Western Oregon University

MIDCYCLE SELF EVALUATION REPORT

Submitted to Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

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INTRODUCTION

Western Oregon University (WOU) is a mid-sized public university committed to changing lives, strengthening communities and transforming our world. Located in Monmouth in the heart of Oregon's lush Willamette Valley, we are 20 minutes from the state capital and 75 minutes from the state's cultural hub and largest city, Portland.

In fall 2018, WOU enrolled 4,570 undergraduate and 523 graduate students, with an FTE of 4,054 undergraduates and 317 graduate students. Eighty-six percent of our undergraduate students are full time, while nearly half of our graduate students are full time. Forty percent of our students are first-generation (Oregon HECC Report), and 41 percent are Pell eligible (WOU IPEDS Report).

Every Oregon county is represented in the 76 percent of students who are Oregon residents. The remaining students represent 34 states, four territories and 21 countries. More than 60 percent of WOU students are white. However, when compared to the technical and regional universities in Oregon, WOU enrolls the most diverse student body; Latino students comprise 16 percent of the student body, and more than 26 percent of our students identify as students of color.

We offer undergraduate academic programs in 52 majors and graduate programs in 10 areas. WOU's students are served by 356 faculty (300 FTE); 77 percent are full-time faculty, and 46 percent are tenured or tenure-track faculty. In 2018, the student-to-faculty ratio is 14:1.

Our teacher education programs are accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and are in compliance with the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC of Oregon), which authorizes teacher preparation programs offered by Oregon higher education institutions. Other program-specific accreditations include National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) and Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE).

Recent Accreditation History

WOU's most recent Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Report and site visit were in 2016. The review resulted in seven recommendations related to mission, core themes, mission fulfillment, learning outcomes, alignment of planning and budgeting, and assessment and continuous improvement (letter dated July 14, 2016).

In March 2017, WOU submitted the Mission and Core Themes Report; however, NWCCU deferred action on the spring 2017 Year One Mission and Core Themes Report. As noted, the decision "was based on the finding that although the institution submitted a major substantive change proposal describing a change with respect to its mission and core themes, the Commission" had not acted on this request (letter dated July 24, 2017). Consequently, WOU was asked to resubmit its Mission and Core Themes Report in March 2018. Our Mission and Core Themes Report of 2017 also included responses to Recommendations 1, 2 and 3[1], which were reviewed by the Commission and found to be in compliance with the standards and eligibility requirements relevant to those recommendations (letter dated February 8, 2018).

In September 2017, WOU submitted the ad hoc report with responses to Recommendations 4, 6 and 7[2]. NWCCU found us to be in substantial compliance but in need of improvement (letter dated February 8, 2018). At that time and in lieu of the March 2018 reporting requirement, we were directed to resubmit a Mission and Core Themes Report and a Recommendation 5[3] response, along with the Mid-Cycle Report, in March 2019.

Per the direction of NWCCU, this Mid-Cycle Report is accompanied by 1) an Appendix containing the Mission and Core Themes Report, 2) an Addendum with updates on Recommendations 4, 6 and

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[1] Recommendation 1: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution clarify its mission statement to provide better direction for mission fulfillment (Standard 1.A.1).
Recommendation 2: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution define mission fulfillment including identifying outcomes that represent the extent of the institution's accomplishment of mission fulfillment (Standard 1.A.2 and Eligibility Requirements 22 & 23).
Recommendation 3: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution establish objectives for each core theme and identify meaningful, assessable, and verifiable direct and indirect indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of the core themes (Eligibility Requirements 23; Standard 1.B.2).
[2] Recommendation 4: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution establish student learning outcomes for all courses, programs and degrees, including general education, wherever offered and however delivered that are meaningful, assessable and verifiable and are consistent with the mission (Eligibility Requirement 22; Standard 2.C.1, 2.C.2, 2.C.4, 2.C.5, and 2.C.10).
Recommendation 6: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution design and implement an ongoing planning and budgeting process that is broad based, inclusive of all appropriate constituencies, data driven, includes core theme planning and leads to mission fulfillment (Eligibility Requirement 23; Standards 2.F.3, 3.A.1-4, and 3.B.1-3).
Recommendation 7: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution engage in comprehensive, ongoing, systematic assessment that leads to mission fulfillment through the evaluation of core theme objectives and support of continuous improvement (Eligibility Requirement 23; Standards 4.A.1-6, 4.B.1-2, 5.A.1-2, and 5.B.1).
[3] Recommendation 5: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution provide appropriate and adequate technology systems and infrastructure planning with input from constituencies to support its management and operational functions, academic programs and support services, wherever offered and however delivered.

7 from the 2016 review, and 3) an [Addendum](#) with a response to Recommendation 5 from the 2016 report.

In February 2018, the Commission found the following:

Actions
- Accept the fall 2017 Ad Hoc Report.

Status of Previous Recommendations Addressed in This Evaluation
- Recommendation 1 of the spring 2016 Year Seven Peer Evaluation Report is fulfilled.
- Recommendations 2 and 3 of the spring 2016 Year Seven Peer Evaluation Report are now in compliance and fulfilled.
- Recommendations 4, 6 and 7 of the spring 2016 Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report are now substantially in compliance but in need of improvement.

Sanction
- Remove *Notice of Concern* for Recommendations 2, 3, 4 and 6.

Required Follow-Up
- Submit an addendum to the spring 2019 Mid-Cycle Report to readdress Recommendations 4, 6 and 7 of the spring 2016 Year Seven Evaluation Report.
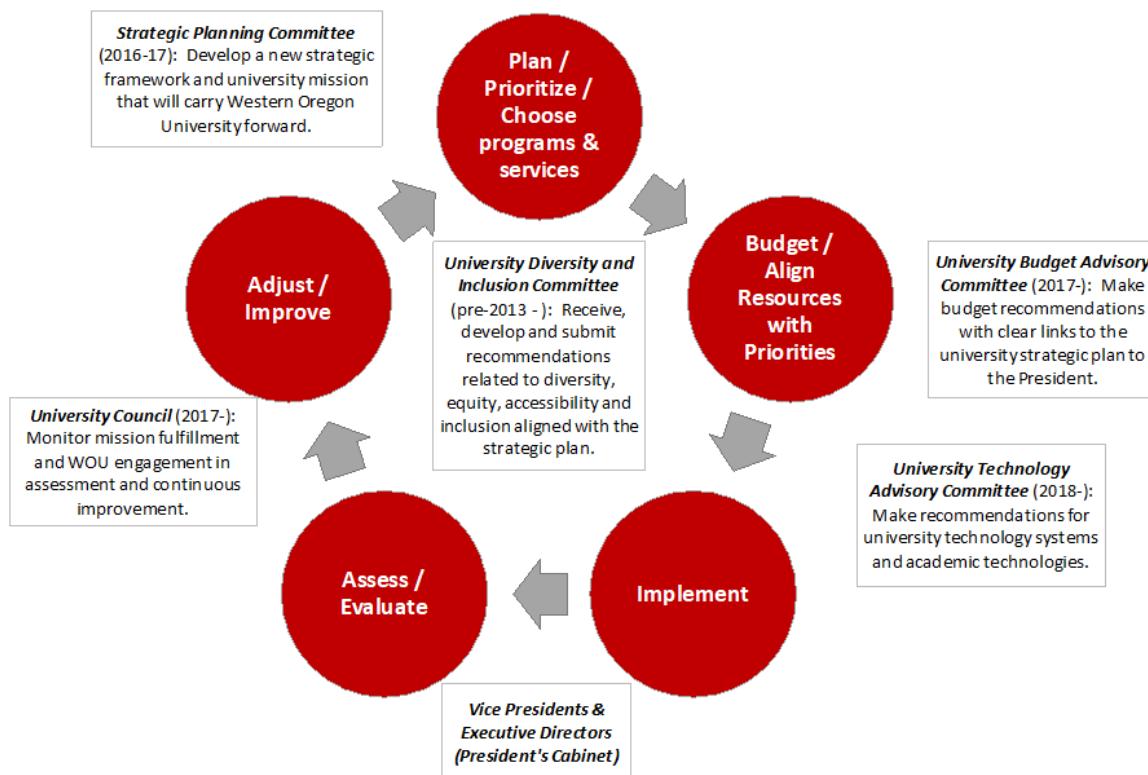
Changes Since Our Last Review

Since NWCCU's last visit to WOU in April 2016, we have reached significant milestones.

At the direction of WOU's president, a [Strategic Planning Committee](#) (SPC) was formed in April 2016. During the nine-month process, the 25-member committee was committed to fostering a culture of open communication and transparency, as it shared its thinking and planning ideas with the larger campus community via multiple town hall meetings. Additionally, SPC members shared updates with, and solicited targeted feedback from, smaller groups such as division chairpersons, the Faculty Senate and its Executive Committee, Academic Affairs Executive Council, Staff Senate and the Associated Students of WOU. SPC also collaborated in small teams to tackle various aspects of the planning process, which ranged from a review of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the development of a new mission statement that reaffirms WOU's values and vision for student success. In January 2017, the inclusive and comprehensive strategic planning process resulted in the Board of Trustees' approval of *[Forward Together](#)*, the strategic framework that will guide us through 2023.

In recognition of the need for institution-wide oversight of mission fulfillment, the [University Council](#) (UC) was established in 2017 as a permanent iteration of the ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee. In support of other elements of our strategic plan, WOU established the [University](#)

[Budget Advisory Committee](#) (UBAC) in 2017 and [University Technology Advisory Committee](#) (UTAC) in 2018. We have also reinvigorated our long-standing [University Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council](#) (UDAIC), which has been charged with receiving, developing and submitting recommendations related to diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion aligned with the strategic plan. Figure 1 illustrates how key constituents function in WOU's cycle of continuous improvement.

Figure 1: Governance and Continuous Improvement

Additional results of strategic planning include changes in key personnel and reporting structures. Most recently, we appointed a new vice president for Finance and Administration, created and filled the position of controller, and are in the midst of a national search for a provost and vice president for Academic Affairs.

Academic Affairs and Student Affairs have been reorganized to support the high priority areas of *Forward Together*. New functions within Academic Affairs include [academic effectiveness](#) (i.e., assessment, program review, professional development), [general education](#) (i.e., planning, implementation, assessment), and program development (i.e., [pipeline](#) and [degree completion](#)). Within Student Affairs, the vice president is now steering enrollment management, with the support of two newly resituated reporting units: Admissions and Financial Aid. With the new responsibilities, Student Affairs has been reorganized to include an associate vice president and two assistant vice presidents.

We also invested in our capacity for evidence-based decision-making by establishing an Institutional Research (IR) office and hiring an experienced director in 2017. Since that time, IR has developed public dashboards tracking key performance indicators, and capacity has been further enhanced by a contract in 2017-18 with Hanover Research with an explicit focus on our students and environment. At present, sponsored research and grants management is in flux, but we expect the functions of the university and The Research Institute (TRI) will be integrated by fall 2019. Looking forward, a steering committee of administration, faculty and librarians are developing a plan to integrate library and academic technology functions, and including a national search for a dean of Library and Academic Technologies. These strategic structural changes across the university position us for mission fulfillment.

Processes have also been significantly impacted by strategic planning. Most notable is the area of decentralized budgeting. Sweeping changes have been made to 1) align authority, responsibility and accountability, and 2) improve services (see President's 2018 Campus Communique). Examples of changes include the following:

- UBAC was formed to advise the president on the alignment of budget with strategic priorities and to assist in involving the campus community in and throughout the budget process.
- Budget authority is now assigned to units, and units are expected to adhere to their total budget and are authorized to move budget monies across categories (e.g., from S&S to student wages).
- During each fiscal year, vacancy savings are retained in the unit, along with responsibility for personnel-related expenses (e.g., search and vacation payout).
- Divisions may request that positive budget balances be carried forward to the next fiscal year.
- Vacancies in permanent faculty positions accrue to the provost for future reallocation.
- Mid-year unit-level budget changes are limited to salary adjustments related to collective bargaining agreements and unexpected enrollment or revenue fluctuations.

More specifically, UBAC has identified institutional fiscal challenges and makes recommendations regarding solutions and/or action plans:

- A moratorium on course fees was instituted, with plans for an audit in 2019.
- Student-wage budgets were increased by 12.1 percent across campus to offset annual minimum wage increases mandated by Senate Bill 1532.
- The Tuition and Fee Advisory Committee successfully lobbied for 1) an increase of $400,000 in fee remissions, and 2) no increase in tuition for non-resident graduate students for 2018-19.
- The process, timeline and communication plan for budget proposals were overhauled.

With these changes, WOU has systematically and effectively addressed the recommendations NWCCU cited after the Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability evaluation in 2016. The new elements of governance, mission and strategic plan have enabled us to clarify our mission; define core themes aligned with the mission; develop a system of assessment for learning outcomes and core themes; identify meaningful, assessable and measurable measures achievement; provide appropriate technological support; develop an integrated budgeting process aligned with mission fulfillment; and engage in effective assessment of mission fulfillment from a university-wide perspective.

PART ONE: OVERVIEW OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLAN

In this section, we review our institutional assessment plan as it was described in the Mission and Core Themes report submitted to NWCCU in March 2017 (Appendix A). Although the Commission deferred action, the report served as the roadmap for the work described in this mid-cycle update.

The Western Oregon University mission is to "create lasting opportunities for student success through transformative education and personalized support." Two Core Themes emerge from our mission and represent our highest institutional priorities: student success and academic excellence. Our mission is fulfilled when we achieve the student success and academic excellence objectives.

We define student success as degree completion. Student success objectives include the following:

- Curriculum is delivered to students via multiple paths.
- Students complete programs in a timely and efficient manner.
- Student-support services facilitate student persistence and academic achievement.
- Faculty `and staff cultivate positive and personalized interactions with students.
- Financial hardships that interfere with student completion are minimized.

We define academic excellence as well-defined curricular and co-curricular opportunities that enable students to engage in purposeful learning experiences. Academic excellence objectives include the following:

- Alignment across course, program and university learning outcomes is clear.
- Curricular and co-curricular programs are responsive to the evolving needs of students.
- Teaching, research and scholarship and creative activities serve student success.
- High-impact learning opportunities are integral to every student's WOU experience.

We identified indicators and targets for objectives and determined standards for the attainment of the targets. The narrative and rationale for the mission, core themes, objectives and indicators, and for the relationships among them, are found in the Mission and Core Themes report submitted in March 2017 (Appendix A). In the spirit of self-assessment, we selected indicators and targets with

aims that vary in their nature: absolute numbers (i.e., a fully aligned curriculum); improvement over past performance (i.e., year-to-year improvements in retention rate); improvement in comparison to peers (i.e., affordability relative to other Oregon public universities). Our objectives, indicators and targets are dynamic in that our achievement of targets will prompt us to raise the level of our targets and/or develop new objectives.

Progress towards our objectives is reviewed annually by UC and the Board of Trustees, and results shape operational and programmatic priorities for the year.

Implementation of Assessment Plan

We have a schedule of internal reviews that will prepare us for the Year Seven Self-Evaluation, and this process includes annual plans for action: the updating of indicator data in the Mission Fulfillment Matrix; the review of the planning, budgeting, assessment, and continuous improvement cycle by the UC; the review of mission fulfillment by the UC and the Board of Trustees; and the submission of required reports to NWCCU. A biennial review of the elements of Standard 2: Resources and Capacity is scheduled to ensure mission fulfillment by 2023.

By both adhering to the following schedule of activities (see Chart 1) and engaging the broader university in the work of tracking mission fulfillment, we will be well-positioned to demonstrate mission fulfillment in 2023.

Chart 1: Schedule of Reviews of Mission Fulfillment and Standard 2: Resources and Capacity, 2016-2023

2016-17
●   Mission finalized ●   Core themes, objectives, indicators and targets identified and developed ●   Mission and Core Themes report submitted
2017-18
●   Ad hoc report submitted ●   Indicators and targets populated with fall 2017 data ●   UC introduced to its role in monitoring mission fulfillment
2018-19
●   Mid-cycle report submitted ●   Indicators and targets populated with fall 2018 data ●   UC and Board of Trustees review mission fulfillment and make commendations and recommendations ●   First round of Standard 2 preparations completed ●   UC assesses planning, budgeting, assessment and continuous improvement processes
2019-20
●   Indicators and targets populated with fall 2019 data ●   UC and Board of Trustees review mission fulfillment and make commendations and recommendations ●   UC assesses planning, budgeting, assessment and continuous improvement processes

2020-21 • Indicators and targets populated with fall 2020 data • UC and Board of Trustees review mission fulfillment and make commendations and recommendations • Second round of Standard 2 preparations completed • UC assesses planning, budgeting, assessment, and continuous improvement processes
2021-22 • Indicators and targets populated with fall 2021 data • UC and Board of Trustees review mission fulfillment and make commendations and recommendations • UC assesses planning, budgeting, assessment and continuous improvement processes
2022-23 • Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability report submitted • Indicators and targets populated with fall 2022 data • UC reviews mission fulfillment and make commendations and recommendations • UC assesses planning, budgeting, assessment and continuous improvement processes • Board of Trustees reviews and assesses continuous improvement process to ensure mission fulfillment

Using Indicators to Strategize

At the start of each academic year, the UC meets for a full day to discuss major initiatives related to the strategic plan, *Forward Together*. During the September 2018 retreat, UC reviewed baseline data for objective indicators, along with supplemental retention data, and emphasis was placed on areas of concern, or Level 1 goals that had not yet been met: overall affordability, measures of academic challenge in the freshman year, and the five-year rolling average of six-year graduation rates.

The retreat resulted in two mission-driven, long-term goals: the development of new programs for new students, and a 2025 goal for achieving Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) status, which will enable WOU to compete for HSI-related federal funding.

Additionally, we developed immediate budget priorities to guide the 2018-19 budget process: growing enrollment, improving the retention and graduation rates of students in the sophomore, junior and senior year, and becoming the most affordable public university in Oregon.

The priorities were communicated to campus via the president's September 2018 State of the University address (text and video), on the UBAC website, as agenda item in a UC (minutes) meeting, and in an email communication from the president to all faculty and staff, calling for budget proposals aligned with the priorities (Appendix B). Additionally, both the campus executive officers and the UBAC (minutes) were charged with identifying new initiatives and efficiencies aligned with the priorities.

PART TWO: ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT PLAN VIA CASE STUDIES

WOU is a public, regional and comprehensive university that serves a large population of first-generation and economically disadvantaged students. We recognize that our students take significant financial risks when they attend WOU. With this in mind, we have learned to see how academic excellence and student success are contingent upon one another and how unintentional barriers in the curriculum affect student success. Therefore, our case studies document 1) the evidence-driven rebuilding of our curricular infrastructure, which served as the springboard for 2) redesigning our general education program, with students and evidence at the center of our discussions and decisions. We present both narratives before proceeding to the analysis of indicators and our process reflections.

Case Study One

The implementation and assessment of undergraduate student learning outcomes are shown to support academic excellence.

Because a purposeful and well-designed curriculum lies at the heart of our understanding of academic excellence, our first case study focuses on the development of WOU's approach to the implementation and assessment of institution-wide undergraduate learning outcomes.

Building the Foundation

After listening to national assessment conversations and reflecting internally, WOU recognized a need to state goals for student learning and establish assessment processes. Therefore, in 2005, WOU approved Institutional Aspirations as learning outcomes for all undergraduate degrees. Over time, however, we learned that those aspirations were too numerous and vague to be assessable, and we turned to the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) for guidance. In 2014, that Faculty Senate adopted the total collection of 16 LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes as our Undergraduate Learning Outcomes (ULOs). Despite adopting assessable outcomes, however, we made no progress on institution-wide assessment for two more years. It was not until a team of faculty and academic administrators attended the AAC&U Institute on General Education and Assessment in 2016 that a solution to our stall became clear: a realistic assessment framework could only be achieved by choosing several mission-driven outcomes from the collection and using those outcomes as the foundation for a new culture of continuous improvement through assessment.

After collecting and analyzing data on program and general education course outcomes, and their alignments with LEAP outcomes, as well as faculty perceptions of high priority LEAP outcomes, we selected five focal ULOs: Inquiry and Analysis, Integrative Learning, Quantitative Literacy, Written Communication, and Diversity (an mix of the Intercultural Competence and Global Learning LEAP outcomes). All academic departments subsequently participated in aligning undergraduate course outcomes with program learning outcomes and ULOs. In fall 2016, WOU established its first

institution-wide committee on assessment, the [Assessment Facilitation Steering Committee](#) (AFSC), which was charged with advising the provost on processes and policies for aligning, assessing and improving student achievement of learning outcomes in general education and academic programs at the graduate and undergraduate levels. In this capacity, AFSC vets institution-wide assessment practices, including our framework for the collaborative study of student work via Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). This assessment model was piloted by the Quantitative Literacy PLC, which [reported](#) findings about both the learning outcomes and the assessment process itself.

Assessing Student Learning

During the past three years, faculty-led cross-disciplinary PLCs have assessed student work in relation to specific ULOs: Quantitative Literacy (2016-17); Inquiry and Analysis and Written Communication (2017-18); Diversity and Integrative Learning (2018-19). PLCs comprised faculty from across the university and include tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty of all ranks and varying levels of experience (see [Appendix C](#)). In addition to a university-wide call for participation, PLC chairs strategically recruit faculty to ensure broad participation. While examining assignments and students' work, PLCs focus on the following questions: 1) what opportunities do students have to demonstrate the learning outcome; 2) what level of achievement do instructors expect, acknowledging that the bar for an upper-division course should be higher than the bar for an introductory course; and 3) how is the typical student in a course doing, relative to the instructor's expectations? Findings and recommendations have been shared with the Faculty Senate and with faculty via reports and workshops: [Quantitative Literacy Report](#), [Inquiry/Analysis Report](#), and [Written Communication Report](#); reports for Integrative Learning and Diversity will be compiled and released at the end of this academic year. Chart 2 provides a sample of findings.

Chart 2: Sample findings from 2016-17 and 2017-18 ULO PLCs

	Professional Learning Communities		
Findings	**Quantitative Literacy**	**Inquiry and Analysis ("I&A")**	**Written Communication**
Most Prevalent Features	application, calculation and representation	analysis and existing knowledge	There was relatively even representation across features.
Least Prevalent Features	assumptions, interpretation	topic selection, limitations and implications, design process	
Typical Student Achievement Vis-à-vis Instructor Expectations	Met instructor expectations, except for interpretation and communication.	Average achievement was lower than average instructor expectation by about 10 percent.	Lower by 10-15 percent; *syntax and mechanics* was feature for which achievement was closest to expectations (5 percent lower).

Other	Student work was drawn largely from quantitative literacy courses in specific disciplines; PLC was impressed by the rigor of assignments and noted emphasis on statistics rather than pure algebra.	Student work was largely drawn from lower-division general education courses. PLC noted that student agency in such courses is limited; PLC noted that I&A features fit sciences well. Humanities were a better fit with critical thinking features, and being forced into I&A outcome complicated assessment.	Student work was largely drawn from upper-division courses in disciplines designated as writing intensive; PLC surveyed instructors and found uneven implementation of required elements of such courses.

Making Evidence-Based Curriculum Decisions
At the undergraduate level, assignments and student work examined in the context of course learning outcomes provided evidence of the need for the adjustment and/or revision of curriculum and pedagogy, with three focal points: responding to students' challenges and needs; improving opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate skills; and enhancing pedagogy. The findings of the PLCs have guided colleges, divisions and departments in student-centered curriculum improvements. Examples of the range of improvements include:

- In response to a PLC recommendation, Mathematics proposed a change in the prerequisite structure for general education mathematics courses by removing College Algebra (i.e., Precalculus) as a prerequisite for Introduction to Probability and Statistics, which enables students in the social sciences, business, and some natural sciences to proceed directly to the mathematics content that their disciplines demand (approved fall 2018).
- Facilitated by an intersection between the General Education Committee and Writing PLC membership, written communication in general education was re-envisioned, which resulted in replacing "writing intensive" course designations with First-Year Seminars to provide students with early opportunities to develop writing skills in interdisciplinary contexts.
- In line with findings from the Inquiry and Analysis PLC, a critical thinking category was added to the Foundations section of the new general education framework.
- Targeted professional development opportunities (e.g., online teaching, working adult and hybrid course development, assignment design, experiential learning) were expanded to support faculty in enhancing pedagogy and maximizing the opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate skills in their courses.

Implications for Academic Excellence
We have witnessed a notable shift in campus culture during the past three years. In addition to the building of an interconnected system to support student attainment of institution-wide learning goals, increasing numbers of faculty have used evidence-based decision-making to inform how they think and speak about curriculum. The current process of general education redesign is evidence of

that shift. A void in demonstrable pedagogical study and improvement of learning has been replaced by regular, objectives-driven assessment conversations across the curriculum; cross-disciplinary groups of faculty are productively engaged in achieving mission fulfillment in the area of purposeful and well-designed curriculum that supports student learning by engaging direct evidence of student learning.

Case Study Two

Purposeful and well-designed general education is hypothesized to improve student learning and student success.

Our second case study focuses on a substantial redesign of the undergraduate curriculum, with a spotlight on the general education program. We showcase how the foundational work described in our first case study—that is, the implementation and assessment of undergraduate student learning outcomes—set the stage for a faculty-led, evidence-based general education program that will 1) support students in achieving well-articulated student learning outcomes, 2) provide evidence of student learning, 3) evolve as students' needs evolve, and 4) use intentional design of curriculum to streamline paths to completion.

Background

Rooted in its origins as a normal school, Western Oregon University's general education framework has long followed a distribution model. The model was based on the idea that completing credits in the 11 areas of Liberal Arts Core Curriculum (LACC) would provide a broad liberal arts education to aspiring teachers. Additionally, general education and LACC had been without a home, which means that no formal and consistent oversight of general education existed. As a result, as WOU expanded its offerings in broad-based liberal education programs in the 1970s and began attracting the majority of new students to majors other than education, LACC was not adapted to support the systemic changes in academic programs. Aside from a few modifications (adding new graduation requirements in writing and diversity), the program had remained largely the same for nearly 50 years. Our general education and LACC requirements were rooted in a particular era and institutional mission, while the times and our mission had changed.

In past NWCCU evaluations, general education was identified as an area for improvement. The Faculty Senate responded by convening the ad hoc LACC/General Education Review Committee in 2007-08, which identified the absence of general education outcomes. After forming a subcommittee for the development of outcomes, the ad hoc committee proposed the institution of general education outcomes, which the Faculty Senate passed in 2009. However, these outcomes were not fully embraced by faculty, and subsequent WOU catalogs failed to include the new general education learning outcomes.

The ad hoc committee then attempted to use the new outcomes to review the alignment between general education outcomes and LACC courses. In spring 2011, the ad hoc committee presented its findings to the Faculty Senate:

"[We] investigated correspondence between the General Education Learning Outcomes (GELO) adopted last year [2008-09] and the stated objectives of a cross-section of LACC courses. From the data we collected, we were able to determine that the GELO are being addressed by the current general education requirements. However, it must be said that *the committee did not have at its disposal sufficient data to determine whether or not the GELO are actually being accomplished*. This would require a large-scale, campus-wide assessment of learning—something this committee did not have the time or expertise to undertake." [emphasis added]

In other words, there was no foundation in place to produce evidence of program and course alignments or corresponding outcomes-based student learning; therefore, the program did not have meaningful, assessable measures of student achievement related to its intended learning outcomes. As a result, a need for change in general education was not identified, and no changes were made.

Starting Again
We recount our history to illustrate and demarcate our current awareness: that curricular review and evolution were stymied in the absence of 1) clearly articulated and disseminated student learning outcomes; 2) a home, or standing committee, with oversight over the general education curriculum; and 3) mechanisms for ongoing institution-wide assessment of student learning.

With the work described in the first case study, we began to overcome our inertia. Building on the new foundation, we also studied student-level and programmatic data regarding paths through undergraduate degrees and discovered the average graduate earned more than 200 credits when only 180 credits are required for graduation. This finding helped explain our six-year graduation rates, which have been consistently below expectations in light of our student-centered values. We also reviewed undergraduate curriculum by examining the pathways for general education, additional graduation requirements for B.A. and B.S. degrees, upper-division graduation requirements, the mandatory-minor requirement, and major requirements.

Working with program coordinators, we charted the most direct path through each undergraduate major using common assumptions (e.g., credits in a minor, liberal double-counting towards requirements, student readiness for college-level work). We found that approximately 44 percent of our undergraduate programs restricted elective credits to no more than one term (15 quarter credits), which is highly problematic for students who change majors, explore before choosing a major, transfer into the university, or have academic interests not structured into an existing major or minor. As a result of tradition and inertia, WOU had drifted into a prescriptive undergraduate curriculum that posed barriers to student success and lacked clear student learning goals to justify requirements.

The pathways project led to a new curricular structure called "30-60-90." The framework promises students a 180-credit pathway to degree, regardless of major: up to 90 credits would be prescribed by programs, approximately 60 credits would be prescribed by the university as general education, and at least 30 credits would be chosen as electives by the student. In establishing this structure, the university removed barriers to students and created the impetus for reconsideration of general education requirements. In all, WOU:

- Eliminated the minor requirement
- Removed all hidden prerequisites
- Reduced the number of upper-division credits required
- Re-envisioned B.A. and B.S. degree designations to reflect the nature of major programs and corresponding learning outcomes, as opposed to additional isolated graduation requirements
- Redesigned general education, as detailed in the following section

These changes would not have been possible without the 2016 establishment of a governance structure and home for general education: the Faculty Senate General Education Committee. As the result of extensive work, the standing committee proposed a set of GELOs that were aligned with the undergraduate learning outcomes described in our first case study, and the Faculty Senate approved the outcomes in July 2017. With GELOs in hand, a General Education Task Force was established in summer 2017 to design a general education curriculum aligned with those outcomes, and the new curriculum was approved in March 2018.

Revitalized by a New Framework
The new general education program is designed to achieve student learning outcomes that are aligned with the undergraduate learning outcomes described in Case Study One. The framework serves as a crucial component of the WOU experience by providing students with fundamental skills for lifelong learning: students will apply, communicate and integrate ideas from a variety of disciplines; they will gain abilities to think and act critically as citizens of a complex and ever-changing world; and they will be empowered to pursue diverse interests and perform varying roles in their personal, professional and civic lives. Additionally, we have been intentional in removing barriers to student success. For example, we recognize that there are multiple ways to communicate in the 21st century (e.g., verbal, visual, non-verbal/interpersonal), and students should have options that honor the diversity we value. By replacing a communications requirement that could only be fulfilled by a single course (COM 111) with a Communications and Language category whose definition allows options from across the disciplines, the curriculum became not only more flexible and navigable, but also more responsive to the needs and interests of today's students.

This example illustrates a new flexibility that is a key difference between this curriculum and the previous approach. The new framework creates a general education program that can be assessed

holistically and modified in response to changing academic structures and goals. An additional key difference is point of view. Rather than clustering courses by disciplinary prefixes and divisions, general education courses are categorized by their explicit alignment with GELO concepts and skills, and contained within one of four general education categories: First-Year Seminars, Foundations, Exploring Knowledge and Integrating Knowledge.

First-Year Seminars are intended to provide a bridge for students who are new to college. Students will begin to practice foundational skills in a seminar-style environment. In addition to practicing foundational skills in context in the First-Year Seminars, the general education program also features a suite of courses that address distinct **Foundations**. These are offered at the beginning of the college experience to set students up for continuing success in the classroom and beyond. **Exploring Knowledge** courses provide students with perspectives beyond what they will learn in their major through exploration of a wide variety of scholarly topics. **Integrating Knowledge** courses then bring together that wide variety of topics to promote connections between disciplines and different areas of interest. In this way, students gain a deeper comprehension of wide-ranging phenomena in an increasingly complex and interconnected world and to prepare them for citizenship in that world.

In the past, in the absence of a university General Education Committee, general education requirements and courses were largely controlled by separate academic divisions or departments with little attention to the coherence of the student experience. In this new model, individual divisions and departments no longer exercise sole ownership over requirements. The General Education Committee is charged with oversight of an integrated, cohesive student learning experience. Courses can be proposed by any academic unit, then those proposals will be vetted by a university-wide faculty committee charged with ensuring each course's alignment with program learning outcomes.

Continuous Assessment and Improvement

While the Faculty Senate General Education Committee provides oversight for the general education curriculum, the director of general education serves as an ex-officio member on the General Education Committee and is responsible for supporting the coordination, articulation and scheduling of general education courses and for guiding assessment and data collection efforts for general education. The director of general education and the General Education Committee work together to oversee the curriculum within the structure of our Faculty Senate processes. Initial assessment will include discussions of institutional research data, regular PLCs to examine outcomes on a rotating basis in the context of authentic student work, and faculty and student feedback via surveys and portfolios.

Currently, new and modified courses are being reviewed for inclusion in the new general education program. All courses certified for the redesigned program will include instructor-designed signature assignments that provide students the opportunity to practice skills and demonstrate accomplishment. After the curriculum is implemented in 2019-20, there will be a process for data

collection and assessment that will guide the ongoing effectiveness of the program. The new curriculum is a hypothesis; its resultant assessment framework will allow us to test and refine the hypothesis over time.

Implications for Academic Excellence and Student Success
Our work to re-envision general education at WOU was rooted in two analyses that started independently and later converged to illuminate how curricular revision can support both academic excellence and student success:

- We considered our history of ceding responsibility to the disciplines for the management of general education requirements and evaluated the resulting barriers to curricular improvement. We found that, in the absence of university-wide ownership and assessment of an outcomes-based general education, our curriculum did not evolve even as our students' needs did. Our curriculum fell short of our definition of academic excellence.
- We found that the average student graduated with more than 200 credits, an excess of more than 20 credits. This finding led us to examine data regarding our existing curricular paths to determine what our curriculum directs students to do and how many credits that direction requires. If undergraduate programs cannot be completed in 180 quarter credits, we are not providing students with transparent and streamlined paths to student success. We found some undergraduate programs whose curricular requirements could not be completed within 180 credits. But even in programs that *could* be completed in 180 credits, we found many students still graduate with excess credits. The causes for this vary: Students may transfer to our university and be unable to apply all of their previous credits to a WOU degree; students may explore majors or change majors one or more times; and students may study abroad or strive to gain proficiency in a foreign language or other skill outside their core program competencies. Our investigation of curricular pathways and credits to degree completion enabled us to see distinct ways that a highly prescribed curriculum presented barriers to student success. We recognized the value in allocating 30 of the 180 credits to elective course work for all students.

These two insights came together and drove a restructuring of WOU's undergraduate curriculum that 1) established general education as a university program that can be holistically assessed and continually improved; 2) aligned our general education curriculum with the program goals adopted in 2017; 3) created an undergraduate curricular structure, inclusive of general education, that establishes the 180-credit (i.e., four-year) baccalaureate degree as our institution's norm; and 4) designed a set of university requirements and rationale that can be clearly communicated and are responsive to the needs of today's students, including their need for flexibility in course choices. In sum, the redesign of general education was guided by principles of academic excellence and simultaneously changed practices we hypothesize constituted barriers to student success.

As a result of this work, WOU has made significant strides in building infrastructure to support the continuous improvement of our new general education program:

- Assessable learning outcomes
- A course-approval process that requires outcomes-aligned assignments that provide students opportunities to practice and demonstrate skills
- A PLC model for assessment
- A faculty committee to oversee the general education program
- A faculty general education director, reporting to the provost, to provide leadership, advocacy and administrative support

Case Studies Analysis

In this section, we highlight what we have learned, assess the meaningfulness and effectiveness of our indicators, and review what we need to do or change to achieve mission fulfillment in 2023.

What We Have Learned

We have learned to see differently by placing student success at the center of our questions and choices. We have escaped the paralysis engendered by the question "Do you have evidence of a problem with how we do things?" that arose in the absence of assessable outcomes. We are now positioned to ask and answer questions about the effectiveness of our curriculum and to engage in its continuous improvement because we have evidence and make evidence-based decisions.

We have deepened our understanding of what it means to have academic excellence and student success as our highest institutional priorities. While some worry that student success (i.e., degree completion) will be prioritized at the expense of academic excellence, we articulate an understanding that academic excellence and student success are intertwined. We know that one without the other does not serve our students or respect the sacrifices they, and their families, make to pursue a college education.

We have also been challenged to consider whether we invest in academic excellence for its own sake or whether we prioritize academic excellence investments only when they demonstrably support student success. How does our mission guide us in this area? We have yet to answer this question, but its asking is evidence that our core themes and objectives have enriched our conversations about our fundamental purpose and the appropriate balance among priorities.

Faculty, especially those who have actively participated in PLCs or curricular revision, are enthusiastic about the forging of new avenues for interdisciplinary collaboration around teaching and learning. Increasingly, faculty have initiated professional development opportunities for peers. For example, a junior faculty member in mathematics is organizing book groups. A science faculty member has guided assignment-design workshops in the tradition of transparent teaching. Still other faculty have organized an Online Teaching Professional Learning Community to strengthen

our distance education offerings. We are learning that we have much to learn, including from each other.

We also recognize that relying solely on the voluntary efforts of faculty to strengthen teaching and learning is not sustainable. We need an institutional commitment of resources (e.g., funding, infrastructure, time, attention) to professional development for faculty and others who shape the learning environment for students. Those resources are gradually growing; we established the IR department and hired an experienced director; we established an Academic Effectiveness Office and implemented institution-wide software (Tk20) to support assessment, strategic planning and accreditation; we have carved out funds to provide stipends to faculty who participate in PLCs and course releases for PLC chairs; and we have committed to course releases for program leaders who facilitate academic program reviews. As we initiate processes, acknowledging the cognitive load of learning is essential. We must guard against relapsing, whether due to inattention or complacency, and continue to move resources to our highest-priority activities, including continuous improvement.

At times, the transition to an evidence-based curriculum has been bumpy. In particular, because the Assessment Facilitation Steering Committee was constituted at the same time we were collecting data on curricular alignment to the newly identified ULOs, we were not well positioned to leverage the committee's advocacy and expertise to implement a broad-based orientation to the concept of curricular alignment, the importance of institutional learning outcomes and the meaning of the selected ULOs. As a result, we missed an opportunity to work proactively with faculty to imagine how their current work aligns with the ULOs and to support faculty in adapting their courses to better align with institutional outcomes. Numerous faculty members fully engaged with the alignment process and its prompts to articulate the connections between goals for students and their pedagogical practices, but some struggled to understand expectations and others participated in minimal, compliance-oriented ways. The PLCs and our Academic Effectiveness Office saw evidence of this in confusion about expectations for participation in university-wide assessment activities and in patterns of misalignment of assignments with learning outcomes. Nonetheless, through the work of our PLCs and of our General Education Committee and its program leaders, we are steadily making progress in establishing a culture of outcomes-based curriculum, assessment and improvement.

Indicators: Meaningful and Effective?
Indicators are meaningful when they are aligned with the goals we seek to achieve. They are effective when we demonstrate that 1) we are able to collect and analyze data related to the goals, (2) our analysis is used to guide institutional decision-making, and 3) we have a mechanism in place for communicating results and changes to campus.

Student Success Indicators

Overall, we are satisfied with the indicators of student success that relate to these case studies:

- Six-year graduation rates for first-time, full-time students
- Percentage of undergraduate programs that can be completed in 180 credits or fewer
- Average credits at graduation for undergraduate students

We define student success as degree completion, and we measure degree completion by the six-year graduation rate in order to accommodate our students' realities. A significant portion of our undergraduate students receive need-based financial aid, work to support themselves through college, and are not financially positioned to enroll in the traditional 15 credits per term that is necessary to graduate in four years. The indicator regarding "percent of undergraduate programs that can be completed in 180 credits or fewer" reflects our commitment to our students to design academic programs that do not exceed the 180 credits that yield a four-year baccalaureate degree. Our goal is to reach 100 percent of undergraduate programs with pathways of 180 credits or fewer.

While curricular paths are an ideal, students' actual paths also matter. Our indicator of average credits at graduation will allow us to test whether our curricular choices (i.e., the 30-60-90 curriculum model, the elimination of a required minor and the streamlining of general education requirements) lead to more streamlined paths to graduation for the typical WOU student.

Considered in tandem, these indicators of student success provide us with meaningful information about the newly streamlined opportunities we offer students. By measuring the number of credits earned at the time of graduation and the six-year graduation rate, WOU gains evidence about how students are navigating those opportunities. The indicators are also effective in that we have used data from them to identify student challenges (e.g., low six-year graduation rates, excess credits to graduation, coursework barriers for transfer students) and we have implemented potential solutions (e.g., curriculum restructuring and new transfer articulation agreements and processes) that we can study and refine over time. Our campus will be kept apprised of our progress through regular reporting on our indicators of mission fulfillment, as described in Part I.

Our review team of faculty and administrators, most of whom have been directly involved in the work described in the case studies, identified issues with the meaningfulness of our measures of academic excellence. Most notably, we lack indicators related to direct evidence of student learning. We attribute this to the major-project silos in 2016: one team was building our institution-wide assessment framework, another team developed WOU's strategic plan, and yet another team wrote our Mission and Core Themes report that described our institutional assessment plan. Communication among the groups was sporadic. As a result, we find ourselves at mid-cycle with indicators of academic excellence that do not reflect direct evidence of student learning and have uneven alignment with the learning goals we have built our curriculum to achieve.

With the recent establishment of university-wide governance structures such as the University Council, which enable communication, collaboration and coordination of efforts, we are positioned to refine our assessment system and communicate analysis of direct evidence of student learning to our stakeholders. Thus, a next step for us is to envision how academic excellence indicators and goals will include direct evidence of student learning. We believe that the PLC assessment process, which was in its infancy when we developed our institutional assessment plan, will provide such data, especially as its questions become more sophisticated and as results drive changes that can be assessed for effectiveness.

Academic Excellence Indicators
Indicators related to curricular alignment (Indicator #10) and academic program reviews (Indicator #11) are the primary foundations for academic excellence as we define it. The remaining indicators related to academic excellence are either indirect (e.g., National Survey of Student Engagement academic challenge measures) or measures of inputs (e.g., number of high impact practices).

Our measures of academic challenge are primarily drawn from NSSE data, which WOU collects every three years. Some of the measures align with institutional outcomes (e.g., quantitative literacy and integrated learning), while other measures align to a degree (e.g., higher-order thinking may be understood as related to inquiry and analysis). However, not all of our institutional outcomes match an NSSE measure. As a result, measures of some institutional learning outcomes are both indirect and insufficiently meaningful.

Additionally, none of the faculty involved in curricular revisions were familiar with our NSSE data. While we can see in retrospect that NSSE data supports some decisions, we have no evidence that NSSE data has been proactively integrated into institutional decision-making or that it informs current discussions of curriculum. As a result, we are concerned about the effectiveness of these measures. Similarly, our measure of high-impact practices (HIPs) (i.e., the NSSE measure of number of HIPs a student engaged in) is not fully aligned with the AAC&U definition of HIPs, with which we have aligned our curricular design. Thus, our intended actions are not fully aligned with what our indicators measure, detracting from their meaningfulness.

In the future, we envision a system in which indirect evidence, benchmarked against peers, and evidence of inputs can supplement direct evidence of learning rather than stand in for it. Through data collection, analysis and testing of hypothesized causal relationships, we expect that our indicators will be dynamic as we continually refine our evidence base related to student learning, student success, and the relationship between them.

Indicators: Additional notes
We identified other issues with the indicators we have been working with:

- In our current Mission Fulfillment Matrix, we have modified some indicators described in our 2017 Mission and Core Themes report. For our indicators of achievement gaps

(Indicator #6), we originally reported only the difference between comparison groups. Now we report the graduation rates for each group compared *and* the achievement gap. We did this because we recognized the importance of narrowing achievement gaps and improving the graduation rates for all of our students.

- For our indicator of the number of HIPs (Indicator #14), we developed two sub-indicators to disentangle the effects of varying measures (e.g., percent of students who report one HIP vs. two or more HIPs) and varying targets (e.g., WOU's past performance, our peers' performance).
- Our current Mission Fulfillment Matrix indicates that our measure of curricular flexibility needs development; recently our registrar has developed a system indicator to allow us to capture this information. This code has been applied to courses starting in fall 2018.
- Although we aspire to comparing favorably with our peers, even as our peers improve, we note that this approach requires an annual recalculation of multiple targets, which will be challenging given our developing IR capacity.

Additional Gaps Identified and Changes Needed

The development and analysis of case studies shed light on other gaps in our work. Overall, as our work matures, we need to attend to:

- Moving from a heuristic model to a methodologically sound, data-informed assessment of each element of the model for describing our path to mission fulfillment
- Identifying direct measures of student learning, which may be found in the work of our ULO PLCs
- Sorting out the relationships among ULO, general education and academic program assessment to streamline our efforts
- Engaging in a second round of institution-wide ULO assessment that builds upon what we have already learned
- Integrating co-curriculum into our assessment framework by building on the work of the Integrative Learning PLC and the new Experiential Learning Workgroup
- Monitoring our new general education framework, to be implemented in 2019-20, for new and continuing barriers for students
- Raising institution-wide awareness of how academic and student affairs regularly use data to improve
- Engaging our whole campus in the question: "How does this work change what we do for students?"
- Reimagining the role students should play in this process, not as passive consumers of our efforts on their behalf but as active contributors to our continuous improvement efforts.

What We Need to Do or Change Going Forward

Our curriculum, along with the supports we offer students, is our hypothesis regarding how an institution that serves diverse, striving students can simultaneously achieve academic excellence

and student success. Our hypothesis will be tested in the coming years with the following questions:

- Does the new general education curriculum support student achievement of general education learning outcomes?
- Does the curricular restructuring (i.e., the elimination of the required minor and the increased flexibility in general education requirements) result in a reduction of excess credits and an increase in graduation rates?
- Will the curricular restructuring have unanticipated consequences that create new barriers for our students?
- How do we see faculty and staff intentionally changing the environments in which our students learn? And do we see our students engaging with those changed environments?

With the assessment framework we are building, we will be positioned to investigate these questions, test the hypothesis posited by our mission fulfillment plan, and refine our practices by making data-driven improvements to curriculum and support services.

Ultimately, institution-wide use of data is still in its infancy at WOU. However, we are able to imagine a future where the capacity to gather, analyze and apply data to improve student learning is central to who we are. We foresee a sustainable infrastructure for institutional research, assessment and communication, and we look forward to becoming a campus that is tenaciously curious about how our work affects our students.

APPENDIX A
- YEAR ONE REPORT: MISSION AND CORE THEMES

Western Oregon University submitted its Mission and Core Themes report in March 2017. NWCCU deferred action on the report and directed WOU to resubmit the report in March 2018 (letter dated July 24, 2017). After review of a September 2017 Ad Hoc Report, NWCCU revised its direction and instructed WOU to resubmit the Mission and Core Themes report with the Mid-Cycle Report in March 2019 (letter dated February 8, 2018).

Although NWCCU deferred action on the Mission and Core Themes report, the document has served as a roadmap for our progress towards the Mid-Cycle Report. We have updated the "Institutional Overview," "Recent Accreditation History," and "Changes Since Our Last Review" sections to reflect current information, but otherwise the Mission and Core Themes report reflects the mission, core themes and institutional assessment plan developed in 2017. Our Mid-Cycle Report reviews what we have learned about this plan and how we need to adjust it.

Institutional Overview [Updated March 2019]

Western Oregon University (WOU) is a mid-sized public university committed to changing lives, strengthening communities and transforming our world. Located in Monmouth in the heart of Oregon's lush Willamette Valley, we are 20 minutes from the state capital and 75 minutes from the state's cultural hub and largest city, Portland.

In fall 2018, WOU enrolled 4,570 undergraduate and 523 graduate students, with an FTE of 4,054 undergraduates and 317 graduate students. Eighty-six percent of our undergraduate students are full time, while nearly half of our graduate students are full time. Forty percent of our students are first-generation (Oregon HECC Report), and 41 percent are Pell eligible (WOU IPEDS Report).

Every Oregon county is represented in the 76 percent of students who are Oregon residents. The remaining students represent 34 states, four territories and 21 countries. More than 60 percent of WOU students are white. However, when compared to the technical and regional universities in Oregon, WOU enrolls the most diverse student body; Latino students comprise 16 percent of the student body, and more than 26 percent of our students identify as students of color.

We offer undergraduate academic programs in 52 majors and graduate programs in 10 areas. WOU's students are served by 356 faculty (300 FTE); 77 percent are full-time faculty, and 46 percent are tenured or tenure-track faculty. In 2018, the student-to-faculty ratio is 14:1.

Our teacher education programs are accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and are in compliance with the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC of Oregon), which authorizes teacher preparation programs offered by Oregon higher education institutions. Other

program-specific accreditations include National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) and Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE).

Recent Accreditation History [Updated March 2019]

WOU's most recent Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Report and site visit were in 2016. The review resulted in seven recommendations related to mission, core themes, mission fulfillment, learning outcomes, alignment of planning and budgeting, and assessment and continuous improvement (letter dated July 14, 2016).

In March 2017, WOU submitted the Mission and Core Themes Report; however, NWCCU deferred action on the spring 2017 Year One Mission and Core Themes Report. As noted, the decision "was based on the finding that although the institution submitted a major substantive change proposal describing a change with respect to its mission and core themes, the Commission" had not acted on this request (letter dated July 24, 2017). Consequently, WOU was asked to resubmit its Mission and Core Themes Report in March 2018. Our Mission and Core Themes Report of 2017 also included responses to Recommendations 1, 2 and 3[4], which were reviewed by the Commission and found to be in compliance with the standards and eligibility requirements relevant to those recommendations (letter dated February 8, 2018).

In September 2017, WOU submitted the ad hoc report with responses to Recommendations 4, 6 and 7[5]. NWCCU found us to be in substantial compliance but in need of improvement (letter dated February 8, 2018). At that time and in lieu of the March 2018 reporting requirement, we were

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[4] Recommendation 1: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution clarify its mission statement to provide better direction for mission fulfillment (Standard 1.A.1).

Recommendation 2: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution define mission fulfillment including identifying outcomes that represent the extent of the institution's accomplishment of mission fulfillment (Standard 1.A.2 and Eligibility Requirements 22 & 23).

Recommendation 3: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution establish objectives for each core theme and identify meaningful, assessable, and verifiable direct and indirect indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of the core themes (Eligibility Requirements 23; Standard 1.B.2).

[5] Recommendation 4: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution establish student learning outcomes for all courses, programs and degrees, including general education, wherever offered and however delivered that are meaningful, assessable and verifiable and are consistent with the mission (Eligibility Requirement 22; Standard 2.C.1, 2.C.2, 2.C.4, 2.C.5, and 2.C.10).

Recommendation 6: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution design and implement an ongoing planning and budgeting process that is broad based, inclusive of all appropriate constituencies, data driven, includes core theme planning and leads to mission fulfillment (Eligibility Requirement 23; Standards 2.F.3, 3.A.1-4, and 3.B.1-3).

Recommendation 7: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution engage in comprehensive, ongoing, systematic assessment that leads to mission fulfillment through the evaluation of core theme objectives and support of continuous improvement (Eligibility Requirement 23; Standards 4.A.1-6, 4.B.1-2, 5.A.1-2, and 5.B.1).

directed to resubmit a Mission and Core Themes Report and a Recommendation 5[6] response, along with the Mid-Cycle Report, in March 2019.

Per the direction of NWCCU, this Mid-Cycle Report is accompanied by 1) an Appendix containing the Mission and Core Themes Report, 2) an Addendum with updates on Recommendations 4, 6 and 7 from the 2016 review, and 3) an Addendum with a response to Recommendation 5 from the 2016 report.

In February 2018, the Commission found the following:

Actions
- Accept the fall 2017 Ad Hoc Report.

Status of Previous Recommendations Addressed in This Evaluation
- Recommendation 1 of the spring 2016 Year Seven Peer Evaluation Report is fulfilled.
- Recommendations 2 and 3 of the spring 2016 Year Seven Peer Evaluation Report are now in compliance and fulfilled.
- Recommendations 4, 6 and 7 of the spring 2016 Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report are now substantially in compliance but in need of improvement.

Sanction
- Remove *Notice of Concern* for Recommendations 2, 3, 4 and 6.

Required Follow-Up
- Submit an addendum to the spring 2019 Mid-Cycle Report to readdress Recommendations 4, 6 and 7 of the spring 2016 Year Seven Evaluation Report.

Changes Since Our Last Review [Updated March 2019]

Since NWCCU's last visit to WOU in April 2016, we have reached significant milestones.

At the direction of WOU's president, a Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) was formed in April 2016. During the nine-month process, the 25-member committee was committed to fostering a culture of open communication and transparency, as it shared its thinking and planning ideas with the larger campus community via multiple town hall meetings. Additionally, SPC members shared updates with, and solicited targeted feedback from, smaller groups such as division chairpersons, the Faculty Senate and its Executive Committee, Academic Affairs Executive Council, Staff Senate and the Associated Students of WOU. SPC also collaborated in small teams to tackle various aspects of the planning process, which ranged from a review of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the development of a new mission statement that reaffirms WOU's values and vision for student success. In January 2017, the inclusive and comprehensive strategic planning process resulted in the Board of Trustees' approval of *Forward Together*, the strategic framework that will guide us through 2023.

In recognition of the need for institution-wide oversight of mission fulfillment, the University Council (UC) was established in 2017 as a permanent iteration of the ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee.

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[6] Recommendation 5: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution provide appropriate and adequate technology systems and infrastructure planning with input from constituencies to support its management and operational functions, academic programs and support services, wherever offered and however delivered.

In support of other elements of our strategic plan, WOU established the University Budget Advisory Committee (UBAC) in 2017 and University Technology Advisory Committee (UTAC) in 2018. We have also reinvigorated our long-standing University Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council (UDAIC), which has been charged with receiving, developing and submitting recommendations related to diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion aligned with the strategic plan. Figure 1 illustrates how key constituents function in WOU's cycle of continuous improvement.

Figure 1: Governance and Continuous Improvement

Strategic Planning Committee (2016-17): Develop a new strategic framework and university mission that will carry Western Oregon University forward.

Plan / Prioritize / Choose programs & services

Adjust / Improve

University Diversity and Inclusion Committee (pre-2013 -): Receive, develop and submit recommendations related to diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion aligned with the strategic plan.

Budget / Align Resources with Priorities

University Budget Advisory Committee (2017-): Make budget recommendations with clear links to the university strategic plan to the President.

University Council (2017-): Monitor mission fulfillment and WOU engagement in assessment and continuous improvement.

Assess / Evaluate

Implement

University Technology Advisory Committee (2018-): Make recommendations for university technology systems and academic technologies.

Vice Presidents & Executive Directors (President's Cabinet)

Additional results of strategic planning include changes in key personnel and reporting structures. Most recently, we appointed a new vice president for Finance and Administration, created and filled the position of controller, and are in the midst of a national search for a provost and vice president for Academic Affairs.

Academic Affairs and Student Affairs have been reorganized to support the high priority areas of *Forward Together*. New functions within Academic Affairs include academic effectiveness (i.e., assessment, program review, professional development), general education (i.e., planning, implementation, assessment), and program development (i.e., pipeline and degree completion).

Within Student Affairs, the vice president is now steering enrollment management, with the support of two newly resituated reporting units: Admissions and Financial Aid. With the new responsibilities, Student Affairs has been reorganized to include an associate vice president and two assistant vice presidents.

We also invested in our capacity for evidence-based decision-making by establishing an Institutional Research (IR) office and hiring an experienced director in 2017. Since that time, IR has developed public dashboards tracking key performance indicators, and capacity has been further enhanced by a contract in 2017-18 with Hanover Research with an explicit focus on our students and environment. At present, sponsored research and grants management is in flux, but we expect the functions of the university and The Research Institute (TRI) will be integrated by fall 2019. Looking forward, a steering committee of administration, faculty and librarians are developing a plan to integrate library and academic technology functions, and including a national search for a dean of Library and Academic Technologies. These strategic structural changes across the university position us for mission fulfillment.

Processes have also been significantly impacted by strategic planning. Most notable is the area of decentralized budgeting. Sweeping changes have been made to 1) align authority, responsibility and accountability, and 2) improve services (see President's 2018 Campus Communique). Examples of changes include the following:

- UBAC was formed to advise the president on the alignment of budget with strategic priorities and to assist in involving the campus community in and throughout the budget process.
- Budget authority is now assigned to units, and units are expected to adhere to their total budget and are authorized to move budget monies across categories (e.g., from S&S to student wages).
- During each fiscal year, vacancy savings are retained in the unit, along with responsibility for personnel-related expenses (e.g., search and vacation payout).
- Divisions may request that positive budget balances be carried forward to the next fiscal year.
- Vacancies in permanent faculty positions accrue to the provost for future reallocation.
- Mid-year unit-level budget changes are limited to salary adjustments related to collective bargaining agreements and unexpected enrollment or revenue fluctuations.

More specifically, UBAC has identified institutional fiscal challenges and makes recommendations regarding solutions and/or action plans:

- A moratorium on course fees was instituted, with plans for an audit in 2019.
- Student-wage budgets were increased by 12.1 percent across campus to offset annual minimum wage increases mandated by Senate Bill 1532.
- The Tuition and Fee Advisory Committee successfully lobbied for 1) an increase of $400,000 in fee remissions, and 2) no increase in tuition for non-resident graduate students for 2018-19.
- The process, timeline and communication plan for budget proposals were overhauled.

With these changes, WOU has systematically and effectively addressed the recommendations NWCCU cited after the Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability evaluation in 2016. The new elements

of governance, mission and strategic plan have enabled us to clarify our mission; define core themes aligned with the mission; develop a system of assessment for learning outcomes and core themes; identify meaningful, assessable and measurable measures achievement; provide appropriate technological support; develop an integrated budgeting process aligned with mission fulfillment; and engage in effective assessment of mission fulfillment from a university-wide perspective.

Eligibility Requirements 2 and 3

Eligibility Requirement 2. Authority
The institution is authorized to operate and award degrees as a higher education institution by the appropriate governmental organization, agency or governing board as required by the jurisdiction in which it operates.

Western Oregon University was originally authorized to offer associate, baccalaureate and master's degrees by Oregon Revised Statute 352.355 until June 30, 2015, with oversight authority held by the Oregon State Board of Higher Education and the Oregon University System. This changed with Senate Bill 80, which ended the Oregon University System and the State Board of Higher Education. Changes are summarized on page I-20 in the Oregon State Bar's **summary of 2015 legislation**:

> Senate Bill 80 abolished the Oregon University System and the State Board of Higher Education. The board's duties, powers, functions, and lawfully incurred rights and obligations pertaining to a university with a governing board are transferred to and vested in the university's governing board. Any administrative rules and policies adopted by the board continue in effect until superseded or repealed by the standards or policies of a university or its governing board.

The Western Oregon University Board of Trustees was officially empaneled July 1, 2015. **Bylaws** establish the board's authority to govern the university, and the **Board Statement on Delegation of Authority**, Section 1.7, provides information concerning the academic authority held by the board:

> 1.7.1 The Board has the authority to establish, eliminate, control or substantially reorganize academic programs and units of operation. Any significant change in the University's academic programs as defined by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission must be approved by the Board prior to submission to the Commission. The Board confers academic degrees, certificates and other forms of recognition upon the recommendation of the faculty. Such academic degrees, certificates and other forms of recognition are granted in the name of the Board of Trustees of Western Oregon University and are executed by the Board Chair and the University President. The Board shall have the exclusive authority to approve honorary degrees.

1.7.2 The Board delegates to the President and the professors ("the faculty" as defined in ORS 352.146) authority relating to: (a) academic standards relating to admission to study at the University; (b) curriculum, curricular materials, method of instruction, grading, credits, and academic standards of the University; and (c) standards of student competence in a discipline.

Eligibility Requirement 3. Mission and Core Themes

The institution's mission and core themes are clearly defined and adopted by its governing board(s) consistent with its legal authorization and are appropriate to a degree-granting institution of higher education. The institution's purpose is to serve the educational interests of its students and its principal programs lead to recognized degrees. The institution devotes all, or substantially all, of its resources to support its educational mission and core themes.

The institutional strategic planning process concluded Jan. 25, 2017, with the Board of Trustees voting to adopt the plan. At the same meeting, the board agreed to a new mission statement, which was approved by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) in April 2017. University leadership created the University Council—described earlier in "Institutional Updates"—as a mechanism by which WOU will monitor, measure and communicate progress on the plan and will measure mission fulfillment.

WOU's highest priority is to serve the educational interests of its students with purposeful and validated degree programs. Degree programs are reviewed by the Faculty Senate curriculum process and are approved by the Board of Trustees. New programs are reviewed by the statewide Provosts Council, which is composed of provosts from the seven public universities, as well as by HECC, before submission to NWCCU for authorization.

WOU has worked to ensure learning goals and outcomes are defined for all courses across all programs. As described earlier, the associate provost for Academic Effectiveness was charged with leading efforts to create and nurture a university-wide system of alignment and assessment for curriculum. This change is intended to accelerate WOU's efforts to meet NWCCU expectations for student learning outcomes across all courses, programs and degrees.

The university's resources support its educational mission. This fact is demonstrated by the percentage of 2015-16 general fund expenditures used for instruction, research and public service (53 percent) and academic or student support services and financial aid (28.3 percent). The remaining balance of expenditures includes administration, expenses for shared services among the public universities, physical plant and other expenses (18.6 percent). A detailed financial report for the 2015-2016 year can be found on the Finance and Administration website.

Standard 1.A Mission

1.A.1. Mission*: The institution has a widely published mission statement -- approved by its governing board -- that articulates a purpose appropriate for an institution of higher learning, gives direction for its efforts, and derives from, and is generally understood by, its community.*

Western Oregon University's 25-member [SPC](#) defined the institution's mission with discussion and input from campus and community members during a nine-month period. The mission statement was [approved](#) Jan. 25, 2017, by the WOU Board of Trustees. In accordance with Oregon statutes, the mission was [approved](#) by Oregon's HECC at its April 2017 meeting. The mission statement is currently available on WOU's [website](#) within the strategic plan and has been integrated widely into our online and print materials (e.g., application materials, course catalog).

> **Western Oregon University creates lasting opportunities for student success through transformative education and personalized support.**

This mission prioritizes WOU's purpose to create *lasting opportunities for student success.* It highlights *lasting opportunities* because academic achievement is a gateway to lifelong learning as well as future opportunities for WOU's graduates, their families and the communities WOU serves throughout Oregon. Students who undertake degree programs do so to achieve an end goal: a degree, a certificate or a teaching endorsement. Because Oregon's governor and legislators name degree completion as the most critical component of the HECC's annual evaluation of public universities and the basis for a significant portion of [public funding](#), WOU has also defined s*tudent success* as degree completion.

Student success is achieved through transformative education and personalized support. *Transformative education* requires the creation of a campus environment that enhances learning. Academic excellence is expressed through curricular and co-curricular programs whose design both develops in students the knowledge and skills expected in their respective degree programs and also is transparent, intentional, directional and cohesive. In working with students, WOU intends to clearly communicate why students are doing what they are doing and how the pieces of their education fit together.

Personalized support is provided across a campus-wide environment that includes significant faculty-student interaction, proactive student services and efforts to accommodate student needs. For example, advising appointments are required each term for each student; undeclared majors are served by professional advisers in the Student Success and Advising Center and students with declared majors are assigned faculty advisers from their academic program.

In addition to the new mission statement, the new strategic plan articulated five institutional priorities: 1) Student Success, 2) Academic Excellence, 3) Community Engagement, 4) Accountability, and 5) Sustainability and Stewardship. The latter three priorities are defined as broad *operational*

imperatives that help define goals for how WOU and its members will conduct the institution's affairs. The first two institutional priorities, however, were designated as "core themes" for NWCCU accreditation because they are derived directly from the mission statement.

1.A.2. Mission: *The institution defines mission fulfillment in the context of its purpose, characteristics and expectations. Guided by that definition, it articulates institutional accomplishments or outcomes that represent an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.*

WOU's new strategic plan clarified its mission and defined five institutional priorities, two of which are articulated as core themes: Student Success and Academic Excellence. These core themes are supported by nine objectives that rely on 14 indicators that enable the institution to assess progress on meeting the desired objectives. (Indicators are displayed under 1.B. Core Themes.)

WOU has established a process by which the institution monitors its assessment of progress of overall institutional progress toward mission fulfillment.

First, WOU established meaningful, assessable and verifiable indicators of achievement.
Indicators have been assigned two levels of target goals. The Level 1 Goal is the minimum acceptable level of performance. The Level 2 Goal is a higher target for performance. (The full set of objectives and indicators is included under Standard 1.B.)

[Indicators and goals](#) are defined specifically to ensure they are assessable and verifiable. Data is drawn from internal data maintained by [Institutional Research](#) or standardized data from national sources (e.g., IPEDS, NSSE, College Results Online), which provides comparison results for WOU and a WOU-defined peer group.

Second, WOU has defined how to evaluate performance based on indicator results.
WOU will systematically review achievement data for each metric against that indicator's target goals. Assessment reviews will be managed by the appropriate authority, such as a designee of the president, Academic Affairs under the provost or the director of Institutional Research.

WOU has defined how achievement data will be translated into measured against categories: "below expectations," "meets expectations" and "exceeds expectations." If the institution meets the Level 1 Goal, that indicator will receive a rating of "meets expectations" for progress toward mission fulfillment. However, if the institution fails to meet the Level 1 Goal, that indicator will receive a rating of "below expectations." All indicators that are below expectations will subsequently require a review of institutional plans and efforts leading to a written action plan for improvement. This action plan will be included in the report to the UC. If the institution meets the Level 2 Goal, the indicator will receive a rating of "exceeds expectations."

Preliminary reports on achievement will be reviewed in order to assess obstacles and opportunities for institutional improvement; the provost will assign responsibility for developing action plans. The provost's directors and staff, working with the director of Institutional Research, will annually compile a full report of accreditation assessment results. Whenever WOU has not met expectations for target goals, an action plan for improvement will be included with the results report.

Third, WOU has determined how to summarize performance across all indicators.
Academic Affairs (with Institutional Research) will be compiling all ratings and noting achievement results into a preliminary summary matrix (as seen in Chart 1). For example, if the data reflect achievement for indicator 1 "exceeds expectations," that column would be highlighted in green. Thus, the summary matrix provides a visual overview of progress on mission fulfillment based on color in order to focus internal reviewers' attention to critical problem areas.

This matrix (and supporting details, data or action plans) will be provided to the UC for its annual review of mission fulfillment. The council will use these materials, as well as qualitative attributes such as value and difficulty of efforts undertaken, to review the preliminary matrix and make any adjustments deemed appropriate. Then, it will conduct a holistic assessment of institutional progress based on all indicators' outcomes and make a recommendation of overall institutional progress on mission fulfillment to the president. This process enables a review of achievement of all indicators by the broadly representative members of the UC who may have a range of experience in accreditation and institutional metrics.

Chart 1: Template for Summary Matrix

Objectives	Indicator	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Programs can be completed in a timely and efficient manner	Undergraduate annual calculation for six-year graduation rate (based on full-time, first-time cohort)	[RED]	[BLUE]	[GREEN]

Finally, WOU has preliminary plans for communicating and integrating results.
Communicating results to critical groups is vital for ongoing institutional improvement. The university has established a set of board-approved dashboards where progress on key indicators can be monitored. The provost will regularly update the President's Cabinet and UC to ensure integration with other institutional planning efforts. The UC is charged with monitoring progress on strategic plan initiatives, as well as reviewing and assessing overall institutional achievement toward mission fulfillment. Therefore, its review and subsequent overall evaluation that is recommended to the president will also inform the council's subsequent decision-making related to strategic plan initiatives. The annual September *State of the University* address to campus members at the start of the academic year, and the Board of Trustee meetings provide opportunities for progress reports to constituents. All of these progress reports are intended to include the extent to which WOU is

meeting its progress goals, as well as action plans to improve where performance is below specified expectations. Results that are shared are expected to inform the work of the board and its committees, as well as campus units through the administrative structures.

In summary, WOU not only has identified outcomes (objectives) that represent mission fulfillment, but it also has defined a framework for evaluating progress toward those objectives. This framework is based upon meaningful, assessable and verifiable indicators, as well as explicitly defined target goals that allow for a consistent evaluation of efforts as "below expectations," "meets expectations" or "exceeds expectations." The results will be compiled into a preliminary summary matrix that categorizes results by color, to assist the UC in reviewing results and making a determination if any adjustments are needed. The final matrix will help the UC make its assessment of overall university progress on mission fulfillment, which is needed before offering its recommendation to the president. This process overall allows for a clear and transparent assessment of, and communication about, results to WOU's campus community.

Standard 1.B Core Themes

1.B.1 Core Themes*: The institution identifies core themes that individually manifest essential elements of its mission and collectively encompass its mission.*

Five institutional priorities were articulated within the 2017-2023 strategic plan. The first two are key elements in the mission statement and therefore have been identified as the core themes with which to focus mission fulfillment efforts. The remaining three priorities (Community Engagement, Accountability, and Sustainability and Stewardship) will help to guide operational practices. The mission statement and WOU's two core themes are:

Western Oregon University creates lasting opportunities for student success through transformative education and personalized support.

Core Theme 1. Student Success
Student success—specifically degree completion—is made possible through an accessible curriculum, attainable programs, supportive structures and personalized services.

Core Theme 2. Academic Excellence
WOU provides an academic environment of well-defined curricular and co-curricular opportunities that enable students to engage in purposeful learning experiences.

Individually, these core themes are each essential to the mission. Collectively, they illuminate the mission's intent that WOU is first and foremost focused on academic program quality in which students achieve expected competencies, demonstrate learning and successfully complete their

degrees. WOU's core themes and their objectives are also aligned with the [equity lens](#) adopted by HECC in 2014. WOU is mindful of the importance of time to graduation (which affects cost and therefore can create an obstacle to completion) and the overall cost of attendance, particularly as it pertains to the graduation rate of under-represented minorities, first-generation students, students with financial need, or students from rural Oregon counties. The effective use of high-impact practices, including community-engaged service learning, is part of our definition of academic excellence. WOU is committed to integrating high-impact learning practices into the [curriculum](#) and [co-curriculum](#) because such practices support diverse students' retention, engagement and learning.

While a public university like WOU engages in a variety of community partnerships and outreach, this work is primarily in support of academic excellence and student success. For that reason, WOU does not presently prioritize public engagement with a distinct core theme. In addition, such activities are not a critical part of the university's performance evaluations by the HECC and do not factor into calculations for state appropriations funding.

1.B.2. Core Themes*: The institution establishes objectives for each of its core themes and identifies meaningful, assessable and verifiable indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of its core themes.*

WOU's core themes and their objectives are summarized in Chart 2 below. Additional detail related to the indicators and desired levels of achievement follow in tables under each core theme.

Chart 2: Core Themes and Objectives

CORE THEME 1: **STUDENT SUCCESS** Student success—specifically degree completion—is made possible through an accessible curriculum, attainable programs, supportive structures and personalized services.	**OBJECTIVES:** 1. WOU curriculum is offered across multiple delivery pathways. 2. WOU programs can be completed in a timely, efficient manner. 3. WOU student services facilitate student persistence and success. 4. Students perceive positive, personalized interactions with WOU faculty and staff. 5. WOU strives to limit financial hardship that interferes with student persistence.
CORE THEME 2: **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE** WOU provides an academic environment of well-defined curricular and co-curricular opportunities that enable students to engage in purposeful learning experiences.	**OBJECTIVES:** 1. WOU demonstrates alignment across course, program and university learning outcomes. 2. Academic and co-curricular programs are responsive to the evolving needs of students. 3. WOU champions outstanding teaching as well as scholarship, research and creativity to promote student learning. 4. Students participate in high-impact learning practices.

CORE THEME 1: Student Success

To promote student success, curricula must be accessible to the full range of students. In order to meet this need, delivery modes must extend beyond the traditional on-campus, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. course offerings. Furthermore, time and credits to degree are critical variables for accessibility because extended time leads to increased costs. Thus, curricula should be attainable in 180 credits over years. This benchmark requires that degree programs (including majors, general education and other university requirements) are designed so that students may have a reasonable expectation of completing their degree in a timely and effective manner. Improving the quality and efficiency of degree programs is intended to lead to improvements in goals critical to mission fulfillment; students graduate at a higher rate with fewer excess credits in a shorter time frame and with an overall lower cost (controlling for other student characteristics).

Finally, WOU must prioritize supportive structures and personalized service and do so in a way that *anticipates* obstacles students may face in navigating unfamiliar institutional systems. Many WOU current and potential students are the "new majority" (i.e., first-generation, under-represented, low-income or immigrant students). Such students bring strengths and value to the institution, but they may not have the social and cultural capital (e.g., knowledge of institutional systems, mentorship from people with familiarity with the complexities of higher education) needed to navigate specific programs, processes and structures. In order to fulfill the mission of student success, it is incumbent upon WOU to design transparent and student-friendly systems and foster relationships with students that enable WOU to proactively guide them toward important services (e.g., advising) and opportunities (e.g., internships, co-curricular programs and leadership opportunities). Altogether, the indicators are meaningful, the stipulated measures (direct and indirect) are assessable, and all evidence can be verified by internal and external reviewers.

Core Theme 1 is displayed in Chart 3, which conveys the five objectives, nine indicators and two goal levels that will be used to assess achievement and progress toward mission fulfillment as it relates to student success. In several of the indicators, a "comparator group" is indicated. This group is a national group of 10 degree-granting public higher education institutions (four-year or above) matched on the basis of IPEDS data variables such as institutional size, geographic region, degree of urbanization, existence of a tenure system, percent of undergraduates receiving any financial aid or receiving Pell grants, and percent admitted.

Chart 3: CORE THEME 1- Student Success

Student success—specifically degree completion—is made possible through an accessible curriculum, attainable programs, supportive structures and personalized services.

Objectives	Indicator #	Indicator Description	Level 1 Goal	Level 2 Goal
Curriculum is offered via multiple delivery pathways.	1	Percent of courses with at least one section offered via flexible course format during the academic year. (o*ff-campus, evening, online, hybrid, weekends*)	Percent of courses increases from same measure in previous year	25 percent of courses have at least one section offered via flexible format during academic year
Programs can be completed in a timely and efficient manner.	2	Undergraduate annual calculation for six-year graduation rate, for first-time, full-time student cohort	WOU's six-year graduation rate is equal to or above rolling five-year average for WOU's six-year graduation rate	WOU's six-year graduation rate is equal to or above the median value of the comparator group's rolling five-year average six-year graduation rate
	3	Total credits at graduation for first-time, full-time students	Current year is equal to or below the five-year rolling average	Greater than 80 percent of undergraduates have fewer than 200 credits
	4	Percent of programs that can be completed within 180 credits	Annual percent of programs increases over previous year total	100 percent of programs can be completed within 180 credits
Student services facilitate student persistence and success.	5	Retention for undergraduates from year one to year two for first-time, full-time student cohort	Current year is equal to or above the five-year rolling average for previous year	WOU's retention rate is equal to or above the median value of the comparator group's five-year rolling average
	6	Graduation rate for undergrad and grad students who are under-represented minorities (URM), veterans, Pell grant eligible or high school graduates from rural counties	a) Achievement gap between URM and majority students does not increase annually, and b) achievement gap between URM and majority students shows decrease in rolling five-year average	Achievement gap between URM and majority students is equal to or lower than the median value of the comparator group's rolling five-year average achievement gap
	7	Students' perception of supportive campus environment at WOU (overall, academic, social, learning support, etc.)	Maintains mean value that is statistically comparable to comparator group's results	Significantly higher difference in mean value for both first-year and senior students in comparison to comparator group

Chart 3: Core Theme 1 – Student Success (continued)

Objectives	Indicator #	Indicator Description	Level 1 Goal	Level 2 Goal
WOU provides positive, personalized interactions between students and faculty.	**8**	Students' perception of frequency of student-centered interactions with faculty	Maintains mean value that is not significantly different from comparator group's value	Significantly higher difference for both first-year and senior students in comparison to national peer institutions
WOU strives to limit financial hardship that interferes with student completion.	**9**	Cost of attendance is limited by managing tuition and fees as well as increasing various forms of assistance to WOU students	WOU is at median of all Oregon public universities, for average net price for all students, and average net price for middle-income students	WOU is within top two of seven Oregon public universities for both items: average net price for all students and average net price for middle-income students.

CORE THEME 2: Academic Excellence

WOU's degree programs are integral to providing an educational experience leading to student success. Academic effectiveness focuses on assessing student learning across all courses, programs and university requirements. Achieving alignment between stated program outcomes and program curricula ensures that students have the opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills expected of graduates.

Figure 2 is a graphic representation used internally to highlight the meaning and value of alignment:

Figure 2: Value of Alignment to WOU

Align → Assess → Evolve → Shine

These components are defined as:
Align: We coordinate our teaching efforts.
Assess: We study learning as a community of scholars.
Evolve: We use what we learn to improve.
Shine: We celebrate our successes.
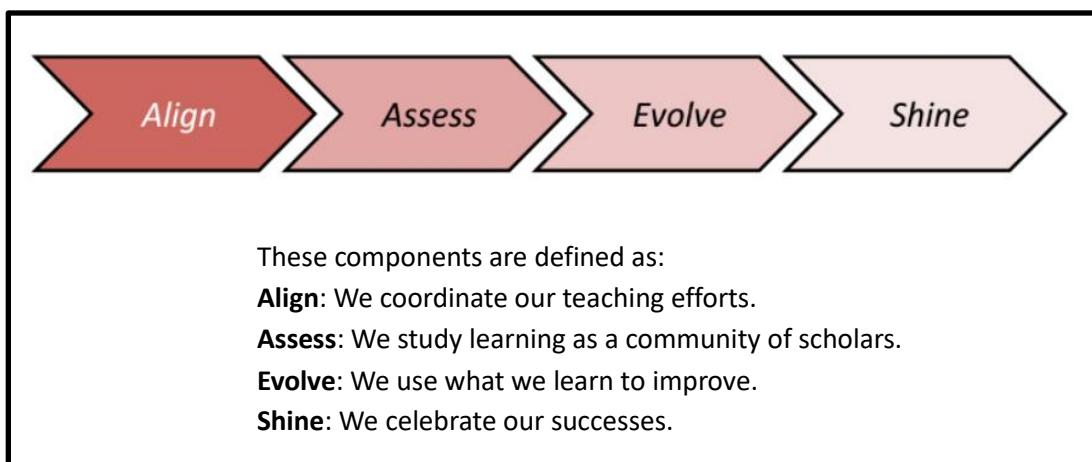
Core Theme 2's first two objectives (indicator #10 and #11 on chart) focus on the outcomes of the process: the demonstration of alignment and a reiterative regular review process. The first ensures a "purposeful learning experience," and the second enables "programs that are responsive to the evolving needs of students." In both cases, progress tracking will be ongoing with information available on the Academic Effectiveness website (to be defined further in the fall 2017 Ad Hoc Report). Therefore, the indicators are meaningful, the stipulated measures (direct and indirect) are assessable and all evidence can be verified by internal and external reviewers. The next two objectives (indicators #12, #13 and #14) speak to WOU's emphasis on championing academic excellence. First, outstanding teaching is assessed based on students' perceptions of academic challenge in their courses. Research, scholarship or creative activity is grounded in student participation through two institutional venues that promote those efforts. Then, in recognition of the value of high-impact practices to students' academic and personal development, WOU will track students' participation in high-impact practices within courses or through co-curricular opportunities. Overall, these objectives and their indicators are measurable, assessable and verifiable by internal or external reviewers. Chart 4 (Core Theme 2) conveys the objectives, indicators and goal levels that will be used to assess achievement and progress toward mission fulfillment as it relates to academic excellence.

Chart 4: CORE THEME 2 – Academic Excellence

WOU provides an academic environment of well-defined curricular and co-curricular opportunities that enable students to engage in purposeful learning experiences.

Objectives	Indicator #	Indicator Description	Level 1 Goal	Level 2 Goal
Demonstrated alignment across course, program and university learning outcomes.	10	Percent of curriculum with alignment among course, program, and university learning outcomes	All newly proposed courses and programs (through Faculty Senate curriculum process) are fully aligned	100 percent alignment by January 2018
Academic and co-curricular programs are responsive to evolving needs of students.	11	Completion of program reviews per seven-year program review schedule	Program reviews were completed or in progress according to the schedule for the year	All programs have completed program reviews by the end of the seven-year review cycle
WOU champions outstanding teaching, research, and scholarship that serve student success.	12	Teaching at WOU involves opportunities for students to be academically challenged (NSSE: Academic Challenge scale)	Maintains mean value (on each of four sub-scales) that is not significantly different from national peer institutions	Significantly higher difference for both first-year and senior students in comparison to national peer institutions
	13	Students demonstrate scholarship, research or creative activity	Maintain annual number of students who have presented at Academic Excellence Showcase and who have published work in *PURE Insights* journal	Increase number of students who present at Academic Excellence Showcase and publish in *PURE Insights* journal
WOU students engage in high-impact learning practices (HIP).	14	WOU students take advantage of opportunities at WOU to participate in high-impact learning opportunities	Percentage of seniors who have participated in at least one HIP increases for each administration of NSSE	Achieve percentage of seniors who have participated in two or more HIP to level that is comparable to national peer institutions

Conclusion

Since the Year Seven Report was filed with the NWCCU in 2016, the Western Oregon University community has undergone a focused, intensive engagement in examining the university mission through the strategic planning process. Significant public discussion among multiple constituencies has resulted in a new and clarified statement of the university's mission as well as the strategic and tactical means by which that mission is pursued.

The mission and core themes adopted by the Board of Trustees in January 2017 focus the university for the future. Further, the institution's response thus far to the Commission's recommendations from the Year Seven review (April 2016) demonstrates that university leadership is committing significant resources to give concerted attention to those recommendations. The institution also is developing a process for tracking overall mission fulfillment to ensure its accountability and responsiveness to its constituencies. This includes a new UC charged with reviewing our progress on mission fulfillment as well as our adherence to the new strategic plan.

WOU's framework for evaluating mission fulfillment is demonstrated through the core themes, their objectives and their indicators. This framework articulates achievement goal levels so that the institution may determine whether efforts meet expectations for mission fulfillment. Future reports on progress will include not only evidence on performance but also action plans to remediate less-than-satisfactory results. The Western Oregon University faculty, staff and leadership have always been dedicated to providing students with a transformative education in a student-centered learning environment. We look forward to working with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities in future accreditation reviews.

APPENDIX B - CALL FOR BUDGET PROPOSALS

[WOU-Notice] Budget process for 2019-20

1 message

Rex Fuller <rfuller@wou.edu>   Mon, Oct 15, 2018 at 8:23 AM
Reply-To: noreply@wou.edu
To: WOU-Notice@wou.edu

Dear Colleague,

WOU's budget planning period for the 2019-20 academic year will be beginning soon. These past three years the leadership team and campus community spent considerable time planning for the next four years through the strategic planning process culminating in the adoption of *Forward Together,* the strategic plan for 2017-2023. This resulted in the following university wide strategic initiatives through 2023:

1. Student Success
2. Academic Excellence
3. Community Engagement
4. Accountability
5. Sustainability & Stewardship

Operating within these priorities, WOU begins university-wide participation in the 2019-20 budget planning process in October 2018. As part of any thorough and comprehensive budget process,
we must proceed in a strategic manner to allocate the university's current and future resources to position Western for the future success of our students, faculty and staff.

It is the goal of the university to engage the entire campus in the budget process. Our focus areas for this fiscal year are:

1. **grow enrollment,**
2. **improve retention, and,**
3. **become the most affordable public university in Oregon.**

With this in mind, we are issuing a campus-wide call for new initiatives and efficiency ideas related to these areas.

A secure web-based form will be available to aid in submitting these proposals, accessed through the WOU Portal. Dr. Katherine Schmidt, UBAC co-chair, will be hosting an initiative proposal writing workshop in the beginning of November in order to assist our campus community. Any additional questions can be directed to our Budget Manager, Camarie Campfield.

This fall, the Tuition and Fees Advisory Committee (TFAC) will be working on tuition and mandatory fees recommendation for Academic Year 2019-20. In accord with HB4141, TFAC is comprised of faculty members, staff, students representing the ASWOU, and students representing historically underserved students.

The following timeline will allow sufficient time for strategic budget planning prior to Board of Trustee approval of the budget in June 2019.

November 1, 2018 – Initiative proposal training

Appendix B continued

November 16, 2018 –Initiative and efficiency idea proposals due.

December 2018 – UBAC and Cabinet review and forward recommendation to President of proposals to move to Phase 2.

January 2019 – Phase 2 initiative and cost-saving proposals due.

February 2019 – Finance/Budget officers meet with VP/Provost/Dean or Division Chairs/Directors of each major unit to validate roster and indicate the projected cost of such for the year, discuss proposed inflationary adjustments (if any) to unclassified/classified pay, student wages, OPE, S&S, and capital outlay budgets.

University Budget Advisory Committee (UBAC) and Cabinet review Phase 2 initiatives and forward recommendations to President.

March 2019- Presidential decision on initiatives made with consideration of UBAC recommendations.

April 2019 - BOT approval of tuition rates for 2019-20.

June 2019 - BOT approval of budget for 2019-20.

For detailed 2019-20 Budget Planning Schedule click here

In closing, we want to thank the UBAC for its participation in the process and for your participation in preparing your budget requests for the upcoming year.

Rex Fuller   *Ana Karaman*

Rex Fuller, President   **Ana Karaman, Vice President for Finance and**
Administration

Western Oregon University   Western Oregon University

Appendix C
- Membership of Professional Learning Communities Focused On Institution-Wide Undergraduate Learning Outcomes

2016-17:   Quantitative Literacy
- Breeann Flesch, Mathematics, Chair
- Kendall Rosales, Mathematics
- Matt Nabity, Mathematics
- Ethan McMahan, Psychology
- John Leadley, Economics
- Vivian Djokotoe, Criminal Justice
- Kristin Latham, Biology
- Melinda Shimizu, Earth Science
- Bob Hautala, Exercise Science

2017-18: Writing
- Lars Soderlund, English/Writing, Chair
- Leigh Graziano, English/Writing
- Samantha Hafner, English/Writing
- Chloe Hughes, Education and Leadership
- Melanie Landon-Hays, Education and Leadership
- Joshua Schulze, Education and Leadership
- Chehalis Strapp, Psychology
- Diane Tarter, Art
- Tandy Tillinghast-Voit, English/Writing

2017-18: Inquiry and Analysis
- Melinda Shimizu, Earth Science, Chair
- Elizabeth Brookbank, Library
- Patricia Flatt, Chemistry
- Breeann Flesch, Computer Science
- Kate Hovey, Education and Leadership
- Shaun Huston, Geography
- Ethan McMahan, Psychology
- Garima Thakur, Art
- Greg Zobel, Education and Leadership

2018-19: Integrative Learning
- Becka Morgan, Computer Science, Chair
- Melissa Cannon, Gerontology
- Adry Clark, Service Learning and Career Development
- Jessica Dougherty, Education and Leadership
- Breeann Flesch, Computer Science
- Patricia Gimenez-Eguibar, Spanish
- Leigh Graziano, English/Writing
- Mary Harden, Art

2018-19: Diversity and Global Learning
- Garima Thakur, Art, Co-chair
- Tandy Tillinghast-Voit, Writing, Co-chair
- Carmen Caceda, Education and Leadership
- Gudrun Hoobler, German
- Kate Hovey, Education and Leadership
- Anne Ittner, Education and Leadership
- Leanne Merrill, Mathematics
- Kathryn Plummer, Service Learning and Career Development
- Rob Troyer, English/Linguistics

ADDENDUM: RECOMMENDATIONS 4, 6 AND 7 UPDATES

In its letter reaffirming WOU accreditation (dated July 14, 2016), the NWCCU found that WOU did not meet NWCCU standards in the areas described below. NWCCU directed WOU to submit an Ad Hoc Report in September 2017 appraising progress towards meeting the standards cited. NWCCU accepted that report, finding WOU in substantial compliance with need for improvement on the standards (letter dated February 8, 2018). NWCCU directed WOU to provide updates in March 2019 on our progress regarding these Recommendations:

- Recommendation 4: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution establish student learning outcomes for all courses, programs and degrees, including general education, wherever offered and however delivered that are meaningful, assessable and verifiable and are consistent with the mission (Eligibility Requirement 22; Standard 2.C.1, 2.C.2, 2.C.4, 2.C.5, and 2.C.10).

- Recommendation 6: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution design and implement an ongoing planning and budgeting process that is broad based, inclusive of all appropriate constituencies, data driven, includes core theme planning and leads to mission fulfillment (Eligibility Requirement 23; Standards 2.F.3, 3.A.1-4, and 3.B.1-3).

- Recommendation 7: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution engage in comprehensive, ongoing, systematic assessment that leads to mission fulfillment through the evaluation of core theme objectives and support of continuous improvement (Eligibility Requirement 23; Standards 4.A.1-6, 4.B.1-2, 5.A.1-2, and 5.B.1).

In our September 2017 Ad Hoc Report, we assessed progress on each component of the three recommendations using a four-level scale, which also allowed appraisals to fall between two levels:

- *Initial*: Minimal or no evidence of the practice or feature
- *Emerging:* Evidence of intermittent practice or feature OR practices or features for which a plan for regularization has been recently adopted and is now being implemented
- *Developed*: Evidence of regularized practice or feature, following a plan
- *Highly Developed*: Evidence of wide-spread, multi-year use of a regularized practice

We updated the initial appraisals to reflect the progress made between September 2017 and March 2019 (summarized in Appendix D to this Addendum).

Recommendation 4

NWCCU: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution establish student learning outcomes for all courses, programs and degrees, including general education, wherever offered and however delivered that are meaningful, assessable, and verifiable and are consistent with the mission (Eligibility Requirement 22; Standard 2.C.1, 2.C.2, 2.C.4, 2.C.5, and 2.C.10).

Outcomes

Courses: Developed

Eighteen months ago, we appraised our status regarding course outcomes as emerging. At that time, we were collecting course goals from existing courses and integrating the information into our Faculty Senate's curriculum database. We also gathered information tracking the alignments of course outcomes with program and/or institutional learning outcomes, which facilitated program mapping and the assessment of institutional learning outcomes.

Since that time, much progress has been made. Primary course goals are set for all programs, new course proposals require the inclusion of learning outcomes, and program coordinator approval is required for instructor-submitted changes to course learning outcomes. Additionally, course goals are available in a publicly accessible archive. Faculty have access to them for course and syllabus development, and students may view them to learn more about courses.

These changes are significant in that they have placed the ownership of primary course goals with the program's faculty as a whole rather than at the discretion of a single instructor teaching the course; instructors also retain academic freedom in that they are encouraged to supplement the primary course goals in a manner that aligns with their training, expertise and experience. Therefore, we currently appraise our status on course outcomes as *developed*.

Programs: Developed

All academic programs have outcomes that guide curriculum design. Course outcomes are aligned with program learning outcomes, and both can be found in a publicly accessible archive. At this time, as in 2017, we appraise our status related to program outcomes as *developed*.

General Education: Emerging/Developed

In 2017, we appraised our status regarding outcomes for general education as emerging. Our faculty had recently adopted new general education goals but had not yet operationalized them.

Since that time, an ad hoc General Education Task Force was constituted in summer/fall of 2017 and developed a general education curriculum that aligns with general education program goals. The curriculum was carried forward by the General Education Committee and approved by the Faculty Senate in March 2018. The new curriculum articulates how each type of course contributes to general education outcomes and requires courses to provide descriptions of the opportunities that our students have to practice and demonstrate achievement of general education learning outcomes

(e.g., see guidance on proposing "Exploring Knowledge" courses). The review of courses for inclusion in the new general education framework is under way and will be complete in time for 2019-20 implementation.

When our general education curriculum is fully implemented and students are benefiting from its purposeful design built around program outcomes, we will arrive at a status we consider developed. Thus, given our progress and timeline, we appraise our current status with respect to general education outcomes as *emerging/developed*.

Degrees: Emerging/Developed

Eighteen months ago, we appraised our status regarding degree outcomes as emerging because the university was undertaking work to define and assess degree learning outcomes. Since that time, our undergraduate and graduate programs have clarified the meaning of undergraduate and graduate WOU degrees in terms of learning outcomes. Because of this foundational work, assessment of learning at the institutional level has been able to proceed.

Undergraduate: Developed

All undergraduate degrees have been defined in terms of their shared undergraduate learning outcomes (ULOs): Written Communication, Quantitative Literacy, Inquiry and Analysis, Diversity, and Integrative Learning. Cross-disciplinary faculty groups have engaged in the assessment of ULOs, with a focus on 1) the opportunities we give students to demonstrate outcomes, 2) the instructors' expectations, and 3) the achievement of typical students as shown in their work on aligned assignments. Based on the work described in the general education appraisal section, our general education program is now fully aligned with ULOs, further strengthening the meaningfulness of the WOU undergraduate degree.

In fall 2018, WOU faculty approved a restructuring of the definition of the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees. Previously, the B.A. or B.S. designation was determined by additional graduation requirements that consisted of a fragmented and relatively small subset of credits (e.g., varying combinations of math, computer science, diversity, writing, language) often unrelated to the nature of the associated major academic program. This structure contributed little to the coherence or meaning of the degree as a whole for the majority of WOU students, and the designations significantly complicated the communication of degree requirements.

As a result, academic programs are currently defining their programs as B.A. or B.S. degrees based on criteria that align with national norms and were approved by the Faculty Senate. Thus, effective fall 2019, our B.A. and B.S. degrees will be more cohesive and better aligned with NWCCU's stated descriptions of B.A. and B.S. degree programs. We have made significant institution-wide progress in defining WOU undergraduate degrees in terms of student learning outcomes and curriculum alignments. Given this progress, we appraise our status for undergraduate degree outcomes as *developed*.

Graduate: Emerging

In 2016, graduate faculty began their work to identify the core qualities of a WOU master's degree, expressed as degree learning outcomes, by considering Lumina's Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) as a possible framework. We [piloted](#) the assessment of three graduate outcomes: a volunteer group of graduate faculty examined 1) written communication while the Graduate Studies Committee examined 2) analytic inquiry and 3) applied and collaborative learning. As a result of this work, graduate faculty concluded the following:

- The DQP was not a fruitful framework for the definition and assessment of graduate degree outcomes.
- The group wanted to adopt the formalized Professional Learning Community (PLC) model that had been successful for the assessment of undergraduate learning outcomes.

A Graduate PLC, with representation from all graduate programs, was constituted in fall 2018. Building upon the earlier work, this group has identified the key pillars of WOU graduate education that define our programs: area-specific content knowledge, applied learning and ethical foundations. As a first step to undertaking meaningful assessment of graduate degrees, graduate faculty are currently examining their programs to identify areas of alignment with these degree pillars. With respect to graduate degree outcomes, early efforts have yielded a viable path forward, and we evaluate our status as *emerging*.

Meaningful, Assessable, Verifiable and Consistent with Mission

Meaningful and Consistent with Mission: Emerging/Developed

In 2017, we appraised our status regarding meaningful outcomes as emerging/developed. Since that time, we have reviewed courses for inclusion in the new general education program based on their alignment with student learning outcomes and evidence of inclusion of assignments that allow students to demonstrate those outcomes. We have also strengthened our collective articulation of how student learning fits in our mission and definition of mission fulfillment as a result of the case studies preparation process for the Mid-Cycle Report. The case studies process, in particular, was a powerful tool for analyzing the alignment of our institutional mission and educational programs and for strengthening our shared understanding of how student learning and academic excellence relate in practice at WOU.

As a next step, we need to supplement our recently developed four-year degree plans, which illustrate for undergraduate students what to do and when to do it, with curriculum maps that provide clear rationale for students. The use of curriculum maps, which articulate the purposefulness of curriculum, is inconsistent. Additionally, we need to develop maps for graduate students.

We appraise our status related to meaningful outcomes as *emerging/developed*.

Assessable: Developed

In 2017, we appraised our status regarding assessable outcomes as emerging. Since then, synergistic developments have moved assessable learning outcomes to the center of the work we do:

- We created WOU's first true general education program, with assessable and meaningful outcomes
- We established a mechanism for assuring direct evidence of student learning via embedded assignments aligned with institutional and program outcomes that allow students the opportunity to demonstrate features of an outcome and allow program faculty, as well as institution-wide PLCs, to assess student learning
- We sponsored assignment-design workshops that support faculty in implementing transparent teaching principles, including clear task, purpose and criteria statements that hone everyone's understanding of an assessable outcome.

This work, along with expanded faculty participation in PLCs that review assignments and student work, has made us more aware and proficient at identifying measurable outcomes and creating opportunities for students to demonstrate those outcomes. We appraise our status related to assessable outcomes as *developed*.

Verifiable: Developed
Since 2017, we have made progress in establishing systems to facilitate the shared review and archiving of direct evidence of student learning, especially for undergraduate degree outcomes. We use TK20's Juried Assessment module to store and distribute samples of student work to faculty assessors, to collect scoring information, and to produce reports. TK20's functions have enabled us to work together on norming and identifying patterns in interrater reliability. Given our progress in consistently basing assessment conclusions on verifiable findings, we appraise our current status as *developed*.

Published: Developed
In 2017, we appraised our status related to published learning outcomes as developed. Our published curriculum now illustrates alignment with student learning outcomes at the institutional, program and course levels, which enables students to see the purpose of requirements and the coherence of the curriculum. Our next step is the publication of curricular maps that illustrate the relationship between outcomes and curriculum. At this time, as in 2017, we appraise our current status as *developed*.

Assessment of Learning Outcomes (Continuous Improvement): Developed
In 2017, we appraised our status related to assessment of learning outcomes as emerging/developed. During the past two years, we have regularized the assessment of institutional learning outcomes at the [undergraduate] and [graduate] levels via outcome-based PLCs. In addition, we adopted TK20 to support institution-wide assessment planning. Through TK20, we provide a user-friendly interface for the review of student work; we have simplified the process of reporting program assessment plans and results; and we now have a mechanism to share plans and reports with faculty and administrators responsible for those programs.

In addition, the new general education framework to be implemented in 2019-20 is outcomes based, and course inclusion requires assignments to be aligned with outcomes. More information is available: First-Year Seminar, Foundations, Exploring Knowledge and Integrating Knowledge. As such, the general education program is built to support continuous improvement.

We appraise our current status related to assessment of learning outcomes as *developed*.

Academic Program Review (Quality Assurance): Emerging
In 2017, we appraised our status related to academic program review as initial/emerging, as both a policy and preliminary procedures for academic review were in place. Since that time, we developed a schedule that identifies when each academic program will be reviewed. The Departments of English and American Sign Language (ASL) served as our inaugural subjects for review: English completed its review in fall 2018, and ASL will complete its review with a visit by an external reviewer in spring 2019. The dance program completed an external review before these procedures were in place. Currently, four academic programs are preparing reports for upcoming reviews: criminal justice, sociology, music and philosophy. With procedures and schedules in place, reviews completed and more reviews under way, we appraise our status as *emerging.*

Recommendation 6

NWCCU: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution design and implement an ongoing planning and budgeting process that is broad based, inclusive of all appropriate constituencies, data driven, includes core theme planning, and leads to mission fulfillment (Eligibility Requirement 23; Standards 2.F.3, 3.A.1-4, and 3.B.1-3).

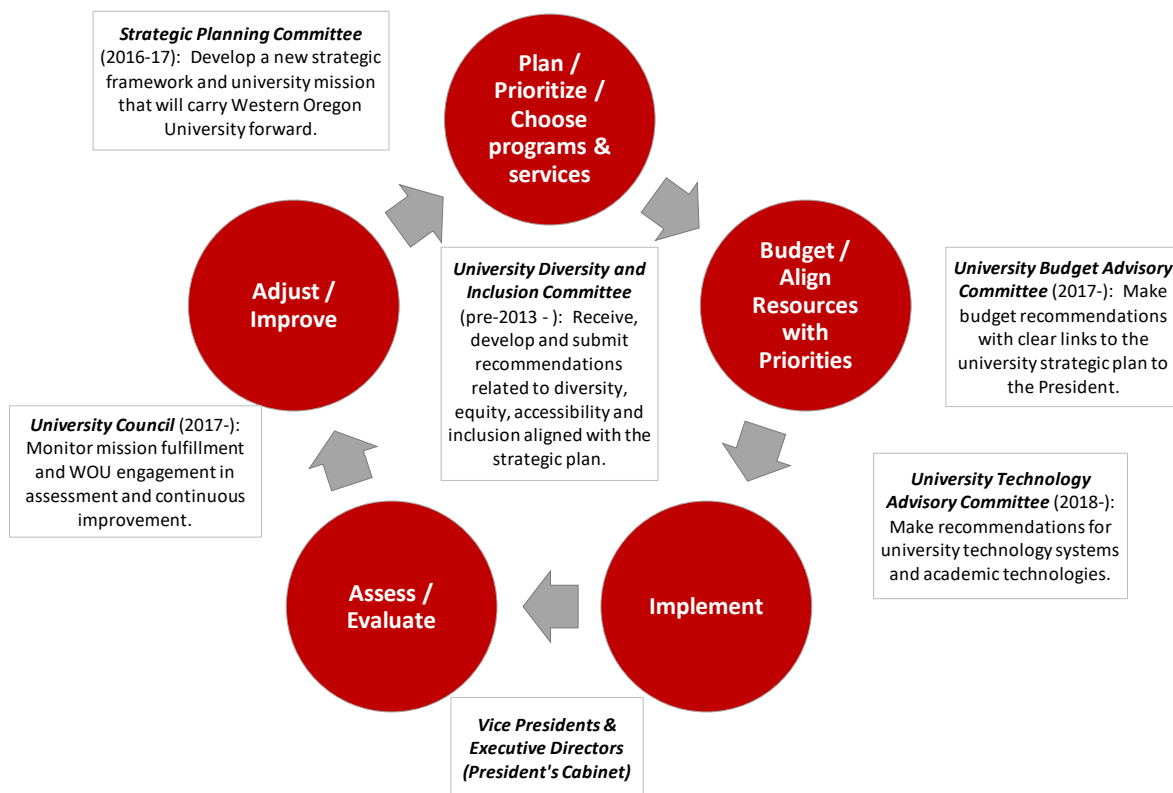**Integrated Planning and Budgeting: Developed**
We define planning as 1) choosing and prioritizing goals, 2) devising strategies to achieve goals, 3) aligning resources relative to our priorities so that strategies can be implemented, and 4) monitoring implementation. At its core, a budget is a representation of our priorities. WOU's institutional budgeting process ensures that institutional funds are aligned with the strategic plan and goals relative to the priority we place on those goals.

At WOU, planning and budgeting are overseen by a set of interconnected committees. In recognition of the need for institution-wide oversight of mission fulfillment, a University Council (UC) was established in 2017 as a permanent iteration of the ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee. In support of other elements of our strategic plan, WOU established the University Budget Advisory Committee (UBAC) in 2017 and University Technology Advisory Committee (UTAC) in 2018. We have also reinvigorated our long-standing University Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council (UDIAC), which has been charged with receiving, developing and submitting recommendations related to diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion aligned with the strategic plan. Figure 1 illustrates the role of

internal governance bodies in institutional planning, budgeting, assessment and continuous improvement.

Figure 1: Governance and Continuous Improvement

Strategic Planning Committee (2016-17): Develop a new strategic framework and university mission that will carry Western Oregon University forward.

Plan / Prioritize / Choose programs & services

Adjust / Improve

University Diversity and Inclusion Committee (pre-2013 -): Receive, develop and submit recommendations related to diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion aligned with the strategic plan.

Budget / Align Resources with Priorities

University Budget Advisory Committee (2017-): Make budget recommendations with clear links to the university strategic plan to the President.

University Council (2017-): Monitor mission fulfillment and WOU engagement in assessment and continuous improvement.

University Technology Advisory Committee (2018-): Make recommendations for university technology systems and academic technologies.

Assess / Evaluate

Implement

Vice Presidents & Executive Directors (President's Cabinet)

With guidance and oversight from the institutional governance bodies, we have taken significant steps to implement our strategic plan and align budget allocations with institutional priorities:

- The offices of Institutional Research and Academic Effectiveness have been established and support data-rich assessment and data-driven decision-making.
- General education has been revised, and the undergraduate curriculum has been streamlined, explicitly supported by the newly created roles of director of General Education and coordinator of First-Year Seminars.
- An experiential learning workgroup is strengthening support for high impact practices in the curriculum and co-curriculum, and high-impact practices have been integrated as a key feature of our revised General Education program.
- WOU has established operations in the nearby city of Salem, with conveniently scheduled evening hybrid courses expanding access to WOU degree and certificate programs.

- A newly created role for a transfer specialist to develop formalized robust Degree Partnership Program agreements with key Oregon community colleges.
- Communications and marketing functions have been centralized, creating vital infrastructure to ensure that WOU effectively communicates its strengths, successes and value.
- Accomplishments with respect to affordability include restructuring tuition remissions to improve net cost of attendance for lower-income students and families.

Additionally, UBAC has played a key role in the integration of planning and budgeting. In response to the new decentralized budget model, UBAC highlighted the need for improved communication on multiple levels: between UC and UBAC to ensure the clear alignment of strategic priorities and budget decisions; campus-wide with regard to the budget process itself, with special emphasis on soliciting ideas for initiatives and efficiencies from faculty, staff and students at the start of the academic year; and between the VPFA/Business Office and the budget managers across campus with regard to teaching and learning strategies for budget management under the new model. Additionally, this year ushers in a new process for evaluating promising proposals: UBAC and the President's Cabinet will sponsor a joint showcase during which each initiative sponsor has the opportunity to make a case projecting the initiative's impact on revenue, enrollment, and/or retention in a public forum. UBAC's next integrated planning objective is the incorporation of a mechanism to monitor the progress of funded initiatives and to create exit strategies, when necessary.

We appraise our current status with respect to integrated budget and planning as *developed*.

Ongoing: Developed
WOU established the UBAC in spring 2017, and the integration of planning and budgeting has been an ongoing practice since that time. UBAC meets for four hours each month and engages in an annual process to 1) call for budget proposals aligned with institutional priorities; 2) mentor the campus community in developing proposals; 3) review proposals for initiatives and efficiencies; and 4) make recommendations to the president and his cabinet. In 2019, UBAC will participate in a fifth step: a joint showcase with the President's Cabinet for proposals. As in 2017, we appraise our current status with respect to ongoing integration of budget and planning as *developed*.

Broad-Based (Comprehensive): Developed
With the completion of the University Strategic Plan in 2017, many divisions and units have engaged in a complementary planning process. Most notable among these was the completion of the Campus Master Plan for its facilities. The Master Plan identifies key opportunities for facility renovations as well as opportunities for new spaces that support the mission and strategic plan.

The division of Finance and Administration engaged in a planning retreat in fall 2018 to discuss the university strategic plan, efficiencies and continuous process improvements, and how to utilize existing technology across campus. This process identified key action items that directly tie to the initiatives in the university's strategic plan. Each department also wrote a three-year vision statement and those are being actively implemented. The division will follow-up on this work in spring 2019 to finalize the division and department strategic plans.

Athletics developed a strategic plan that includes all aspects of an NCAA D-II athletics program. The plan addresses improvements in athletic facilities as well as academic success. One specific goal related to academic excellence is:

> *Be recognized on campus, within the conference and nationally for academic excellence by providing the student-athlete with an environment in which exceptional scholastic performance can be achieved.*

Western Oregon University's Advancement and Foundation is engaged in campaign research to support a comprehensive campaign. A consultant has been hired to assist in the process with broad campus and community participation. The consultant will submit a final report and plan in June 2019 and we expect the plan to take us through 2026.

Academic affairs approach to planning is strategically linked to general education redesign, transfer articulation, new program development and focused efforts to serve persons with some college credit and no college degree. Academic Affairs developed a set of guidelines for its work:

- All course offerings are the result of intentional planning and decisions that are:
  - Data-driven
  - Student-focused
  - Guided by WOU's Strategic Plan
  - Use institutional research and external research to identify emerging markets and opportunities

- Increase alternative offerings:
  - Accessible, flexible pathways for:
    - Completion of all General Education requirements.
    - Degree completion.
  - Increased number of majors and programs fully available through alternative delivery modes.
  - Increased number and variety of courses that utilize alternative delivery modes.

- Faculty are provided with the professional development and support necessary to develop and deliver courses that incorporate best-practices as defined by professional organizations and prioritized by the online PLC.

- Each course is taught by faculty qualified to teach in and adequately trained to deliver the applicable delivery mode / logistics of that course.

Finally, these plans and action items inform the university's budget planning process. This year the call for proposals to the University Budget Advisory Committee (UBAC) focused on enrollment growth, improved retention and graduation, and affordability.

As in 2017, we appraise our current status with respect to broad-based (comprehensive) planning and budgeting as *developed*.

Inclusive: Developed

By design, the members of [UC](UC) and the UBAC are drawn from across the university. Their work, which includes meetings, recommendations, reports and communications, is well-documented and widely communicated ([UC](UC), UBAC). As in 2017, we appraise our current status with respect to inclusive planning and budgeting as *developed*.

Data-Driven: Developed

In 2017, we appraised our status with respect to data-driven decision-making as emerging. Over the past two years, we have established [IR](IR), crafted an interactive dashboard for key performance indicators, contracted with Hanover Research to augment our in-house research capacity, and created Academic Effectiveness to support university-wide academic assessment. This infrastructure has enhanced the campus's capacity for making data-driven decisions regarding priorities and investments. We have focused on the analysis of data: retention and graduation rates, disparities among sub-groups in rates, affordability indices, the size of curriculum and credits to degree. This data has informed decisions about the structure of our undergraduate curriculum (described in our 2019 Mid-Cycle report), procedures for placing and releasing advising holds, and investments in student services including on-campus internships and multicultural student services. At this time, we appraise our status with respect to data-driven decision-making as *developed*.

Linked to Core Themes and Mission Fulfillment: Developed

Planning and budgeting are aligned and linked to Core Themes and Mission Fulfillment. WOU's strategic plan, *Forward Together*, articulates a mission that is captured by our core themes of academic excellence and student success. Our Mission Fulfillment Matrix is updated annually and enables us to track progress towards accomplishing the core theme objectives that define mission fulfillment. In fall 2018, UC affirmed long-term institutional priorities (i.e., new programs for new students and becoming a Hispanic-Serving Institution) and proximate goals (i.e., improved affordability and the retention of continuing students) that are well-aligned with our core themes and supportive of the achievement of the objectives that represent mission fulfillment. Campus leaders have been charged with pursuing those priorities, UBAC is reviewing proposals aligned with those priorities, and campus units are aligning their activities and budget requests to UBAC with those priorities. As in 2017, we appraise our status regarding the link between planning/budgeting and Core Themes and Mission Fulfillment as *developed*.

Recommendation 7

NWCCU: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution engage in comprehensive, ongoing, systematic assessment that leads to mission fulfillment through the evaluation of core

theme objectives and support of continuous improvement (Eligibility Requirement 23; Standards 4.A.1-6, 4.B.1-2, 5.A.1-2, and 5.B.1).

We define assessment as a process by which we determine whether we are on track to achieve, or have succeeded in achieving, our goals. Assessment presupposes measurable goals and uses relevant metrics to track progress. In that sense, assessment is inherently data-driven (see response to Recommendation 6).

In 2017, we appraised our progress related to each component of Recommendation 7 as emerging. Over the past two years, we have made substantial progress in establishing institution-wide processes for ongoing, comprehensive, systematic assessment; evaluating achievement of core theme objectives; and developing an ethos and practice of continuous improvement. These processes are under way and will guide us to our 2023 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability report. When we successfully implement our institutional assessment plan and report its results, we will achieve developed status. At this time, however, we continue to appraise our status as *emerging* on all aspects of this recommendation.

Ongoing: Emerging

To ensure the ongoing assessment of core theme objectives, we developed a schedule of internal reviews that will prepare us for the Year Seven Self-Evaluation, and this process includes annual plans for action: the updating of indicator data in the Mission Fulfillment Matrix; the review of the planning, budgeting, assessment, and continuous improvement cycle by UC; the review of mission fulfillment by UC and the Board of Trustees; and the submission of required reports to NWCCU. A biennial review of the elements of Standard 2: Resources & Capacity is scheduled to ensure compliance.

Figure 2: Schedule of Reviews of Mission Fulfillment and Standard 2: Resources and Capacity, 2016-2023

2016-17 ● Mission finalized ● Core themes, objectives, indicators and targets identified and developed ● Mission and Core Themes report submitted
2017-18 ● Ad hoc report submitted ● Indicators and targets populated with fall 2017 data ● UC introduced to its role in monitoring mission fulfillment
2018-19 ● Mid-cycle report submitted ● Indicators and targets populated with fall 2018 data ● UC and Board of Trustees review mission fulfillment and make commendations and recommendations ● First round of Standard 2 preparations completed ● UC assesses planning, budgeting, assessment and continuous improvement processes

2019-20

● Indicators and targets populated with fall 2019 data
    ● UC and Board of Trustees review mission fulfillment and make commendations and recommendations
    ● UC assesses planning, budgeting, assessment and continuous improvement processes

2020-21

● Indicators and targets populated with fall 2020 data
    ● UC and Board of Trustees review mission fulfillment and make commendations and recommendations
    ● Faculty, Student and Staff senates receive progress report
    ● Second round of Standard 2 preparations completed
    ● UC assesses planning, budgeting, assessment and continuous improvement processes

2021-22

● Indicators and targets populated with fall 2021 data
    ● UC and Board of Trustees review mission fulfillment and make commendations and recommendations
    ● Faculty, Student and Staff senates receive progress report
    ● UC assesses planning, budgeting, assessment and continuous improvement processes

2022-23

● Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability report submitted
    ● Indicators and targets populated with fall 2022 data
    ● UC and Board of Trustees review mission fulfillment and make commendations and recommendations
    ● Faculty, Student and Staff senates receive progress report
    ● UC assesses planning, budgeting, assessment and continuous improvement processes

By adhering to this schedule of activities and engaging the broader university in tracking mission fulfillment, we will demonstrate ongoing institution-wide assessment of our Core Themes and Mission Fulfillment. At this time, however, we continue to appraise our status as *emerging*.

Comprehensive Assessment: Emerging
Our process of institutional assessment is comprehensive, addressing all objectives associated with our core themes. We track our progress with our Mission Fulfillment [Matrix](), which illustrates the relationships among core themes, objectives and indicators; reports our targets and outcomes; and appraises our progress towards mission fulfillment. Our Mission Fulfillment Matrix is a key tool for comprehensive assessment of mission fulfillment. Populated with data on our outcomes, it communicates our progress and informs decisions about adjustments needed to reach mission fulfillment. At this time, we continue to appraise our status as *emerging*.

Systematic Assessment: Emerging
Systematic assessment is characterized by the presence of formal and effective plans for assessment that are implemented on a regular basis. Our mission-fulfillment process, as described in our Mission and Core Themes Report and analyzed in our Mid-Cycle Review, constitutes the university's systematic plan for assessment. We continue to appraise our status as *emerging*.

Evaluation of Core Themes: Emerging

As both this update and our Mid-Cycle Report describe, we have built the infrastructure to evaluate core themes:

- Mission-driven core themes, objectives, indicators, targets and outcomes that are summarized in our Mission Fulfillment [Matrix](#)
- An inclusive governance body, the UC, that is charged with tracking our progress towards mission fulfillment
- Institutional Research and Academic Effectiveness units that support assessment and data-driven decision-making
- A formal plan for institutional assessment, including a schedule of reviews

Our final evaluation will occur in 2023, when we submit our Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Report. Therefore, we continue to appraise our status as *emerging*.

Continuous Improvement: Emerging

Our institutional assessment plan guides us toward mission fulfillment and provides a framework for building a culture of continuous improvement as we set and communicate objectives and goals, adjust to improve performance, achieve goals and identify new objectives. Although our trajectory is clear, we continue to appraise our status as *emerging*.

The university has successfully developed a comprehensive planning process that integrates the roles and responsibilities of formal governance groups with a set of complementary advisory committees. This newly developed governance system provides a strong foundation for campus-wide participation in the strategic decision making process. Moreover, the use of assessable, meaningful and verifiable metrics linked to the core themes and mission will enable the university to engage in meaningful assessment and continuous improvement. The comprehensive approach to assessment supports our value of evidence-based, transparent decision-making that is aligned with the mission and strategic plan. Looking to the future, the system will become more firmly rooted in the culture of the university, and it will move from its early stages to a fully developed system.

APPENDIX D - SUMMARY OF SELF-EVALUATIONS RELATED TO 2016 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations		
4: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution establish student learning outcomes for all courses, programs and degrees, including general education, wherever offered and however delivered that are meaningful, assessable and verifiable and are consistent with the mission.		
Components	**Appraisal of status: September 2017**	**Appraisal of status: March 2019**
Courses	Emerging	Developed
Programs	Developed	Developed
Degrees	Emerging	UG: Developed GR: Emerging
General Education	Initial/Emerging	Emerging/Developed
Meaningful and Consistent with Mission	Emerging/Developed	Developed
Assessable	Emerging	Developed
Verifiable	Emerging	Developed
Published	Developed	Developed
Assessment of Learning Outcomes (Quality Assurance)	Emerging/Developed	Developed
Academic Program Review (Quality)	Initial/Emerging	Emerging
6: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution design and implement an ongoing planning and budgeting process that is broad-based, inclusive of all appropriate constituencies, data-driven, includes core theme planning and leads to mission fulfillment.		
Components	**Appraisal of status: September 2017**	**Appraisal of status: March 2019**
Strategic Planning and Integration of Budgeting and Planning	Developed	Developed
Ongoing	Developed	Developed
Broad-based	Developed	Developed
Inclusive	Developed	Developed
Data-driven	Developed	Developed
Linked to Core Themes and Mission Fulfillment	Emerging	Developed
7: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution engage in comprehensive, ongoing and systematic assessment that leads to mission fulfillment through the evaluation of core theme objectives and support of continuous improvement.		
Components	**Appraisal of status: September 2017**	**Appraisal of status: March 2019**
Comprehensive Assessment	Emerging	Emerging
Ongoing Assessment	Emerging	Emerging

Systematic Assessment	Emerging	Emerging
Evaluation of Core Themes	Emerging	Emerging
Supports Continuous Improvement	Emerging	Emerging

ADDENDUM: RECOMMENDATION 5 UPDATE

In 2016, Western Oregon University completed its Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Self-Evaluation and was reviewed by an NWCCU evaluation committee. The committee made seven recommendations to WOU. NWCCU directed WOU to respond to the following:

- Recommendations 1, 2 and 3 in March 2017, concurrent with its Mission and Core Themes Report
- Recommendations 4, 6 and 7 in September 2017 in an Ad Hoc Report
- Recommendation 5 in March 2019, concurrent with its Mid-Cycle Report

WOU responded to Recommendations 1, 2 and 3 in March 2017 and was found by NWCCU to be in compliance with the standards cited in those recommendations (letter dated February 8, 2018). WOU responded to Recommendations 4, 6 and 7 in September 2017 and was found by NWCCU to be in substantial compliance with a need for improvement (letter dated February 8, 2018).

Recommendation 5

NWCCU: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution provide appropriate and adequate technology systems and infrastructure planning with input from constituencies to support its management and operational functions, academic programs and support services, wherever offered and however offered (Standards 2.G.5 and 2.G.7).

In the 2016 evaluation, WOU was found to be in substantial compliance with Standards 2.G.5 and 2.G.7 but in need of improvement. During the past two years, we have taken steps to improve technology systems and infrastructure planning—including building systems—to receive and respond to input from campus units that rely on technology to serve WOU students.

WOU has developed a scale for assessing progress toward NWCCU recommendations. The university assesses each component using a four-level scale, which also allows appraisals to fall between levels:

- *Initial*: Minimal or no evidence of the practice or feature
- *Emerging*: 1) Evidence of intermittent practice or feature, or 2) practices or features for which a plan for regularization has been recently adopted and is now being implemented
- *Developed*: Evidence of regularized practice or feature, following a plan
- *Highly Developed*: Evidence of widespread, multiyear use of a regularized practice

Appropriate and Adequate Infrastructure Planning: Emerging
As part of the implementation of our strategic plan, *Forward Together*, WOU formed the University Technology Advisory Committee (UTAC), which is charged with "receiving, developing and submitting

recommendations related to the use of technology for university technology systems and academic technologies that are aligned with the strategic plan, *Forward Together*."

Key responsibilities of the committee include:
- Create and maintain a Campus Technology Plan (CTP) that articulates a vision for implementation, adoption, integration and maintenance of technologies across campus that are aligned with the WOU strategic plan
- Review new building and renovation projects pertinent to the academic technology environment
- Develop and monitor policies related to university technology systems and academic technologies
- Prioritize proposals for new university technology systems and academic technologies and present technology purchasing recommendations and plans to the University Budget Advisory Committee
- Explore and engage in reviews of new developments in university and academic technologies for potential use, relevance and future needs of the university
- Evaluate the progress and success of technology initiatives

UTAC convened for the first time in November 2018 to begin the working on the initiatives related to its charge. As UTAC pursues its charge, we expect adequate and appropriate infrastructure planning to become a more developed practice at WOU. At this time, given that the committee is new, we appraise our progress on technological infrastructure planning as *emerging*.

Input from Constituencies: Developed
UTAC's membership includes one or more representatives from all major university units (i.e., Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Finance and Administration, Strategic Communications and Marketing, and General Counsel) and shared governance bodies (i.e., Faculty Senate, Staff Senate and Student Senate). In recognition of the centrality of teaching and learning to the university's mission, the committee includes four representatives from the Faculty Senate and three additional representatives from units in Academic Affairs. The committee is co-chaired by a senior administrator in Academic Affairs and the director of University Computing Solutions (UCS). Input from constituencies began with the development of the UTAC charge and membership, which were developed in consultation with Faculty and Staff senates and other key stakeholders. UTAC's composition and mission will continue this pattern of consultative planning for technology at WOU. Given the history of its development, we appraise our status regarding constituency input as *developed*.

Appropriate and Adequate Technology Systems to Support Management and Operational Functions, Academic Programs and Support Services: Emerging/Developed

Infrastructure
UCS is our central information technology unit, tasked with ensuring WOU technology systems and infrastructure adequately support its many functions, programs and services.

WOU's network infrastructure provides a virtualized environment that effectively and securely supports WOU's technology needs:

- The infrastructure takes a resilient design approach that ensures redundant paths to data structures and software upgrades.
- It is designed in a manner that allows for non-disruptive upgrades on an as-needed basis.
- Systems are in place to monitor and control WOU-internal network traffic on a continuous basis, as well as to ensure adequate bandwidth and redundancy for internal network traffic.

These supports ensure WOU meets the industry standard for bandwidth in higher education.

Enterprise Software

WOU successfully moved Banner to the Ellucian Cloud in February 2018. The Oracle forms technology was no longer supported Dec. 31, 2018. Since Jan. 2, 2019, WOU has been successfully running the Java-based Banner 9.

The technical Banner team is now led by the Banner Solutions and Integrations Manager, with the support of four analyst programmers. The Banner functional team includes three staff members with expertise in FIS, HRIS and SIS. Technical and functional teams meet weekly to plan the successful implementation of Banner 9. Both teams have been involved in Banner 9 training sessions for the Banner user community.

Instructional Technology

Western Oregon University facilitates its online and other technology-enhanced courses through an onsite installation of the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS). Back-end and integration support is provided by UCS personnel. Load and uptime are managed through a load balancing system that parses traffic out across eight web servers: five are dedicated to student traffic and three to faculty traffic.

Currently, WOU has more than 150 smart classrooms. Smart Classrooms are technology-enhanced classrooms that allow faculty to easily present dynamic multimedia content to students. The rooms enable an instructor to enter the room, log into the networked computer, select among projection options (e.g., document camera, computer, DVD) using the touch panel, and project onto large screen(s). Full-time staff are on call to provide assistance to faculty and staff when they experience equipment or network issues.

Support Services

WOU uses a variety of software systems to support its work with students:

- Degree Works is our degree audit system. It is integrated with student academic records in Banner, managed by the Registrar and used by students, faculty and other academic advisers.
- Grades First supports the coordination of academic advising and outreach to students at academic risk and is managed by our Student Success and Advising Office.
- College Source's Transfer Evaluation System was recently adopted to manage transfer articulation requests and is jointly managed by the Registrar and transfer specialist.

- Astra Schedule is our system for campus space scheduling and is managed by UCS.
- TK20 is our management system for assessment planning and reporting, strategic planning, course evaluations and accreditation. It is managed by the Academic Effectiveness Office.

These systems predate the establishment of UTAC, and we expect UTAC will consider the continued value of each system as part of its planning.

In the past, our library engaged in its own planning processes regarding technologies. However, WOU is currently integrating Library and Academic Technology functions under a dean of Libraries and Academic Innovation. We expect this development to further integrate planning and provision of technological support campus wide.

Security
System security is a constant concern. UCS draws upon significant resources to maintain an operational network environment, blocking 350,000-400,000 spam/malware viruses every day. From WOU's log files, UCS is aware of mischievous attempts at network penetration from the outside on a daily basis, and these are managed and restricted through multiple tactics. Additionally, WOU engages a penetration-testing firm on an annual basis, and the director, assistant director, network engineer and system administrators meet monthly to discuss security concerns and projects.

UCS also added additional security infrastructure to prevent digital content copyright infringement from WOU users. Complaints from the Digital Media Association (DMA) have decreased from a weekly occurrence to only one or two per year. This improvement reduced organizational liability for WOU and personal liability for WOU students.

Employee Workstations
UCS purchases and maintains computing equipment for faculty and staff. Similar to computers in labs across campus, employee machines have a three- to five-year replacement cycle to ensure a supply of functional and contemporary equipment.

Technology Equipment Policies
In order to protect WOU's investments, all computing technology equipment (e.g., computers, monitors, printers and specialty printers) is tagged with an inventory control number that identifies the unit and its service start date. Academic and administration departments are responsible for appropriately tracking and securing equipment provided to them and ensuring that equipment is used for its intended purpose. An Acceptable Use of Computing Technology policy guides users in appropriate practices.

Overall, we have many technological systems in place to support management and operational functions, academic programs and support services. We expect that UTAC will help us to evaluate the adequacy of our systems for current and projected operations. Pending comprehensive review by the

newly formed UTAC, we appraise our status with respect to adequate and appropriate systems as *emerging/developed*.