

## Institutional Accreditation Review

### BACKGROUND

#### Regional Accreditation

Regional accreditation is a process of recognizing educational institutions for performance, integrity, and quality that entitles them to the confidence of the educational community and the public. In the United States, this recognition is extended largely through nongovernmental, voluntary membership associations that establish accreditation criteria, evaluate institutions against those criteria, and grant accreditation to institutions meeting the criteria.

Oregon State University is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), one of six regional accrediting organizations recognized by the US Department of Education.

Accreditation criteria and procedures intend to:

- Foster excellence through the development of criteria and guidelines for assessing educational quality and institutional effectiveness;
- Encourage institutional improvement through continuous self-study and evaluation;
- Ensure the educational community, the general public, and other organizations that an institution has clearly defined and appropriate educational objectives, has established conditions under which their achievement can reasonably be expected, appears in fact to be substantially accomplishing them, and is so organized, staffed, and supported that it can be expected to continue to do so; and
- Provide counsel and assistance to established and developing institutions.

When granted, NWCCU accreditation applies to the entire institution in operation at the time of the most recent comprehensive evaluation. It indicates that the institution as a whole is substantially achieving its mission and that it meets the Commission's expectations for compliance with the accreditation criteria.

#### Institutional Self-Evaluation

Institutions seeking accreditation by the NWCCU are required to conduct a self-evaluation of the quality and efficacy of their mission, goals, operations, and achievements. The Commission then provides expert analysis by peer evaluators, and, later, commendations for accomplishments and recommendations for improvement.

Institutional self-evaluation is the most significant part of the accreditation process. It must be comprehensive, encompass the entire institution, and address the Commission's accreditation criteria and be viewed as an ongoing process to understand, evaluate, and improve quality and effectiveness by:

- Analyzing institutional resources and effectiveness in fulfilling its mission;
- Demonstrating that student achievement is commensurate with the certificates, diplomas, degrees, or other recognition awarded;
- Appraising the relationship of all the institution's activities to its purposes;
- Providing a sound basis for institutional planning and improvement;
- Assessing educational achievements as well as structures and processes;

- Assessing student achievement with respect to programs and services offered to accomplish educational purposes; and
- Assessing performance in achieving institutional mission and goals.

### **OSU Accreditation Review**

Accreditation for Oregon State University was reaffirmed by NWCCU in 2011. In spring 2019, OSU will be visited by a team of evaluators associated with the NWCCU as part of our accreditation review. Preparations for this visit will begin in fall 2017 and will follow the institutional self-evaluation process outlined above. The self-study report and supporting data will be submitted to members of the evaluation committee prior to their visit. The re-accreditation process, and the production of a self-study report, provides the university with a unique opportunity to self-examine our considerable strengths as well as to identify areas where challenges exist.

OSU will be assessed on 114 criteria grouped under five standards:

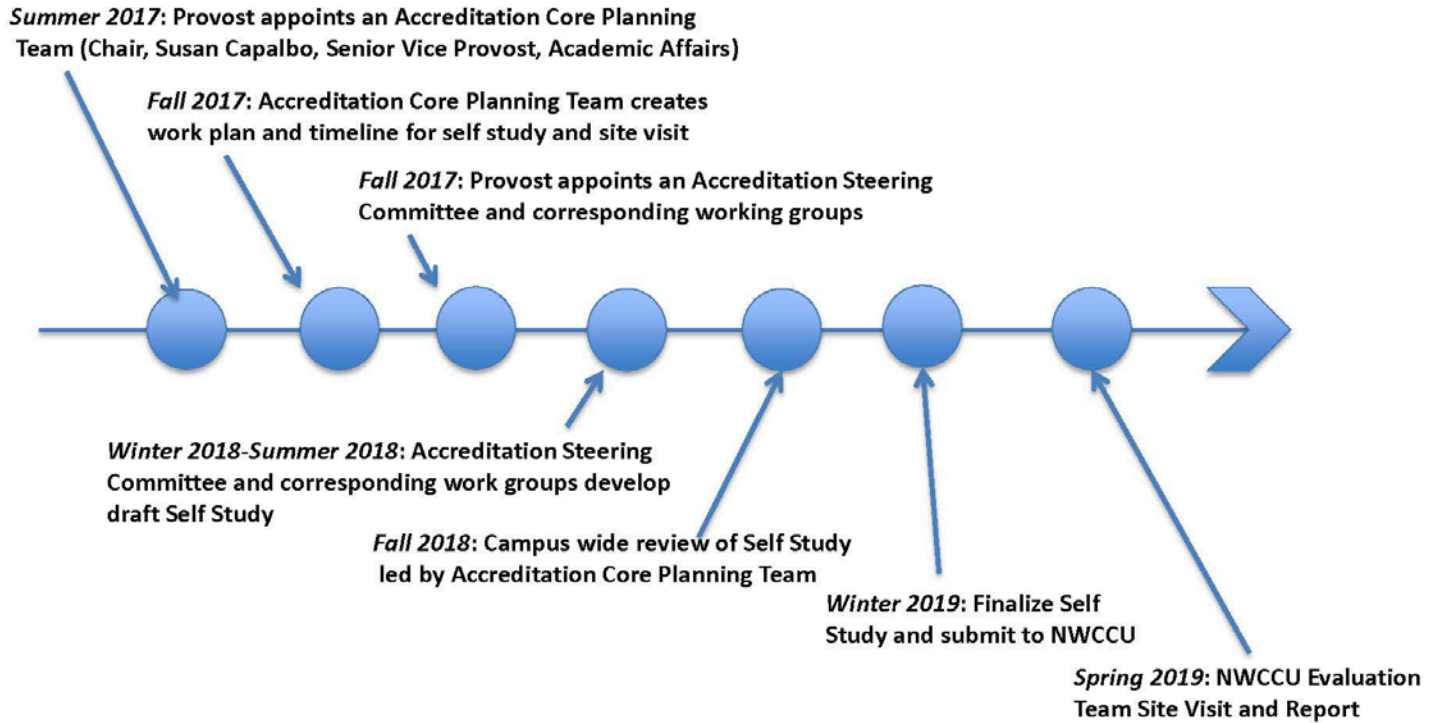
- Standard 1: Mission and Core Themes
- Standard 2: Resources and Capacity (Governance, Governing Board, Leadership and Management, Policies and Procedures, Human Resources, Education Resources, Student Support Resources, Library and Information Resources, Financial Resources, Physical and Technological Infrastructure)
- Standard 3: Institutional Planning and Implementation
- Standard 4: Effectiveness and Improvement
- Standard 5: Mission Fulfillment, Adaptation and Sustainability

### **NEXT STEPS**

This summer, Provost Ed Feser will appoint an Accreditation Core Planning Team, which will be chaired by Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Susan Capalbo. This team will be tasked with creating the work plan and timeline for the self-study and site visit. In the fall, the Provost will appoint an Accreditation Steering Committee. The steering committee will help prepare the self-study and educate and prepare the campus for the on-site visit.

The Academic Strategies Committee is responsible for overseeing engagement with accrediting bodies and will be provided regular progress reports throughout this effort.

# Accreditation Process Time Line



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