


January 5, 2012

TO: Chancellors, Deans, Vice Chancellors, Associate Deans, Chairs, Academic Directors and Faculty

FROM: Warwick M. Bayly   
Provost and Executive Vice President

SUBJECT: WSU's Regional Re-accreditation by Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)

As many of you are aware, WSU's re-accreditation was affirmed by the NWCCU in July 2009 with recommendations. NWCCU is now satisfied that WSU's new ZZUSIS student information system resolves the first recommendation but is **not satisfied with our progress** in resolving a second recommendation dealing with university-wide educational assessment.

Our recent accreditation reporting and NWCCU responses include these communications:

WSU

2009 Report closing ten-year reaccrreditation cycle

October 2010 Progress Report, including information from undergraduate and graduate program assessment reports

Year One Report in March 2011 begins a new seven-year accreditation cycle (2011-2017)

2012: WSU will prepare the next Report and for the April 2013 site visit; and address Recommendations

NWCCU

2009 Reaffirmation letter to President Floyd includes recommendations for subsequent Progress Report

Spring 2011 Response (letter and subsequent email) to WSU's Progress Report includes need for continued work on recommendations

July 2011 Peer-Evaluation Report in response to WSU's Year One Report includes three additional Recommendations

**Educational Assessment** is particularly urgent, as these concerns have been on the table – and so noted by the NWCCU – for over a decade.

NWCCU communication consistently expresses the need for WSU to strengthen the assessment process in all educational programs, stating that system-wide progress in this area has been inadequate. It is clear that we have much to do and that we should expect educational assessment to be a major emphasis of every NWCCU report and each site visit for the foreseeable future. NWCCU expects to see significant progress.

Effective assessment is an undertaking that requires time and sustained effort, and I extend my appreciation to programs who have already invested in this work. In moving forward, we must build on successes and share tools and techniques, to ensure that all programs implement useful, sustainable assessment that enhances teaching and learning.

Looking ahead, for the next two years we will give particular attention to increasing our assessment capacity system-wide and documenting how we use assessment data to inform change and decision-making in programs, colleges, and across the institution.

For information on educational assessment, undergraduate programs should contact their Associate Dean for Academic Programs, their Vice Chancellor, or the Office of Assessment of Teaching and Learning. Graduate and professional programs should continue to work with the Graduate School to plan and report assessment.

We are committed to using assessment to improve teaching and learning at WSU and to efficiently deploy our resources. The institution needs everyone's efforts, individually and collectively, to bring this about. As you plan for 2012, this work must be part of your discussion and your action.

WSU's Reports and Progress Report, and the NWCCU evaluations, findings, and responses can be found at <http://accreditation.wsu.edu/> (website update in progress).