

## VII. STANDING COMMITTEES

### A. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

#### University of Washington Decennial Accreditation

For information only.

The University of Washington is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). UW is undergoing a regularly scheduled review in 2013-14, including a visit from a 10-member accreditation site visit team October 7-9, 2013. UCLA Chancellor Gene Block will chair the site visit team.

#### Background on accreditation, Northwest Commission

Regional accreditation of postsecondary institutions is a voluntary, non-governmental, self-regulatory process of quality assurance and institutional improvement. It recognizes higher education institutions for performance, integrity, and quality to merit the confidence of the educational community and the public. Accreditation or pre-accreditation by a postsecondary regional accrediting agency qualifies institutions and enrolled students for access to federal funds to support teaching, research, and student financial aid.

The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) is an independent, non-profit membership organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as the regional authority on educational quality and institutional effectiveness of higher education institutions in the seven-state Northwest region of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. It fulfills its mission by establishing accreditation criteria and evaluation procedures by which institutions are reviewed.

The Commission oversees regional accreditation for 163 institutions.

The Commission's decision-making body consists of up to twenty-six Commissioners who represent the public and the diversity of higher education institutions within the Northwest region.

The Northwest Commission has made extensive changes to the general accreditation template and review timeline, so the current self-study varies greatly from earlier iterations.

#### Accreditation self-study

In preparation for our 2013-14 review, the University of Washington has created a substantive self-study, which focuses on:

- analyzing institutional resources and effectiveness in fulfilling its mission;

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- 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;
- assessing performance in achieving institutional mission and goals.

#### Our self-study

Our self-study is a snap shot of the University and its work. The self-study falls into two parts:

1. Identification by UW of our core themes and indicators of achievement.
2. A wide range of questions from the Commission about:

#### Resources and Capacity

- Governance
- Human Resources
- Educational goals and processes
- Student support resources
- Financial Resources
- Physical and Technological Infrastructure

#### Institutional Planning

### **1. Core Themes**

In part of our self-study process, the University of Washington established a standing accreditation team composed of representatives of the University's three campuses. This team met on a regular basis to discuss the UW's accreditation review, and specifically to identify three core themes and indicators of achievement.

The three core themes emerged from the central code of activities on which faculty are generally evaluated:

- Research and Scholarship
- Teaching and Learning
- Service

These themes also map directly onto the primary mission of the University, which is the preservation, advancement, and dissemination of knowledge. The University preserves knowledge through its libraries and collections, its courses, and the scholarship of its faculty. It advances new knowledge through many forms of research, inquiry, and discussion and disseminates it through the

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classroom and the laboratory, scholarly exchanges, creative practice, international education, and public service.

#### **Research and Scholarship**

We identified 3 core objectives in Research and Scholarship:

1. UW creates an outstanding climate of support for researchers and scholars and fosters innovative, interdisciplinary, collaborative, and transformational research and scholarship.
2. UW adheres to the highest standards of ethics in research and scholarship.
3. Research facilities at the UW are among the best in the U.S.

For each of these three core objectives, we created a series of “indicators” that provided concrete evidence of our success in achieving these core objectives.

- For “outstanding climate,” our self-study narrative details support for faculty (\$1.47 billion in grants and contracts in FY 2013, intramural support for faculty research, paid professional leave, student engagement in research, interdisciplinary research efforts, examples of emerging fields and innovation).
- For “ethics,” our self-study details the great variety of grant management and ethics training provided (e.g., workshops, courses, and online programs in a wide array of topics, including human subjects research, animal use, and financial interest), and the number of attendees at trainings (e.g., NSF required trainings; Biomedical Research Integrity Program) and the number of human subjects applications, etc.
- For “facilities,” we provide detail on the University of Washington Libraries (ranked 20<sup>th</sup> among the top 115 academic research libraries in the United States), and the great quantity and array of labs and research facilities at UW (e.g., open labs, computer labs, biohazard labs, computation lab, specialized wet and dry labs, vivarium, etc.).

#### **Teaching and Learning**

We identified four core objectives in Teaching and Learning:

1. UW provides leadership for innovative and effective teaching
2. UW provides transformative learning experiences for students, educating future leaders, scholars, and citizens through a challenging learning environment.

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3. The UW provides access to instruction and services that enable students to be successful in their postsecondary endeavors.
4. Recognizing the value of a diverse learning environment for all, the UW welcomes and educates a diverse population of students and recruits and supports diverse faculty and staff.

For each of these four core objectives, we created a series of “indicators” that provided concrete evidence of our success in achieving these core objectives.

- For “leadership,” our self-study details course evaluations, the number of programs, center and initiatives that support effective teaching (e.g., Center for Teaching and Learning, UW Bothell Hybrid Course Development Initiative; UWT Instructional Teaching Fellows Initiative), and the number of awards that recognize effective teaching.
- For “transformative learning experiences,” the self-study details experiential learning opportunities for students (such as service learning, internships, undergraduate research, McNair Program; Pipeline Project, study abroad), learning goals, evidence that undergraduates are learning intended goals in their majors, and student satisfaction with the UW learning experience.
- For “access to instruction,” the self-study details the number of students receiving degrees or certificates from undergraduate and graduate programs, retention rates and time-to-degree, scholarships and grant awards, academic assistance programs for undergraduate students and professional development opportunities for graduate students.
- For “diverse learning environments,” the self-study identifies the number of under-represented minority first-time freshmen entering UW, percentage of under-represented students at UW, degrees awarded to under-represented students, evidence of support for under-represented students, and availability of diversity training for faculty and staff.

#### **Service**

We identified three core objectives in Service:

1. The UW addresses and responds to issues related to its community and beyond.
2. The UW helps fuel the economic engine of the Pacific Northwest.
3. The UW provides the highest quality of healthcare to the region.

For each of these three core objectives, we created a series of “indicators” that provided concrete evidence of our success in achieving these core objectives.

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- For “issues related to its community and beyond,” the self-study identifies community outreach examples (such as UW Bothell’s Chancellor’s Community Engagement Council, or UW Seattle’s award-winning Neurobiology and Behavior Community Outreach program), student volunteer hours, number of UW alumni in the Peace Corps, awards that recognize public service, community attendance at campus educational and cultural events, and community members on UW advisory boards.
- For “economic engine,” the self-study details estimates of economic impact (\$9.1 billion in total economic impact generated by the UW in Washington state) and the number of start-up companies (since 2005, the UW’s Center for Commercialization has supported the commercialization of more than 100 projects, and more than 250 companies have been started by UW students and faculty or with UW technology).
- For “quality of healthcare,” the self-study details the nationally recognized work of the UW School of Medicine in patient care, research and teaching.

#### **2. Questions from the Northwest Commission**

The Commission self-study template includes questions on each of the topics below

##### **Resources and Capacity**

- Governance. Our self-study focuses on the role of faculty, staff and students in governance, collective bargaining, legislative and federal relations, the Board of Regents and university administrators. This section also provides extensive detail on a wide variety of policies around human resources, academic personnel, staff, conflicts of interest, student conduct, sexual harassment and non-discrimination, Title IX reporting policies, risk management and internal audit, scholarly integrity, Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, etc.
- Human Resources. Our self-study describes general personnel issues (number of personnel, evaluations, professional development opportunities, number and qualifications of faculty, faculty workload and evaluation).
- Education Resources. Our self-study details efforts to ensure curricular quality (e.g., academic planning; program reorganization, consolidation or elimination; learning outcomes and critical thinking at all three campuses; assessment of student work; conferral of degrees; transfer credit, and general education, fee-based programs, and certificate programs).

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- Student Support Resources. Our self-study focuses on classroom availability and increased efficiency in use; student safety and security on all three campuses; recruitment and admission both undergraduate and graduate; student records, student financial aid, advising for graduate and undergraduate students; co-curricular activities; student governance; diversity and access; housing and food services; intercollegiate athletics, etc.).
- Library and Information Resources. Our self-study describes the Libraries' support for the three-campus community, with a particular emphasis on the Libraries' support for the intellectual discovery that is so central to UW. The self-study notes user satisfaction surveys, library planning and consultation, library engagement with students, and careful analysis of user needs and interests.
- Financial Resources. The self-study details the University's general financial profile (including cash flow, reserves, risk management); resource planning (enrollment management, responsible projections on grants, donations, etc.); collaborative budgetary processes; timely financial information and accounting systems; consonance between mission and spending; role of auxiliary enterprises; auditing; fund-raising.
- Physical and Technological Infrastructure. The self-study focuses on the quality and quantity of accessible, safe, secure and sufficient physical facilities; procedures on hazardous or toxic materials; meaningful master planning that is consistent with UW's mission; quality and quantity of equipment. The self-study provides detail about UW Information Technology (UWIT) and the role of technology in supporting faculty, students, and staff.

#### **Institutional Planning**

The Commission seeks to gauge the quality and extent of institutional planning. Our self-study focuses extensively on the Two Years-Two Decades (2y2d) initiative that provides the foundation for strategic initiatives today. The self-study notes the creation of a strategic academic business plan, and the multiple initiatives that it launched:

- Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century
- Campus of the 21st Century
- Fostering Collaboration in the 21st Century
- Organizational Effectiveness
- Program Evaluation

#### **Accreditation Site Team Visit, October 7-9, 2013**

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A team of 10 people will visit campus in early October. UCLA Chancellor Gene Block will chair the team. We do not yet have a list of the visit team members, but we know that they will include people with expertise in:

- Medical Schools and related Medical Centers
- Physical and technological infrastructure, information technology
- Students (undergraduate and graduate; student experience, student affairs)
- Libraries
- Finance

As part of the site visit, some of the team members will meet with some of the members of the Board of Regents. Some of the types of questions that may be asked:

- Functions/roles
  - What's the role of the UW Board of Regents in advancing or guaranteeing the quality of the university?
  - How does the board function? Committees, etc.?
  - What are the board's chief areas of focus?
  - How does the board get information about the university?
- Oversight, assessment of quality
  - How does the board oversee, supervise or interact with senior leadership at the University?
  - What is the board's assessment of the quality of leadership at the institution?
  - What is the board's assessment of the quality of the institution more broadly (faculty, staff, students, programs, etc.).
  - How well does the three-campus UW work? Is this a well-functioning organization?
- Challenges, opportunities
  - What are the chief challenges and opportunities ahead for UW? What is being done to address these challenges and opportunities?
  - What does the board see as the main strengths of UW? Weaknesses?
- Budgets
  - What has the board done, in recent years, to address budgetary challenges?