It is with great pride that I write today about the re-affirmation of Washington State University’s accreditation by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. Congratulations and thank you to all who participated in the development of our Year Three report and virtual progress review last spring! I especially appreciate the fine work of Kimberly Green, director of the WSU Office of Assessment of Teaching and Learning, and her staff as well as the members of the WSU Accreditation Committee. The full report is available here.

That report focused on our resources, capacity and educational assessment practices, with specific emphasis on the latter. Strengthening educational assessment has been a long-standing recommendation from NWCCU. Thanks to concerted efforts by the faculty, the Office of Assessment of Teaching and Learning as well as the Graduate School, NWCCU commended us on the “noticeable transformation of the culture of assessment since 2011.”

Of course, there is always more to do.

WSU faculty members are committed to effective instruction, and I am especially gratified at how they have committed themselves to the development and implementation of best practices for assessing student learning outcomes. As the accrediting team noted, however, these assessments are most useful if we employ them to continually improve our instruction, which is fundamental to our institutional mission. The commission has challenged us to ensure that faculty members who teach are consistently involved in assessment, that online students and courses are included in assessment, and that student learning achievement data contribute to WSU’s evaluation of mission fulfillment. We will do everything possible to meet these challenges.

In addition, we must also demonstrate that we meet new standards announced in 2010 regarding planning, evaluation and evidence-based decision-making. The details of those are available here. Unlike previous accreditation reports, this will involve every academic and support unit in the university. The strategic planning process that Provost Dan Bernardo is leading is a major step toward incorporating the new standards in our alignment of programs, services and evaluation with our strategic plan, themes and indicators. I ask every member of our university community to participate in our planning and assessment activities to help Washington State University achieve its land-grant mission as a Research I institution.

The bottom line? Despite the dramatic budget tumult of the past several years, we are doing well. And, the things we have been asked to work on we believe in strongly and embrace wholeheartedly.

http://president.wsu.edu/blog/perspectives/2013/10/17/accreditation-report-praises-assessment-progress-outlines-need-for-more/