

Progress on 1994 Recommendations

As a result of our 1994 review, we had a focused interim report and visit in 1996 to address three of the five recommendations (library resources, faculty evaluation, general education related instruction). Our regular interim report and visit in 1999 addressed all five recommendations. What follows is a brief summary of our progress on the five 1994 recommendations; additional detail is found in the institutional self-study.

Recommendation #1:

Library and learning resources should be brought up to the standards needed to support the University's mission of quality undergraduate education (WSU currently does not appear to meet NASC Standard IV [now NWCCU Standard V]).

Since 1994, we have focused on three efforts to improve our library: increase the budget, enhance the collection, and increase the staff. From 1994 to 2003, we increased the library budget from \$2,296,224 to \$3,440,674, or a 50% increase. These increased funds are a combination of legislative allocations to Weber State University, legislative allocations to the Utah Academic Library Consortium of which we receive a portion, and private donations.

Our collection has been enhanced by increasing monographs, videos, and journals through both print and electronic media. We have also improved the relevancy of our collection through a combination of traditional assessment techniques and the OCLC-Amigos Collection Analysis CD-ROM. We have gathered positive student and faculty satisfaction data on our library resources.

Finally, we have increased our library staff positions from 39.2 FTE to 47.6 FTE. This has come about through additional staff positions as well as through extending the contracts of some nine-month faculty to 12 months.

At the time of our 1996 focused visit, we had made some progress with improving our library resources and we continued to focus our efforts on this important area. Our 1999 interim visit report indicated that we were in compliance with Standard IV. We continue to make the library a high priority for Weber State University.

Recommendation #2:

The team found inconsistencies across the colleges in evaluating the performance of faculty and providing for their continuing development. This was especially noted in the case of tenured faculty who have been promoted to the rank of professor. (WSU currently does not appear to meet Policy Statement #26 [now NWCCU Policy #4.1].)

University policy on faculty evaluation was changed in 1995 to implement a performance review of each faculty member by the department chair at least every three years (or more often at the discretion of the department chair). Teaching performance is a priority item for the review. To provide a focus for discussion and better inform the chair, faculty members prepare a summary of their most recent activities in teaching, in scholarship, and in service. Goals of the review include finding ways to help faculty members improve their performance, finding ways the University might better support faculty members, and discussing individual, department, and University goals and expectations.

The 1996 focused visit report indicated this policy change brought us into compliance with commission policy. Since that time, this commission policy has been interpreted to include all faculty, full and part time.

Correspondingly, we have begun to direct our attention to the support for and evaluation of our adjunct faculty. We have made progress with the evaluation of our adjunct faculty, but additional efforts are needed.

Recommendation #3:

The University should revise associate degree requirements to insure that instruction in

human relations is included as part of the tripartite related instruction requirement as specified in commission Standard 2. (WSU currently does not appear to meet Policy Statement #15 [now Policy #2.1].)

We offer 23 A.A.S. degree programs, and each program includes courses that meet the tripartite related instruction requirements of NWCCU Policy 2.1. The report of the 1996 focused visit indicated we were in compliance with this policy.

Recommendation #4

The assessment of educational effectiveness and retention needs to occur in a more coordinated, integrated, systematic, and focused manner. (NASC Policy Statement #25 [now NWCCU Policy #2.2].)

In the fall of 1998, we implemented a more systematic approach to assessing the effectiveness of educational programs, both within the major and within general education, across the Division of Academic Affairs. Outcomes data have been collected and are being acted upon for program improvement by faculty and staff throughout the division.

Our 1999 interim visit report indicated that that this systematic approach seemed to be working well at the department level and that additional assessment needed to occur at the institutional level. Since 1999, we have implemented outcomes assessment processes within the remaining four divisions, and we have administered national surveys that measure mission-related outcomes. We have made significant progress in addressing this recommendation and we will continue to focus our efforts on these important activities.

Recommendation # 5

The University should review its academic advising processes to insure clarity, consistency, and timeliness of information for students regarding degree requirements, progress toward degree, and long-term course schedules. (NASC Standard IX [now NWCCU Standard 3].)

Since 1994, several changes have been made in the campus-wide approach to advising both declared-major and undeclared students. We have increased the number of professional advisors both within our central Academic Advisement Center and within colleges and departments, and we have enhanced our advising services. Our 1999 interim visit report noted that both institutional policy changes and changes in practice had led to enhanced advising services throughout the institution. Subsequent to 1999, national data from Noel-Levitz student satisfaction surveys have shown an increase in student satisfaction with the advising services they have received from WSU. We continue to focus on and improve our advising services.