhibit Room (2.G and H and EESP Supplemental Exhibit Books I – VII). Organizational Charts and governance policy documents are available in the IR and the Exhibit Room.

In a meeting with the Council of Deans it was stated that EESP is at a similar stage of evolution as is the Graduate Program. The Deans expressed the opinion the institution is ready for strategic discussions to determine the future of distance learning at WWU. The sentiment expressed by the Deans was echoed by administration and faculty in the Woodring College of Education.

The IR, web, Catalog, Exhibits and EESP Supplemental Books I-VII are comprehensive and thorough. Evidence is provided that the EESP Mission and efforts are aligned with and congruent with Standards 2.G and H and Policy 2.6.

College of Business & Economics

The College of Business and Economics (CBE) is a professionally accredited business school whose mission and goals are consonant with WWU's mission of providing engaged excellence through high quality undergraduate education and select master-level preparation. The CBE advances this mission through the promotion of excellence in teaching, expectation of scholarship primarily in areas of applied, integrative and pedagogical research, and support of service and outreach activities which add value to a variety of internal and external stakeholder relationships.

The CBE is structured in such a way that it can effectively and efficiently deliver educational opportunities to a variety of stakeholders. Five academic departments offer baccalaureate degrees in accounting, economics, decision sciences, finance and marketing, and management as well professional Masters degrees in business administration (MBA) and accounting (MPAc). The primary focus of the CBE is delivery of undergraduate curricula which balance the depth of professional preparation with the breadth of liberal arts education. The CBE Center for Excellence in Management Education further enhances the undergraduate experience through a variety of programs such as the Virtual Mentor Program, the Ethics Speaker Series, the Strategy Speaker Series, and the Distinguished Scholar Program for high performing first year students. In part these programs help bridge the gap between the theoretical and practitioner dimensions of the discipline – a program strength cited by a number of students interviewed on-site.

Delivery of the mission and goals of the CBE is grounded in a commitment to assessment and planning. The cycle of assessment is in what could be described as a reflective phase. Initially, the assessment plan included standardized measures of the common body of knowledge such as the Major Field Test (MFT) as well as measures of information/technology literacy. After careful analyses of the validity and costs of these instruments, the CBE modified its plan to focus on primarily course-embedded measures of well-defined learning objectives which are based on broader themes and goals emanating from the CBE core values and mission. Currently, the Assessment Committee is gathering extensive data on these objectives and providing departments with specific measures on student performance. Discussion with the faculty support the conclusion that the CBE has built the foundation for sustaining future assessment and planning cycles and that the choices made in process and execution were very participatory and grounded in substantive and reflective examination of options and methodologies.

The faculty of the CBE hold appropriate academic degrees and/or professional currency required for their disciplines. These qualifications are supported by detailed analyses of the AQ and PQ status of current faculty. The processes for annual review of tenure/tenure track faculty as well as adjunct (fixed term) faculty are systematic and well-defined. Discussion with faculty on-site confirmed the processes are also designed to be very collegial and inclusive of both formative and summative feedback. Senior faculty provide formal and informal mentoring of junior faculty; all faculty are provided substantive annual feedback relative to maintaining their AQ and/or PQ status.

Data supplied in the self study, the supporting 5th year AACSB report and on-site interviews with CBE faculty, administration and students support the conclusion that the CBE is very thoughtful about and reflective of its strengths, challenges and strategic direction. The faculty and administration appear committed to focused efforts in the following broad categories:

- Faculty recruitment and development: Faculty recruitment was cited as one of the college's three core strategic goals. On-site interviews emphasized both the importance as well as the on-going challenges of accomplishing this goal. Attracting new junior faculty in an environment of salary resource constraints and ever-increasing salary compression in the senior ranks were common themes. Continuing to provide adequate support for faculty scholarship and professional development was also cited as an essential component of retaining productive faculty.
- Enhancing the undergraduate experience: The CBE has identified several additional services which they plan to develop in order to add value to students' professional development: CBE advising and career placement center. Reallocation of space on the first floor of Parks Hall will provide the CBE with the physical space to actualize these plans.
- Enhancement of relationships with external stakeholders: Included in this goal were activities such as concerted efforts to better communicate with alumni and external stakeholders and to increase fund-raising and development activities. Having an in-house development officer was cited as a clear asset to actualizing this goal.
- Managing enrollments and growth: developing a sustainable growth model which allows for the maintenance of appropriate ratios of academically and professionally qualified faculty in the context of continued pressures on course enrollments and resources was cited as a major challenge facing the CBE.
- Continuous improvement of curriculum and assessment of student learning – utilizing the CBE data warehouse to close the assessment loop and effect appropriate change appears to be the next step in the assurance of learning cycle.

Overall the faculty, administration and students were very positive about the accomplishments of the CBE. They made frequent references to their strengths as a collegial culture committed to student success and teaching excellence. Moreover, they appeared very reflective and thoughtful concerning future challenges and opportunities. Frequent references were made to proactive approaches to planning and program improvement.

Graduate School

The mission of the Graduate School at WWU is to provide quality advanced academic preparation. Currently, seven degrees are granted in twenty nine areas of study: Master of Science, Master of Arts, Master of Education, Master in Teaching, Master of Music, Master of Business Administration, and most recently, Master of Professional Accounting. The preponderance of the discipline areas prepare students for initial professional certification, practitioner advancement and teacher education. Additional programs provide postgraduate work in a variety of disciplines which enhance student career objectives and/or prepare them for further graduate work.

From an operational perspective, the Graduate School discharges its duties to the institution in a systematic and collaborative way. As evidenced in the self-study, institutional web resources and on-site discussions with faculty and administration, the business of delivering graduate education is well-defined and effective as evidenced by the following:

- Graduate admissions and progress to degree: the Graduate School publishes clear standards and procedures for admission. Applications are vetted centrally by the Graduate School and distributed to appropriate departments for their review and recommendations. Upon recommendation by the department, the student is subsequently admitted to the Graduate School. In coordination with the appropriate department, the Graduate School monitors the standard procedures of graduate degree completion: e.g., program of study, graduate committee membership, comprehensive exams, thesis preparation, and satisfactory degree progress.
- Graduate Council: the Graduate Council, a subcommittee of the university Academic Coordinating Commission (ACC), consists of fifteen members: six members at large from the ACC, one representative from each of the six colleges offering graduate degrees, and three graduate students. The Council is charged with what could be described as the stewardship of graduate education which includes but is not limited to the following:
 - Periodic review of existing graduate programs: each program is reviewed relative to basic criteria of quality, viability, student performance, student placement and employer satisfaction as well as criteria appropriate to the particular discipline. Results of the review are forwarded on to the department, ACC and the Provost. It was not entirely clear what the relationship is between program review and student outcome assessment. Appendix 2.D.3 – Inventory of Graduate Program Assessment tools indicates that of the 27 programs listed 8 (approximately one-third) have Student Outcome Assessment plans; two-thirds have indicated they do not have plans. However, in Appendix 2.D.3 – Graduate Program Goals, Outcomes and Assessment Measures, all programs provided specific learning objectives, skills, and methodologies for measuring those goals and objectives. It is unclear why these two reports are inconsistent and/or

if these inconsistencies stem from reliance on informal plans rather than formal plans. It would be reasonable to audit the existing plans and documents to resolve these discrepancies.

- Review of graduate courses/curricula: Since most curricular matters are also university bulletin matters, the Graduate Council is responsible for the graduate section of the university bulletin. The Council is charged with the review of existing courses and the approval of changes and/or new courses. The Council also considers requests for ‘stacked’ or cross-listed courses to ensure that the 500-level course(s) substantively differs from the 400-level version of the course(s). This is not a common practice; however on-site interviews confirmed this was a strategy for broadening graduate elective offerings in departments with small numbers of faculty and/or graduate students. It was reported on-site that the majority of the Council’s work is spent in the arena of program and course evaluation and review.
- Designation of Graduate Faculty: On the recommendation of the department, names of faculty are submitted to the Council for consideration as graduate faculty. The Council has established clear criteria for graduate faculty status which include faculty rank (tenure/tenure track) and appropriate terminal degree. Considerations of research productivity and currency are generally the purview of the recommending department. Reviews of graduate faculty are conducted by their home department/college. The Council considers, and when appropriate, approves any exceptions to the criteria such as interdisciplinary deployment of faculty and use of practitioner faculty in graduate instruction.
- Teaching Assistantships: The Graduate Council is charged with deployment of a portion of the teaching and research assistantships available on campus. Elements of program review and assessment are considered when allocating these resources.
- Thesis defense representatives: The Graduate Council is also charged with serving as independent representatives on thesis defense committees. The member’s role is to ensure that appropriate graduate policies and procedures are followed; on-site interviews indicated this responsibility required a commitment to generally no more than five students per quarter.

From a strategic perspective, the institution’s current strategic plan includes as one of the action items the examination of the role of graduate education at WWU, Discussions on-site confirmed that a variety of stakeholders are committed to substantive analyses of the issues associated with delivery of high quality graduate education which include but are not limited to the following:

- Discussion of the relationship of graduate education to the overall institutional mission.
- Examination of the efficacy of achieving a graduate enrollment target of 10%.of WWU's total enrollment. Currently, approximately 6% of WWU's total enrollment is in graduate education.
- Recruitment of high-quality graduate students.
- Substantive examination of the resource implications related to growing and/or sustaining viable graduate programs. This would include an assessment of the adequacy of institutional resources such as faculty, facilities, library, and information technology (Standard 2.E.1).

In summary, the Graduate School appears operationally sound; there are clear processes and procedures for faculty deployment, curricular review, and student admission and degree progress. Strategically, the Graduate School has been tapped as an action item in the current strategic plan. On-site interviews substantiated faculty interest in discussing the issues related to graduate education, especially in the areas of target enrollments and resource deployment.

College of Fine and Performing Arts

The College of Performing and Fine Arts at WWU is composed of four units including, The Department of Art, The Department of Music, The Department of Theatre Arts; and one program, Dance. Each of these units within the College enjoys increasing student interest and all are well respected. The College continues to recruit top-notch faculty from across the country. Students are successfully recruited from prestigious arts programs at various high schools throughout the region. These students openly comment on the value of their undergraduate experiences. Contact with alumni document a variety of success stories following their graduation. Students in each of the departments have experienced recent awards indicative of their curricular achievements.

The success of the undergraduate majors is not problem free. The Art Department has this year received roughly 250 applications to their major degree programs for which there existed only 120 openings. Music has instituted a number of auditions to fill a limited number of openings in its majors. Dance is filled to capacity and Theatre Arts is considering placing an enrollment cap on its majors.

Open meetings with students and faculty of the College confirmed that the faculty exercises principal responsibility for the curriculum and that students know of the published learning objectives and affirm that the faculty pursue those objectives. All units within the College are involved with students at a variety of levels and across all disciplines.

While the students in each of the majors have experienced successes, there exist concerns with the administrative staffing of the College. The College is currently under the direction of an interim dean, the previous dean having resigned, leaving campus at the close of the spring quarter. The College has had no continuity of leadership at the dean's level and generally relies on leadership untrained for administration at the department level.

The interim dean this past year was faced with finding a new chair for the art department, as the previous one had stepped down during the summer. Additionally, two positions had to be recouped as they had not been requested for replacement by the previous administrators. Significant budget deficits are also being addressed and present considerable difficulty in addressing the needs of the unit as a whole.

Given the lack of continuity within the College's leadership, (four deans in the last six years, chair turnover in every unit but Dance), it has been difficult to sustain efforts to fully develop and embed assessment as a practice to guide and direct programmatic offerings. The College's academic units might best be characterized as being in the beginning stages of the assessment process.

The growth of the student body in the College of Fine and Performing Arts has effectively pushed the enrollment in courses and studios to beyond capacity. These spaces are generally adequate, but are falling significantly into a state of disrepair, often

times creating unsafe situations. Scheduling and utilization of space has become increasingly difficult with the high demand on available spaces.

The faculty remains heavily involved in scholarly/creative activities. Once again, however, rising student numbers and instructional demands combine to impose severe limits on faculty time available for scholarship and creative work. In carrying out its instruction and scholarly endeavors, the College has consistently contributed to the fulfillment of the University's mission and goals.

Faculty members at large express concerns about inadequate salary levels in general, and about salary compression and inversion in specific. Perhaps of equal importance, they report a lack of definitive salary study information to identify equity and other issues, and express concern about alleged differential treatment by College or discipline. On the whole the faculty are placing a great deal of faith in the newly selected faculty union.

New leadership within the College will undoubtedly bring new thought and direction, but it appears that the College requires University assistance through an inclusive, deliberate, and comprehensive strategic and budget planning process.

Assessment remains at a beginning level, although it is of concern to both faculty and administrators. Every Department has defined its mission and identified learning outcomes, with most only mapping outcomes to specific courses. The actual achievement of the identified outcomes remains. The University at large, has made substantial progress toward laying the foundation for a culture of assessment, the College and its respective academic units have room for improvement.

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences:

The College was founded in 2003, when the College of Arts and Sciences was divided in two. At the time it was a controversial decision, but the change does not appear to have undermined the College's effectiveness. It has thirteen departments and two programs, which are divided between the social and behavior sciences, on the one hand, and the humanities, on the other.

Since the last accreditation visit the College has made considerable progress in the area of assessment. All departments have developed learning outcomes. Every department has an assessment plan, and every department chair meets with the dean annually to report on their work. Departments have considerable flexibility in constructing and following their assessment plan. The College is able to document how this assessment is being used to change instruction at the undergraduate level. It is in this area –closing the feedback loop– that the College has demonstrated the most improvement. Several programs within the unit also report to national accrediting bodies. Overall, at the undergraduate level there is clarity and consistency with regard to assessment. At the graduate level, assessment is less visible and documented than at the undergraduate level. In part, this is because several graduate programs report to national accrediting bodies. Most other graduate programs are small, and the Learning Outcomes are not necessarily distinct from those at the undergraduate level. Overall, the College's faculty believe that the quality of assessment work in the departments is good, and that the supervision of assessment is strong.

Faculty described the tenure and promotion process within the College as being clear and fair, and in accord with the overall guidelines for the institution. The system of annual reviews for junior faculty is followed consistently. The College has a practice of pairing junior tenure faculty with a senior faculty mentor. This does not replace the annual meeting with the departmental chair, but it does provide faculty with additional guidance. The five-year review for tenured faculty is both thorough and effective. The College has a strong commitment to teaching, which is a priority in hiring and promotion.

Overall class sizes within the College are appropriate, with an average class size of 28.5. Psychology, Anthropology, Political Science and Philosophy do have large introductory classes, but many departments also have small senior seminars that are capped at around 12 students. Writing intensive courses also tend to have lower enrollment. Still, the student demand for classes in English and Psychology is sufficient that non-majors may not be able to take upper division courses in these programs as an elective. The overall faculty/student ratio is higher than the University average, but it has been consistently declining.

Commendations

1. The College's assessment plan is clear, consistent, and comprehensive; departments have documented that they have closed the feedback loop.

2. The College's Faculty Evaluation process is fair and transparent. The College ensures that tenure-eligible faculty receive feedback throughout their path to the tenure process, while tenured faculty have meaningful reviews.

Study Abroad

This program has a new director of International Programs and Exchanges, who is currently working to bring greater coherence and organization to study abroad offerings, as well as tightening the links between study abroad and curriculum. Currently, the system for study abroad is working well for the 400 students who choose this option annually. There is no language requirement for the BA at WWU, but most students who study abroad have some language proficiency. Students have a good range of choices for study abroad locations. Students undergo an orientation process on-line, which is an innovative approach that has nearly 100% compliance. Information on study abroad is readily available.

WWU appears to have not placed a commensurate effort on recruiting and supporting international students, who contribute to both campus diversity and student's global awareness. There are roughly 100 to 125 international students at WWU, which is a relatively low number. Many international students enter WWU from the community colleges, as opposed to coming directly from abroad. There does not appear to be an active recruitment plan. Both financial and staff support for these students is limited.

Fairhaven College

For over forty years Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies has offered undergraduate, interdisciplinary, customized degrees that combine Fairhaven's own general education core (distinct from that of the rest of the University's) and Fairhaven classes with traditional courses from any of WWU's other colleges. The College thrives on the concept of providing intimate learning communities where students design their own degree programs. Students have significant responsibility for the individual structure and content of their own education through this flexible curriculum.

Fairhaven is defined by five attributes:

1. interdisciplinary study
2. student designed studies and evaluation of learning
3. examination of issues arising from a diverse society
4. development of leadership and a sense of social responsibility
5. curricular, instructional, and evaluative innovation

The Evaluation Committee found substantial evidence that these attributes are understood by those in the college; are developed, approved, and periodically evaluated; and demonstrate a coherent design characterized by breath, depth, and sequencing of courses, synthesis of learning, and the assessment of learning outcomes. The College is proud of their over 40 years of tradition and the Evaluation Committee observed a high level of interaction among faculty, staff and students and a strong sense of college identity.

The College has approximately 450 students and has graduated between 73 and 91 students each year over the past 10 years. A large percentage of Fairhaven students (72%) go on to professional schools or graduate schools. There are approximately 20 permanent faculty in the College representing disciplinary expertise in a wide range of fields from rhetoric to cultural anthropology. In many ways they represent a mini university within the university and retain a high level of autonomy. The College does provide limited opportunities for other WWU faculty to teach in Fairhaven on a full year visiting appointment through the College's Distinguished Teaching College program.

Fairhaven faculty and students see themselves as distinct from other colleges at the University in a number of ways. Students are not graded in the usual A-F manner as done in the rest of the university; instead, student narrative self evaluations and faculty written narrative responses form the basis of a student's portfolio. The general education core requirements for Fairhaven are different than those of the rest of the University and they have their own separate facilities.

The College prides itself on a culture of innovation and experimentation. The faculty see themselves as leading innovation at WWU when it comes to pedagogy and interdisciplinary studies. Over one third of all the course offered each quarter are new classes. The topics of new courses are based on student demand and faculty interest. There are a number of areas where Fairhaven supports the larger mission of WWU. The College enhances the diversity (one of the values in WWU's Strategic Plan) of the university's student body and faculty. They are innovative (another value in the Strategic

Plan) in that they promote alternative pedagogical approaches. They foster engagement (another University Strategic Plan value). The Evaluation Committee viewed these as positives for the College, but did not necessarily see the purposeful links between these initiatives and the institutional strategic plan. Rather, they were seen to be values that Fairhaven believes set them apart from the rest of the campus.

In addition, the Evaluation Committee found little evidence that the innovations developed by Fairhaven faculty permeated other parts of the institution, or lead to institutional change. There does not seem to be as broad a reach and impact beyond the College as Fairhaven administrators and faculty perceive. In this regard, the College appears to be missing an opportunity to translate their commitment and expertise in such areas as the scholarship of teaching to the broader university community.

The College does an excellent job in providing information to students. There is a student handbook that clearly outlines information about the College's requirements and policies. Advising is intensive and extensive, is continuous, and has many touch points. Each student receives 4 types of advising contacts: peer mentors, a faculty advisor, a professional advisor, and a faculty committee which evaluates the student's senior project.

Educational program planning is based on assessment and is viewed as an important aspect of the College. Students participate in an end of program summary which is evaluated by a faculty team. These end of program summaries not only serve as the evaluation for that student, but they are also shared with the dean and other faculty and serve as a college assessment tool to modify the program based on these student experiences. An example provided to the Evaluation Committee was that the College added the written portfolio requirement in response to student's stating they felt they needed more writing skills in the end of program evaluations. The College was able to provide the Evaluation Committee with a list of recent adjustments made in response to assessment activities and survey data that demonstrate their commitment in this area. At present, much of the assessment data relies heavily on narrative/qualitative information. The College has plans to add quantitative data to their assessment.

While the College is high on innovation, it seems less able to discontinue some efforts it has started. For example, the college lists a BA in Education degree which has had a total of 3 graduates in the past 10 years. The Evaluation Committee could find no clear rationale for continuing to offer this option other than "a few students had interest in it."

The institutional self study states that every college has developed strong programs that serve the community (pg 1.7). Fairhaven College hosts the World Issues Forum, the Human Rights Film Festival and is involved in the Whatcom Human Rights projects to name a few, and students participate in internships and service learning. The Evaluation Committee observed that the College does not have a method for measuring the impact of these interactions and instead relies on anecdotal information when discussing impact.

Commendation

There is a high level of student/faculty interaction as evidenced by the intensive/extensive advising, the types of assessment tools employed by the college for student learning outcomes, and the nature of the senior project.

Woodring College of Education

Woodring College of Education (WCE) consists of six departments (Teacher Education Outreach Programs, Educational Leadership, Elementary Education, Human Services and Rehabilitation, Secondary Education, and Special Education). WCE has forty-eight FTE tenure track faculty, sixteen non-tenure track faculty, six professional staff and twenty-five classified staff. The self-sustaining outreach endeavor of WCE has two tenure track faculty, thirty-three non-tenure track, one professional and sixteen classified staff. WCE has added thirteen tenure track lines in three years (Memo Stephanie Salzman, Dean WCE; April 8, 2008).

WCE's vision of fostering community relationships and culture of learning that advance knowledge, embrace diversity, and promote justice is aligned with and supports the Institution's Mission.

WCE has many things of which to be proud; a sample follows:

- Woodring College of Education met all NCATE and State Standards at the undergraduate and graduate levels in fall 2005.
- Woodring Information System is used as a model by NCATE for collecting and disaggregating/aggregating data for program/individual assessment
- The WCE's diversity initiatives are used as a model by NCATE
- The Praxis pass rate for all majors is ninety-eight percent; one hundred percent in Special Education
- Education graduation rates are traditionally the highest in the state
 - The largest producer of science teachers in the state
 - The largest producer of special education teachers in the state
 - The largest producer of elementary and secondary school principals in the state
- The Rehabilitation Counseling program (CORE accredited fall 2004) has a ten year history of one-hundred percent pass rate on the National Rehabilitation Licensure Exam

The robustness of the Woodring Information System allows for macro and micro analyses. Data related to student learning outcomes are systemically collected at four benchmarks in the program of study:

1. Program admission
2. Program continuation and retention
3. Qualification for internship and culminating scholarly experience
4. Program Completion

All programs in the WCE have clearly defined student learning outcomes. Evaluation matrices are developed and the expectations are provided to learners during advising, on syllabi, in the program handbook and the WCE Handbook. The Teacher Education Academic Departments Commission comprised of the Dean of the College, Department Chairs from Teacher Education, the Director of Accreditation and Certification, teacher education faculty and faculty from across campus responsible for preparation of teachers.

The Woodring College of Education Accreditation website (www.wce.wvu.edu/NWCCU/) provides a wealth of information related to expected learning outcomes; how the outcomes are measured and how the data are systemically reviewed to inform decisions. Multiple examples indicated how curriculum changes in every program have resulted from data derived from the assessments. The assessment processes are reviewed regularly by the Internal Assessment Committee and validate by external accreditation and state reviews.

The Administration and faculty jointly discussed the evolving Unit Plan for faculty evaluation as a living document. Individuals present indicated the Unit Plan is providing guidance and transparency to the tenure, promotion, annual, and post tenure evaluation processes. Full-time non-tenure track faculty/limited-term faculty have been redefined by the WCE. A faculty Accountability and Reward System team recommended and implemented the recommendation, changing the name of the non-tenure faculty/limited term faculty to “specialty faculty.”

The entire College is excited about the pending renovation of Miller Hall. Construction begins fall quarter 2009. WCE is recognized as a destination site for Special Education preparation (undergraduate and graduate), yet Miller Hall possess severe challenges for individuals with disabilities. With the renovations the accessibility issues will be ameliorated.

The College has been successful in forming partnerships and securing external fiscal support that enriches the pursuit of the College’s mission. The following centers enhance the student learning environment of WCE and the campus.

- The Center for Educational Pluralism
- Northwest Center for Ethnocide, Genocide, and Holocaust Education
- Center for Family Supportive Schools and Communities
- Ershig Assistive Technology Resource Center
- Pacific Northwest Children’s Literature Clearinghouse
- Education for a Sustainable Future

One of the continuing challenges involves the evolution of Extended Education and Summer Programs (EESP). WCE has an extensive outreach focus. The College has three site-based locations at regional community colleges. EESP provides logistical support while the College retains the authority of decision making related to faculty hires and student learning outcomes delivered and measured. The model has enabled the College to imbed significant opportunities for teacher education candidates to experience ‘real world’ learning and to enrich the cultural diversity of all programs of study.

The evaluation team recognizes the exemplary work represented by the Woodring Data Information System. NCATE has acknowledged the Woodring Data Information System as a model for others to study. All standards appear to have been met.

College of Sciences and Technology

The College of Sciences and Technology (CST) was formed in 2003 as a result of the division of the College of Arts and Sciences into two separate colleges. CST consists of seven departments (Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Engineering Technology, Geology, Mathematics, and Physics/Astronomy), the program of Science, Mathematics, and Technology Education (SMATE), the newly funded Advanced Materials Science and Engineering (AMSEC) Center, and the Internet Studies Center. CST departments offer 33 bachelor's degrees and 8 master degrees, along with interdisciplinary degrees in mathematics/physics, mathematics/biology, and biology/chemistry. In addition, CST partners with the Huxley College of the Environment, the College of Business and Economics, and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (formerly a part of the previous College of Arts and Sciences) in a number of combined degree programs.

Despite the relatively short period of time that CST has been in existence as a separate entity, there appears to be a well-defined organizational structure within the College that works very efficiently and effectively. The College has worked very hard to establish clear lines of communication with the Dean to ensure that faculty and staff voices are heard, and that the governance within the College is clearly participatory. For example, not only is there an active Chairs' Council, but a Policy, Planning, and Budgeting Committee (PPBC) also exists with faculty representation from every department in the College as well as from SMATE (chairs do not participate directly in this committee). The PPBC advises the Dean on a variety of issues, and most recently has just completed a comprehensive strategic plan for the College. The PPBC is now in the process of developing an associated action plan. It is evident to the Evaluation Committee that the faculty and staff greatly appreciate the effort to create a transparent planning and budgeting process within CST. Faculty within CST who had originally been opposed to the split of the old College of Arts and Sciences into two separate colleges now indicate that the reorganization was of great benefit to the faculty, staff, and programs within CST.

Since the last full review by the NWCCU significant progress has been made in improving space allocations for programs within the current CST; however, pressures continue to exist with expanding programs, such as in biology and geology. Since the last review, both Computer Science and Physics/Astronomy have relocated to the new Communications building, providing them with updated facilities and renewed energy for their programs. In fact, it is projected that there will be between 25-30 graduates in Physics/Astronomy during 2007-2008, which is near the top end of the number of graduates from any undergraduate program nationally. Additionally, an expansion of the chemistry facility has been funded, with construction to begin shortly.

During the site visit of the Evaluation Committee it became evident that CST is very proud of the work that they do at both the undergraduate level and at the master's degree level. Programs within CST are clearly student-centered and yet the faculty appear to be actively engaged in research and scholarship in their respective disciplines as well. The faculty also typically provide important undergraduate research experiences for their students. As a result of that emphasis on undergraduate research, the students are

provided with opportunities to see and participate in the process of how science and technology really work beyond the traditional classroom and teaching laboratory settings. The students also have the opportunity to present their work at WWU's Annual University Scholars Program. In addition, students present their work at regional and national conferences. One faculty member commented that some of the presentations of undergraduate students are on par with that of master's degree presentations from other institutions at those conferences. This commitment to undergraduate research is clearly appreciated by the students that were interviewed by the Evaluation Committee.

CST continues to explore areas in which it can develop important new programs. For example, in the last biennium budget cycle, the new AMSEC initiative was funded with an annual budget of just over \$1M. Additionally, a joint, cross-college program in Biomedical Research Activities in Neuroscience (BRAIN) was also funded during the last biennium budget cycle for more than \$1M annually. BRAIN is a program of Biology and Psychology (in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences). Other interdisciplinary programs are also being considered by CST, believing that exciting new science is occurring at the interface between traditional disciplines.

The assessment activities in CST appear to be at multiple levels of maturation depending on the department. Several programs within CST are externally accredited or certified, and as such are subject to the specific assessment procedures established by their accrediting organizations. Specifically, the Bachelor of Science degree offered by the Computer Science Department is accredited through the Computing Accreditation Commission of the Accrediting Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET). Within the Engineering Technology Department, the Technology Accreditation Commission of ABET accredits Electrical Engineering Technology, Manufacturing Engineering Technology, and Plastics Engineering Technology, and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) accredits the Industrial Design Program; the Industrial Technology program is currently working toward ABET accreditation. The Chemistry Department offers a Bachelor of Science degree that is certified by the American Chemical Society and SMATE works with the Woodring College of Education in the accreditation of teaching programs through the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

The remaining programs in CST have established a matrix of assessment activities for their programs that may include presentations of undergraduate research, capstone or thesis projects, locally-developed examinations, portfolios, or internships. In further conversation during the site visit, it is evident to the Evaluation Committee that a significant amount of data also exists that is available at the institutional level to assist in an overall assessment plan for programs across the institution. As noted in the institutional self-study, "The College outlined a general framework for departments to work within, in order to establish a system whereby they can utilize the assessment data to evaluate and, in some cases, improve the current curriculum." It is further noted in the self-study that one of the "Challenges and Next Steps" is to "Continue to develop and refine the assessment process in several departments, with a view to taking better advantage of currently known 'best practices.'" The Evaluation Committee

acknowledges the significant progress that has been made in the area of program assessment, but is concerned with the lack of evidence that assessment activities are resulting in program improvement in some areas of CST. According to Policy 2.2 of the Northwest Commission of Colleges and Universities, "...each institution has an obligation to plan carefully its courses of instruction to respond to student needs, to evaluate the effectiveness of that educational program in terms of the change it brings about in students, and to make improvements in the program dictated by the evaluation process." The Evaluation Committee wishes to encourage programs within CST to provide clear evidence that assessment is closing the feedback loop by using the data that are being collected to improve the already very good educational experiences that are received by the students in CST.

Commendation

The Evaluation Committee commends CST for its efforts to actively engage the faculty in governance within the College.

Huxley College of the Environment

The Huxley College of the Environment was established approximately forty years ago to “pursue programs of environmental education, research, and community service that reflect the broadest view of humans in a physical, biological, social, and cultural world.” The Huxley College is comprised of two departments (the Department of Environmental Sciences, and the Department of Environmental Studies: Policy, Planning, Education, and Geography) and four institutes (Environmental Toxicology, Global and Community Resilience, Spatial Information and Analysis, and Watershed Studies). Undergraduate majors are available in Environmental Science (BS), Planning and Environmental Policy (BA), Environmental Education (BA), Geography (BA), Environmental Studies/Economics (BA in Economics), Environmental Studies/Journalism (BA in Journalism), and Geography/Social Studies (BA in Education). In addition, the Huxley College offers several minors (Environmental Education, Environmental Studies, Environmental Science, Environmental Policy, Geography, Geographic Information Systems, and Sustainable Design), and three master’s level graduate programs (Environmental Science, MS; Geography, MS; and Natural Science/Science Education, MEd).

The Huxley College has a distinct focus on an interdisciplinary approach to problem solving that is reflected in its program and curricular offerings. With the new “greening” of world environmental attention, there is a strong sense in the Huxley College of increased focus on the programs that are offered within the College. In particular, it is reported that there are many more students interested in the programs offered by the College than can be handled with present resources. As a result, students must be turned away from the program.

Based on information provided to the Evaluation Committee, there is significant evidence of assessment of programs and individual courses that result in programmatic revisions. Activities of assessment include student presentations, capstone experiences (senior research, senior thesis, internships, or study abroad), reflective writing, portfolios, course evaluations, student satisfaction studies, and licensing exams. In addition, alumni surveys are conducted that consider necessary skill sets, employers are asked about the effectiveness of graduates, and an external advisory board is also consulted. An example of change that has been implemented in the programs offered by Huxley College as a result of this assessment process is the revision of the core introductory course to the Huxley College. Faculty indicate that the course has not been well-received by the students nor has it successfully accomplished its goals. As a result, the course is still considered ‘a work in progress’ that is continually being modified.

An area of concern expressed by the Huxley faculty and staff is the perceived inadequacy of its facilities. The College is excited about the possibility of relocating to the Waterfront site should that location become a viable reality. It is envisioned that the site would allow for important synergy with other environmental organizations, including the relocation of NOAA from the Seattle area. The site would also be reflective of the embedded mission of the College in an environmentally rich interface of land and sea, the confluence of rivers, a watershed and forest. The hope would be that new facilities at the

site would be Leadership in Environmental Engineering and Design (LEED) Platinum level in design, reflecting the mission of the Huxley College.

In interviews with students and faculty, the Evaluation Committee was pleased to see the clear focus on student learning and success exhibited by the faculty. The students felt that Huxley was genuinely interested in their development as individuals. In addition, it was apparent, especially among the graduate students interviewed, that those students are articulate and deeply concerned about being able to make a positive difference in addressing environmental concerns on a variety of scales.

Students also identified the cross-disciplinary nature of the program as a positive aspect of the program, both across the two departments within Huxley and across colleges that partner with Huxley. In particular, the students identified the close proximity and relationship to departments within the College of Sciences and Technology as an advantage. This proximity allows students to work with faculty in both colleges and to sometimes share equipment as needed.

Overall, it appears to the Evaluation Committee that the Huxley College of the Environment has effective programs that meet the needs of the students it serves, and that the faculty in the Huxley College are engaged in making a contribution within the local community, the region, the nation, and globally.

Commendation

The Huxley College is commended for its efforts to use assessment processes to continually improve its programs.

STANDARD THREE - STUDENTS

Purpose and Organization

Western Washington University (WWU) has a solid student affairs and academic support services division that serves students well. Over the past four years, the Division has reorganized and added three director-level positions and restructured three other positions. Upon review of the self-study, supporting documentation, and campus interviews, it appears that the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support Services is organized to support the university's mission and goals. The Division provides supportive services and engaging programs for students outside the classroom. Support services are designed to support institutional mission and goals.

A review of the credentials of student affairs and academic support services staff reveals a professional staff that is balanced in terms of experience and academic preparation. The Division is comprised of 178 professional staff and 154 classified staff. Fifty-five professional staff and 44 classified staff have more than 20 years experience in student affairs. The staff is comprised of caring and educated professionals, dedicated to serving students.

Physical space is generally good. Since the last self study, a number of Division offices have been remodeled or relocated to improve the delivery of service to students. Old Main houses many of the Division offices, serving as a one-stop center for students.

Fiscal resources seem appropriate for a university this size. The Division is able to fund some new initiatives as necessary.

WWU has experienced strong enrollment growth over the last several years and is ahead of their goal to reach a three-term FTE average of 12,500 students by the year 2013. WWU naturally attracts students from the state as 92% of WWU's student population is from Washington and 71% are from nearby counties. International students comprise less than 1% of the student population. The competition for students within the state of Washington will continue to increase. Demographics in the near future are not favorable and show a decline in the graduation numbers of high school seniors. Admissions will need to be more concerned about the market behavior if WWU is to achieve and maintain their enrollment goal. WWU is positioned to truly manage their enrollment by establishing a comprehensive enrollment management plan.

General Responsibilities

WWU has a very traditional aged population. Student Affairs staff appear to be aware of and sensitive to the developmental needs of the student body at the university. As a result, students are able to graduate in a reasonable amount of time, and are involved in both curricular and co-curricular activities. Students and administrators provided multiple examples of ways students are involved within their discipline and within the institution.

Policies related to students' rights and responsibilities are available in a variety of forms (i.e. catalog, Viking Tips, websites); the procedures for violations of academic and/or behavioral standards are clear.

Campus crime statistics for the past three years are published on the website by the campus public safety department. The information is also shared in a brochure with all students, faculty, and staff as required by federal law. While required information about accessing information relative to registered sex offenders was available on the website, it was a little difficult to find. The crime statistics reported are similar to statistics reported on a large number of campuses (alcohol violations, drug violations, burglaries).

The catalog makes available a broad array of information including mission, admission requirements, student rights and responsibilities, academic policies, degree requirements, course descriptions, tuition and fees, refund policy, and other academic procedures and practices.

They also distribute a brochure that includes information on student conduct, grievance procedures, academic integrity, student organizations, and various student services.

Academic Credit and Records

Information regarding academic credit and degree information is clearly articulated in the catalog. Policies about degree and non-degree credit are established. Transfer credit policies are established. Most student records have been scanned into electronic format and are backed up on the University mainframe. Other student records are secured in a locked, fireproof vault.

Student Services

The institution's admission policies are consistent with its mission. Policies regarding satisfactory academic progress, suspension, and expulsion are in place and publicized. Policies for admission by alternate criteria are established and adhered to. Graduation requirements are clearly stated.

Financial aid is available through scholarships and grants and is centrally managed and supportive of students' academic goals. With the increase in enrollment, there is a need for additional resources to support a student body with a growing proportion of first-generation and/or Pell-eligible students. Information about financial assistance is available on the financial aid website, in publications, and through presentations.

The institution provides orientation and advising for students. New student orientation is designed to support students in their transition to, and engagement with, the university. First time students are required to meet with an advisor in the Academic Advising Center and to create a plan of action for registration. The Academic Advising Center advises new students, and students who have not declared a major. Staff in the ACC also meet with students who are on academic warning or probation and provides classes and other support to help these students succeed. Faculty serve as major advisors.

Student services are available to support students with career decisions, psychological issues, health care needs, learning accommodations, residential living, and academic decisions. Programming exists that is designed to support civic engagement and study abroad. Viking Union staff work with student leaders to provide programs and activities that are related to student engagement, student development, and student satisfaction.

Interaction with many students indicated that students felt welcome and supported by the university. While some students felt there was not enough school spirit, all students were very positive about their experience at WWU and would enthusiastically recommend the university to others.

University Residences is a self-supporting organization. The residence halls are in excellent shape and have had renovations completed as appropriate. University Residences maintains a deferred maintenance plan and is making sufficient progress in addressing deferred maintenance needs.

Food service is contracted with Sodexo. There are three dining facilities located within the residence hall and other outlets in the Viking Union and Recreation Center. Students commented positively about the variety of food choices available to them. Students also conveyed how food service staff had worked with students to restructure the meal plan offerings.

The campus bookstore is university operated. There is a bookstore advisory committee that includes students, faculty, and staff. The state of Washington periodically audits the bookstore for regulatory and compliance issues. The Associated Students originally started the bookstore many years ago and still have decision making in the policies and operation of the facility. The Associated Students also receive a portion of the revenue of the bookstore.

The campus has a strong student media component. The student newspaper is published twice a week, a student magazine is published twice a quarter, an environmental magazine is published once a quarter, and a literary magazine is published once a year. In addition the campus has a radio station that operates 24 hours a day during the academic year and a campus television station. All of the media components are housed in the Viking Union. A student publications advisory committee oversees all of the publications. A station manager oversees the radio and television stations.

Intercollegiate Athletics

WWU competes in seven men's and nine women's sports within the NCAA Division II athletics. With the exception of women's rowing, all sports participate in the Great Northwest Athletic Conference. Three hundred and eighty-five students (unduplicated headcount) participate in both men's and women's sports. The athletic director reports to the vice president for student affairs and academic support services, and the president has ultimate authority for the program. The Faculty Athletic Representative functions to provide institutional oversight and departmental guidance.

The department is close to proportionality in participation by gender; women make up 54% of the student body and 52% of the student athletes. Financial assistance to athletes is proportionate in compliance with federal regulations. Benefits and opportunities are provided equitably. The self-study outlined some concerns with coaching staff. The men's and women's soccer teams share a coach. Additionally, the women's softball coach is part-time. The Department is trying to resolve these issues, but has not been able to secure the funding necessary.

Prospective student athletes are subject to the same admission policies and procedures as the remaining student body. WWU annually has multiple students who have been recognized by the NCAA as academic all-stars. Student athletes often graduate at a higher rate than the general student body and were four percentage points higher for the most recent reporting year.

Other than Carver Gymnasium, the facilities are generally in good condition. The athletic director manages a shared facility that houses academic classes, intramurals, and athletics. The Wade King Recreation Center opened in October of 2003, and this helped relieve some of the pressure of shared space in the Carver Gymnasium between the physical education department, athletics and campus recreation. Space is still a concern with this facility which limits the level of activities that can occur for athletics. Students commented that support for athletics would be higher, especially football, if the stadium were located on-campus.

The department is dependent upon several different sources for revenue for its operations, one of which is student fees. Because several of these sources vary in amount on a year-to-year basis, long-term planning can be difficult. The department funds are audited internally.

Policy 3.1 Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status

Advertisements and materials observed focused on educational programs and services. Information was clear and current.

The general catalog for WWU is available on the university's website and for purchase at the bookstore. Every new student receives a free printed copy of the catalog. It contains a disclaimer that makes students aware that the printed catalog may not be the most up-to-date information. The catalog is well indexed, and information was easy to find.

With the exception of information regarding whether a faculty member is full- or part-time, faculty degrees and conferring institution, and institutional facilities readily available for educational use, the catalog clearly depicts the issues outlined in Policy 3.1, including information about the institutional mission and goals, admission, residency, courses, degree requirements, faculty, rules, tuition and fees, financial aid, and policies for refunds and withdrawals. While not required, it is strongly recommended that

information regarding the Cleary Act and Students Right to Know be listed in the University catalog

The catalog provides clear information regarding requirements for eligibility for licensure and lists specifically the organization by which programs are accredited.

Recruitment efforts are conducted by professional recruiters and faculty volunteers, and these individuals provide accurate information regarding WWU and avoid misrepresentations and/or misleading assurances.

Commendation

The Wade King Recreation Center has been a welcome addition to campus. The facility is well-utilized by students and has helped relieve space issues in Carver Gymnasium. The award-winning facility blends well with the campus landscape, and has increased both the indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities for students.

Concern

The Division has not systematically evaluated student services and programs and used the results from these evaluations as a basis for change (3.B.6). While many departments have evaluated student services and programs, some have not done so. It was not apparent that results from evaluations were consistently used for change. The Division has committed to identifying common learning outcomes. A core group of staff are working on this effort and should help the Division in this area.

STANDARD FOUR – FACULTY

Policy 4.1 Faculty Evaluation

Western Washington University (WWU) has established policies requiring 1) annual evaluation of faculty, including tenure and tenure track, and limited-term appointments 2) summative post-tenure five-year evaluations of tenured faculty, and 3) practices regarding tenure and promotion.

There exists a very positive attitude amongst the university faculty with respect to evaluative processes related to promotion and tenure. Generally, the faculty has a sense of significant peer involvement in, and an understanding of, how the process plays out from initial appointment through decisions about tenure and promotion.

New tenure-track faculty hires are assigned a mentor to assist them with an understanding of the review process, and to support them throughout the probationary period. Some comments did indicate a concern with the assignment of a mentor for new faculty and their ability to adequately shepherd new faculty throughout the probationary period. This mentor (or mentorship committee) along with the department head play a significant role in the development of faculty in preparation for decisions regarding tenure and promotion.

Each year, the department head conducts individual reviews of faculty accomplishments, work in progress, and related needs. All tenured, tenure-track and limited-term (temporary) faculty, within the department, are included in the review process. Performance information - feedback, is provided all faculty each year. Performance materials generated by tenure-track faculty are subsequently forwarded to the College office. There, they are reviewed and evaluated by a College review committee and the Dean. The Dean's recommendation is forwarded to central administration for a final decision on the granting of tenure. It is at this point that some concern emerges with regard to the amount of time required for the central administration decision-making process.

Post-tenure review occurs every five years in line with accreditation standards.

STANDARD FIVE – LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

The Western Washington Universities (WWU) Libraries stated mission is “to support the services and resources that sustain teaching, learning and scholarship.” The library mission reflects the traditional mission of WWU with its focus on undergraduate education.

Access to collections has been broadened for WWU through the membership of the ORBIS-Cascade Alliance, a consortium of libraries in Washington and Oregon that shares the monographic collections of its members is a courier system that delivers materials within 48 hours. Assessment of the Western Libraries collection using the conspectus method established by RLG indicates collections are supportive of undergraduate collections with many indicating insufficient funding to attain collection goals to enrich or maintain. From the user perspective, the LibQual survey from 2006 supports undergraduate satisfaction with collections, services as well as the facility. Support of graduate programs is less clear. The self study comments from standard two (2-63 of the self study) points to an inadequacy for library holdings for graduate programs. The LibQual survey of 2006 indicated dissatisfaction of graduate students with the WWU Libraries collections. In light of the university’s plan to expand graduate programs in target disciplines, deeper assessment of collections needs to be conducted to understand this dissatisfaction and to be able to advocate for collections and services.

Resources and Services

Ongoing collaboration with the Academic Technology and User Services (ATUS) has been fruitful in the use of technology to expand access to information and to support the students and staff in the use of changing technologies. Through this partnership, the library has established digital collections, digitized these and is looking at the potential of making its unique collections more accessible in the future. The library has been able to provide the public access computers so important to the services of the library with the funding from the student technology fee. The campus does not have a predictable replacement schedule or funding identified to support such a process. The expanding needs of information technology resulting from new construction or the uses of technology in instruction present added pressure on the technology fee. Because of the source of funding and the grant proposal process, planning and development of technology in instruction is problematic. Nevertheless, the general computer labs and the public access computers in the library are reasonably current and well maintained. The library manages the laptop check out program, with locations around campus, which has peaks of 4000 seat hour use per week.

The establishment of the Student Technology Center in the ground floor of Haggard is an initiative of the ATUS resulting from a student survey to identify need and priority. Usage data and anecdotal information has guided the development of services. Because of its location in the library building, services from both entities are enhanced with students benefiting from the wider range of services in the same building.

Instruction in information literacy has evolved and identified learning outcomes for the classes, but evidence of achieving those outcomes is limited to student evaluation forms of the classes. An online tutorial has been adapted to provide additional assistance to students but evidence of impact of this tool on learning outcomes has not been substantiated, nor is there evidence of assessment of this tool.

The Usability/Design team is a grassroots group originally dedicated to improving the library home page. Systematic testing and using the data to modify the home page has become an established process, with equipment dedicated to usability. Documentation of the data gathered and the conclusions from the data should be made available for other groups as well as to provide evidence of their work.

Collection management, through collection development policy and cataloging policies, was a concern expressed in the consultant report of the library operation in 2007. The existing collection development policies should be reviewed to include weeding collections, review of gift books and processes for evaluation and consultation. The library faculty with liaison responsibility to departments should consult their departments in the development of such policies.

Facilities and Access

During the past ten years, the libraries have experienced some successes in addressing concerns of the last full evaluation. Facilities have improved with the completed renovation of Haggard and popular sky bridge connecting Haggard to Wilson, but as stated in the last report, the full benefit of the remodel will not be realized until Wilson is also remodeled to address HVAC, leaking roofs and address the ability to address the two buildings as a single coherent library.

The off-campus access to electronic collections is now enabled with the use of a proxy server to match that of campus access. Additional support for off campus users includes the use of virtual reference and assigning a librarian to support distant education effort by in person instruction at service sites as well as an online information literacy course.

Personnel and Management

The organization, distribution of personnel, communication and general climate were expressed as serious concerns in the 2007 report by the consultants. Specific recommendations were made to improve leadership at the top and middle layers of management in the library. Most of these changes are awaiting the arrival of the new dean, expected June, 2008.

The financial resources for collections have had modest increases the past three years. These increases are not at a level that would keep pace with the inflationary costs. Discussions with the library faculty revealed that cancellations in journal subscriptions occurred last year and expected to do this again this fiscal year. This was not documented in the self study or exhibits. Financial analysis and planning for collections is necessary if this situation is to be addressed by the institution.

Consultation with the library and collection analysis to document the level of support for new curriculum is inconsistent (standard 5.D5). Discussions with the academic deans indicated a change had recently been made in the process but this is not clearly documented or communicated.

Planning and Evaluation

A systematic planning process in the library is not evident, consequently a process that involves students, faculty and administrators is equally lacking. An assessment committee was recently established but the charge and work has yet to be established, pending the arrival of the new Dean. Usage data is collected for collections, services and facilities but analysis and changes resulting from this data is not evident.

The discussions with the library faculty, existing administration and committees sought to identify an underlying process of assessment or use of data that was not reflected in the self study. The self study was highly descriptive with exhibits that tended to report incidents rather than present a series of events that have built upon each other. These discussions did not result in discovery of an assessment plan but did confirm the culture of the management of the library and approach to decision making is not analytical, does not routinely collect and use data to evolve processes. Changing a culture is a significant challenge and one that has been recognized by the external consultant for the library in the 2007 report. However, the results for a cultural change have significant payback in the ability for the staff to quantify the needs of the library to support the academic initiatives and remain relevant to the institution.

Concern

Assessing the quality, adequacy and utilization of the library is not routinely done.

STANDARD SIX – GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Western Washington University (WWU) is a freestanding public university governed by an eight member Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Legislature. Since 1998, the Board has included a student member recommended by the Associated Students (AS) organization. There is some level of coordination coming from the state's Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB); this Board does have degree approval authority. The Legislature also provides standards and guidance on a number of issues such as enrollment level and performance standards. Still, compared to many other institutions, WWU has a relatively high level of autonomy. This places considerable responsibility on campus level governance structures and processes.

The Evaluation Committee found the Board of Trustees to be well informed, highly engaged, committed to the mission and vision of the university, and well-versed on the issues facing WWU. The Board takes its stewardship role seriously and by its own account, supported by the input of others, spends considerable time on the work of the university. There were no reports of micromanaging or inadvertently stepping beyond the normal boundaries of Trustee responsibility.

The Governance structure below the Trustees follows a fairly typical pattern with senates or representative groups for faculty, staff, and students. The recent votes to bring in unions have created some mild turmoil as adjustments are made to changing roles and responsibilities.

Commendation

The Board of Trustees is particularly well-informed and engaged.

Concerns

1. There is a complex array of committees and processes that create the potential for input on key decisions yet there is a feeling on the part of many faculty that this process does not impact decisions. (6.A.3, 6.D.)
2. The decision of the faculty to enter into a collective bargaining agreement calls for considerable reworking of governance details such that there is a lack of clarity on the respective roles of faculty bargaining entities and other faculty governance organizations. (Policy 6.2.4)

STANDARD SEVEN - FINANCE

Financial Planning

Western Washington University (WWU) is governed by a Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate.

The budget process is driven by the State budget timeline. The campus prepares and submits a two year budget request to the State for approval as part of the State's biennial budget process. The 09-11 budget request will include a performance agreement with the State. This agreement will require WWU to define performance metrics tied to their Strategic Plan for funding and assessment. Once the State has approved the budget request, the President allocates budget resources to each vice president. Each vice president has his/her own budget staff and allocates resources within their division. The final institution budget is approved by the Board of Trustees and published. Changes to the budget are reviewed by the President's Planning and Resources Council (PPRC) and recommendations are made to the President.

Long and short-range capital planning is guided by a master plan. Each biennium the campus must submit a ten year capital construction and renovation plan in support of their biennial capital budget request. The ten year plan is prepared with input by the Deans, the President's cabinet, the PPRC, and the Board of Trustees.

Debt for capital outlay is reviewed and controlled and does not create an unreasonable drain on resources available for educational purposes.

Adequacy of Financial Reserves

Funding is largely dependent on the State of Washington with 59% of the 2006-07 general fund budget revenue coming from state appropriations. The institution is quasi-self insured and maintains fund balances and reserves adequate to provide for enrollment fluctuations, legal settlements, minor calamities, and other contingencies.

Debt service schedules are maintained and appropriate annual debt service reserve transfers are required and made.

Auxiliaries are charged an annual Administrative Services Assessment. The institution has developed a fixed dollar assessment for each auxiliary unit that is roughly equal to 1% of revenue on average and varies by auxiliary unit from 0% for the Student Health Center to 15.3% for Central Stores. In almost all cases, the assessment is not adequate to reimburse the Institution for administrative services rendered to the auxiliary units.

Financial Management

The President regularly reports on the financial performance of the university to the Board of Trustees.

The President's Planning and Resources Council (PPRC) is an eighteen member council made up of faculty, staff, and students. The PPRC replaced the University Budget Advisory Committee. The mission of the PPRC, as described on the PPRC web page, is to "identify and broadly communicate to the campus macro-level university issues and priorities, discussing broad issues relative to how the university will proceed as guided by our Mission and Strategic Action Guidelines." The council reviews and provides strategic feedback on the biennial state budget request and on proposed changes to the approved institution budget. It does not transparently review and provide strategic feedback on the allocation of budget resources within the university divisions. Meeting minutes are not taken and campus-wide communication is limited.

Business functions are centralized and under the authority of the vice president for business and financial affairs who reports directly to the president. Operating budget and planning activities are managed by the executive director for university planning and budgeting who also reports directly to the president. Both of these areas are adequately staffed by professional, experienced, and knowledgeable staff.

The campus internal auditor reports to the President and to the Board of Trustees, through the board audit committee. An annual audit plan is prepared and approved by the audit committee. Audit reports are formally prepared, findings and recommendations communicated, and follow up to campus responses scheduled and made.

The institution complies with all aspects of financial management, reporting and audit requirements as evidenced by audited financial statements and independent auditor's report and internal audit reports.

Fundraising and Development

The WWU Foundation is incorporated separately as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Its sole purpose is to raise funds for the university in the areas of scholarships and faculty and program support. The relationship between the university and the foundation is defined in an agreement signed by both parties. All investment activities are governed by policy and managed by an investment committee made up of foundation board members. All fund raising activities are governed by policy, comply with government requirements, and are conducted in a professional and ethical manner as evidenced by audited financial statements and independent auditor's report.

STANDARD EIGHT - PHYSICAL RESOURCES

Instructional and Support Facilities

Western Washington University (WWU) is situated on 215 acres with a total of slightly over 3.2 million square feet of buildings, including 48 academic and support buildings (roughly 2/3 of campus building square footage), 27 residential housing and food services facilities, and 10 auxiliary facilities.

The institution is currently constructing a new academic building, Academic-Instructional Center, which should be completed by Fall 2009. This facility will add 725 classroom seats. Additionally, Miller Hall is scheduled for a needed renovation which is planned to add another 210 classroom seats by 2011. State standard for required weekly contact hours per seat for Fall 2007 was 22.0. Actual weekly contact hours per week for Fall 2007 were 24.5.

The majority of evidence suggests that maintenance of facilities needs improvements and that there is a concern that resources are not adequate to ensure all deferred maintenance projects can be performed on a proactive rather than reactive basis. Current deferred maintenance backlog is \$122M and growing at a rate of approximately \$20M per year. The use of computerized maintenance management systems like FacMan and FAMIS, greatly assists Facilities Management staff in their efforts to meet the facilities needs of the campus. FacMan gives the institution the ability to identify deferred maintenance by building and can drill down to specific building systems. It also provides invaluable assistance in prioritizing deferred maintenance projects based on criteria such as health, safety, accessibility, cost, and time sensitivity.

Equipment and Materials

Equipment for instructional programs appears to be adequate and is inventoried, controlled, and maintained. Formal replacement cycle planning is not always evident.

Physical Resource Planning

WWU's current master plan was developed in 1998 and approved by the Institution, Board of Trustees, and the City of Bellingham in 2001. It works in concert with the campus' Strategic Action Plan, the Board of Trustees, and the PPRC to guide future campus development.

Four years ago the Institution began an extensive planning exercise looking at the possibility of partnering with the Port Authority, the City of Bellingham, private developers, and other stakeholders to develop a 200 plus parcel of waterfront property formally owned by Georgia Pacific. Preliminary plans vision a twenty acre academic center that could provide for future campus expansion and contribute to the Bellingham community. The planning for this exciting project should continue with the same inclusive visionary thinking that has been ongoing for the past four years.

The Institution has invested in a Sustainability Office and created a new position of Sustainability Coordinator to staff it. The coordinator reports to the director of facilities

management and receives functional guidance from the Sustainability Committee. Goals of this office are to 1) develop sustainable campus operations and best practices, 2) work as a connection between sustainability research and students, and 3) act as a liaison between WWU and other higher education institutions.

The facilities are sufficient to support the mission and goals of the university. The facilities management department is well organized and well run and has been able to maintain the buildings, grounds, and support infrastructure in a manner more than adequate to meet the needs of the Institution.

Concern

The Institution's deferred maintenance backlog is not adequately funded and there appears to be no strategy to address this directly. (Standard 8.A)

STANDARD NINE – INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

Western Washington University (WWU) is guided by the laws of the state, its own Board policies, internal governance documents, the norms of academic entities, and the standards of the accrediting commission. These are reflected in the everyday life of the university. The administration is clearly cognizant of these expectations and fastidious in its respect for the rights of all members of its community.

Discussions with faculty, staff and students indicate a firm commitment to academic freedom. Rigorous dialogue is clearly part of the tradition and fabric of the institution.

The institution meets this standard without question.

GENERAL COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Commendations

1. The faculty, staff and administration are commended for their uniformly shared understanding of and deep commitment to the university's core mission of undergraduate education and the pride they have in the success of their students.
2. The university is commended for its effective system of faculty evaluation which has been widely credited for its thoroughness and its impact on faculty development.
3. The university is commended for its attractive campus and for its well organized and managed facilities operation with its computerized maintenance management systems.
4. The Board of Trustees is commended for its informed and effective stewardship of the university.

Recommendations

1. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the operating budgeting process be given a thorough review and revision. The current process, though detailed and iterative, does not always provide adequate transparency. There is a need for more discussion prior to decisions, better and consistent communications of results, and greater demonstration that funding decisions are linked to strategic priorities. (Standards 1, 7.A)
2. The Evaluation Committee notes there has been inadequate progress on the implementation of key aspects of an institution-wide plan of program assessment. Despite admirable growth in ongoing data collection, campus support, a plethora of reports, the number of robust college level plans and efforts, investments in staff, and committees there is a need to close the feedback loop and use the information generated to improve programs and inform resource decisions in a consistent and systemic manner. (Standards 1.B, 2.B, Policy 2.6)
3. The Evaluation Committee finds that the Library has not engaged in a fundamental and thorough planning effort, informed by assessment, to consistently support the university's academic mission. (Standard 5)
4. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the university address the structure and working relationships of the numerous committees, processes, and reports that populate the governance process in order to enhance communication and effectiveness. This good faith effort to provide multiple opportunities for input and review has, in some areas, created confusion and sometimes tensions as to where reports go, how processes work and which group has responsibility for making decisions and implementing recommendations. (Standard 6.A.1)