WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY
YEAR ONE
SELF-EVALUATION REPORT
September 15, 2011

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I. Introduction and Institutional Context

Weber State University (WSU) is a comprehensive public university providing associate, bachelor and master's degrees focused on the educational needs of the more than 500,000 people within a service area centered in Ogden, in Northern Utah. WSU began as Weber Academy, founded by community religious leaders in 1889, and served primarily as a high school/normal school until 1923 when it became a junior college. Ownership and management of the school was transferred from the L.D.S. Church to the state of Utah in 1933. For the next three decades, Weber College served as the public junior college in Northern Utah. In 1964, Weber State College awarded its first baccalaureate degrees and, in1979, its first master's degrees. In 1991, the institution's name was changed from Weber State College to Weber State University. Currently, WSU serves both community college and regional university roles through seven academic colleges with more than fifty academic departments offering more than 230 programs. WSU's 800 full- and part-time faculty provide education in online and traditional classes.

WSU's policies and programs reflect its community college and regional university missions. General admission to lower-division course work is open, and WSU annually awards the second largest number of associate degrees in the state of Utah. At the same time, an increasing number of programs have selective admissions criteria and its graduate enrollments are increasing more rapidly than any other enrollment category.

WSU's student demographics also reflect its dual focus—WSU students are more likely to be first-generation college students than their peers at regional universities. A higher percentage are married, have children, are working fulltime, receive financial aid, and need remediation in math or English as compared to students attending similar institutions.

WSU faculty see part of their role as helping less well-prepared students to achieve, and its retention and graduation data substantiate their success. In the most recent year, WSU conferred over 1,800 associate degrees, 1,900 bachelor degrees and 230 master's degrees.

WSU's engaged learning model includes learning opportunities in undergraduate research, community-based and service learning, internships, capstone courses and other forms of experiential learning. As a Carnegie Community Engaged institution, WSU students, faculty and staff contribute well over 100,000 hours of service to the community.

WSU currently serves more than 24,000 students on two major campuses. The Ogden campus serves 19,000 students with 60 buildings on over 400 acres, and the WSU-Davis campus, located next to Hill Air Force Base, provides instruction to 3,300 students. The Ogden campus has on-campus housing for approximately 750 students. In addition to its Ogden and Davis campuses, WSU offers courses at two small centers within the region and throughout the country through distance-mediated instruction. Over 15% of WSU's total enrollment is in online courses. Like other publicly-funded institutions in the region, WSU has recently experienced a decline in public support while student enrollments have increased.

A. Significant Changes

There have been no significant changes in the governance, leadership or programs of the institution since the last report in fall of 2009.

B. Accreditation Status

WSU had a regular Interim Visit in fall of 2009, after which its accreditation was reaffirmed with the following recommendation:

1. Clear evidence of an institutional assessment plan tied to Vision 2030 goals will be provided in Weber State University's Fall 2014 Comprehensive Evaluation Report.

C. Response to Recommendation 1 from the Fall 2009 Interim Report

During the process of developing Mission Core Themes and their associated objectives and measures, WSU revised its planning processes and assessment plans for strategic and long-term planning. The new Core Themes planning process, with its associated measures, is described in this report. The related strategic and long-term planning processes are being aligned to reflect their relationship with the Core Theme planning process. The restructured strategic and long-term plans will incorporate departmental and college/divisional plans that will reflect the Core Themes and applicable data from within the planning unit. The application of these data in resource allocation and other data-informed planning and decision processes is now being implemented and will be fully described in the Year Five report, due in September of 2013.

D. Eligibility Requirements 2 and 3

2. AUTHORITY

The institution is authorized to operate and award degrees as a higher education institution by the appropriate governmental organization, agency, or governing board as required by the jurisdiction in which it operates.

Weber State University is authorized to operate and confer degrees under Utah Code section 53B-6-101 et seq.

3. MISSION AND CORE THEMES

The institution's mission and core themes are clearly defined and adopted by its governing board(s) consistent with its legal authorization, and are appropriate to a degree-granting institution of higher education. The institution's purpose is to serve the educational interests of its students and its principal programs lead to recognized degrees. The institution devotes all, or substantially all, of its resources to support its educational mission and core themes.

Weber State University's purposes are consistent with NWCCU Eligibility Requirement 3. Its mission and roles are governed by Utah State Board of Regents policy 312. The current mission was approved by the Weber State University Board of Trustees in January of 2011 and by the Utah State Board of Regents in May of 2011. The Weber State University Core Themes were adopted by the Weber State University Board of Trustees (by delegation from the Utah Board of Regents) in June 2011.

II. Standard One – Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations

> **NWCCU Standard One**
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> The institution articulates its purpose in a mission statement, and identifies core themes that comprise essential elements of that mission. In an examination of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations, the institution defines the parameters for mission fulfillment. Guided by that definition, it identifies an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.
>
> 1.A – Mission
>
> 1.A.1 The institution has a widely published mission statement—approved by its governing board—that articulates a purpose appropriate for an institution of higher learning, gives direction for its efforts, and derives from, and is generally understood by, its community.
>
> 1.B – Core Themes
>
> 1.B.1 The institution identifies core themes that individually manifest essential elements of its mission and collectively encompass its mission.

A. Process for Revision of Mission Statement and Development of Core Themes

Over the course of the 2009-2011 school years, the WSU University Planning Council worked with input from trustees, faculty, staff, students and community to refine the WSU Mission Statement and to develop Core Themes. During the spring of 2011, the proposed changes were discussed in meetings to which all members of the university community were invited. The changes were further reviewed by the Faculty Senate, Classified Staff Advisory Committee, Professional Staff Advisory Committee and the WSU Board of Trustees, which adopted the new Mission Statement in January of 2011 and Core Themes in June of 2011. The final mission statement was approved by the State Board of Regents in May, 2011.

B. Mission Statement

The process described in Section II A, supra, resulted in modest restructuring of the WSU mission statement to ensure that the relationship between the mission and the core themes was clear.

Weber State University Mission Statement:

Weber State University provides associate, baccalaureate and master degree programs in liberal arts, sciences, technical and professional fields. Encouraging freedom of expression and valuing diversity, the university provides excellent learning experiences for students through extensive personal contact among faculty, staff and students in and out of the classroom. Through academic programs, research, artistic expression, public service and community-based learning, the university serves as an educational, cultural and economic leader for the region.

C. Mission Interpretation

The three fundamental goals articulated in the mission are interpreted as follows:

1. Provide access to academic programs in liberal arts, sciences, technical and professional fields.

2. Provide an engaging teaching and learning environment that encourages learning and leads to students' success.

3. Support and improve the local community through educational, economic and public service partnerships and cultural and athletic events.

D. Weber State University Core Themes

At the conclusion of the planning process, three core themes were identified.

1. ACCESS

2. LEARNING

3. COMMUNITY

E. Rationale for the Core Themes

Access - By offering valued degrees and proactively mitigating barriers to participation and completion, we provide an opportunity for a quality higher education to the people in our region, regardless of their life circumstances.

Learning - Backed by effective educational support, our students experience an engaging environment, achieve identified learning outcomes, earn degrees and experience post-graduation success. Students and alumni are satisfied that their investment in Weber is or was important to their success as educated persons and professionals.

Community - In partnerships with our communities, we focus on improving public education, enriching the regional cultural amenities and stimulating economic development.

F. Mission Fulfillment

NWCCU Standard 1.A.2 The institution defines mission fulfillment in the context of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations. Guided by that definition, it articulates institutional accomplishments or outcomes that represent an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.

The core themes and their objectives reflect the three fundamental goals stated in the mission, respond to the unique characteristics of the university and embrace lofty, but attainable, expectations for the future. They describe what WSU does and how it measures what it does with respect to those goals. Analysis of the data allows the university to identify the extent to which it is successful in fulfilling those goals and facilitates WSU's continuous improvement.

Specific objectives have been articulated for each of the three core themes, and one to three indicators of achievement have been identified for each objective. In turn, each indicator has been linked to metrics, and expected levels of performance have been identified for each set of metrics.

The analysis of the attainment of objectives identifies areas that "need improvement," "substantially meet expectations" and "exceed expectations." If all of the metrics identified for the set of indicators associated with a specific objective meet or exceed the expected levels of performance, the objective is deemed to "exceed expectations." If the preponderance of the metrics identified for the set of indicators associated with a specific objective meets or exceeds the expected levels of performance, the objective is deemed to "substantially meet expectations." Finally, if most of the metrics fall below the expected levels of performance, the objective is deemed to "need improvement."

The threshold for mission fulfillment is that the university "substantially meets expectations" or "exceeds expectations" for each of the institutional goals.

G. Core Themes, Objectives and Indicators

> **NWCCU Standard 1** 1.B.2 The institution establishes objectives for each of its core themes and identifies meaningful, assessable, and verifiable indicators of achievement that form the basis for evaluating accomplishment of the objectives of its core themes.

To aid the evaluator, this section begins with an outline of the core themes, objectives and indicators. The outline is followed by a more complete description of the core theme, an analysis of its alignment with WSU's mission, objectives that reflect the major activities associated with the core theme, indicators for the objectives, the rationale for each indicator, and an expected performance level for the metrics associated with each indicator. The process of identifying indicators included gathering and evaluating preliminary data to ensure that those selected are meaningful, useful and sustainable. While the indicators and their associated thresholds are listed in this report, the data will be included in the Year Three Report that will be filed next year.

Outline of Weber State University Core Themes, Objectives and Indicators

1. ACCESS

    a. DEGREES: Weber State offers responsive associate, baccalaureate and master's degrees in liberal arts, sciences, technical and professional fields

        1) Programs and degrees are responsive to student and market needs

    b. ACHIEVEMENT: Students progress in their programs of study

        1) Students earn degrees

        2) Graduates have "next step" success

    c. OPPORTUNITY: Weber State provides access to higher educational opportunity

        1) Student enrollments reflect support for non-traditional students

        2) Student enrollments reflect diversity and inclusion

2. LEARNING

    a. ENGAGEMENT: Students experience an engaging learning environment founded on extensive personal contact among faculty, staff and students in and out of the classroom

        1) Students participate in learning experiences such as undergraduate research, service learning, involvement and other forms of experience-based learning

        2) Students experience extensive contact with faculty, staff and other students

    b. SUPPORT: Students receive effective educational support

        1) Students utilize and are satisfied with academic support services

        2) Students utilize and are satisfied with general support services

    c. SUCCESS: Students learn to succeed as educated persons and professionals

        1) Students achieve General Education learning goals

        2) Students achieve the learning goals of Major programs

d. INQUIRY: Students and faculty learn, explore and create in an environment that sustains free inquiry and free expression

> 1) Faculty and students engage in creative and scholarly activity

> 2) Faculty and students perceive that WSU fosters knowledge creation, free inquiry and free expression

3. COMMUNITY

> a. EDUCATION: Weber State contributes to pre-K through 12 education in the region

>> 1) WSU contributes to Pre K-12 education and professional development

>> 2) WSU promotes preparation for higher education

> b. CULTURE: Weber State contributes to the richness of the regional culture

>> 1) The community participates in a diverse offering of WSU events

>> 2) WSU facilitates community development through public service

> c. ECONOMY: Weber State contributes to the economic development of the region

>> 1) WSU facilitates economic development in the region through professional development and technical support

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Core Theme 1: ACCESS

Mission Alignment: WSU serves communities with significant socio-economic and cultural differences. As the "educational, cultural and economic leader for the region," WSU strives to provide meaningful access for prospective students to educational programs that respond to student and market needs.

Objectives, Indicators of Achievement, and Rationale

ACCESS Objective A. Degrees: Weber State offers responsive associate, baccalaureate and master's degrees in liberal arts, sciences, technical and professional fields

Institutional Indicators:

> Degrees Indicator 1. Programs and degrees are responsive to student and market needs

>> Rationale for indicator: Responsiveness to student and market needs is assessed by measuring perceptions of graduates, employers and other community members and by measuring actions that reflect their perceptions. The first set of metrics relates to enrollment trends and market share. The underlying assumption is that students who perceive WSU degrees to add value will increasingly enroll at the institution rather than other colleges or universities

>> The second set of data focuses on the perceptions that undergird enrollment choices. The metrics include graduate and employer satisfaction surveys and data-based rankings that may influence potential students' choice to attend WSU.

Metrics:

 a. Market share

 b. Enrollments

 c. Institutional reputation

Expected Performance: It is expected that WSU maintain both enrollment and market share within a range consistent with state-wide enrollment patterns and expectations established by the Utah State Board of Regents. It is expected that surveys of institutional reputation are positive and that trends are increasing.

ACCESS Objective B. Achievement: Students progress in their programs of study

Institutional Indicators:

Achievement Indicator 1. Students earn degrees

Rationale for Indicator: The retention and graduation rates, which are normed against the rates at regional and national peer institutions, provide evidence that allows WSU to evaluate whether it is more or less successful than peer institutions in retaining students and assisting them to graduate. The trends in degrees awarded by WSU provide evidence about whether students are persisting and completing their educational goals.

Metrics:

 a. Retention

 b. Graduation

 c. Degrees Awarded

 d. Regional rates of educational achievement

Expected Performance: It is expected that the rates and trends for each of the metrics are comparable to, or surpass, the average of peer institutions.

(Note: WSU regularly compares itself to a list of peer institutions from across the nation. This list of national peer institutions is approved by the Utah State Board of Regents. In some instances, WSU also compares itself to a set of "in-state peers." These are institutions within the Utah System of Higher Education that have roles and missions similar to those of WSU. Finally, WSU regularly administers national surveys and assessment instruments (e.g., National Survey of Student Engagement, Collegiate Learning Assessment, Higher Education Research Institute.) These surveys provide comparisons against sets of comparable institutions that are not identical to either WSU national peer institutions or in-state peers. Nevertheless, these comparisons are useful.)

Achievement Indicator 2. Graduates have "next step" success

Rationale for Indicator: Next-step success reflects the value added by a WSU degree. The measurements include placement and how graduates self-report about the completion of their educational goals. These direct measures are corroborated by gathering data that reflect the perceptions of graduates with respect to level of academic challenge, faculty interaction, environment and collaboration that they experienced at WSU.

Metrics:

    a. Graduate school

    b. Careers and employment

    c. Post-graduate student perceptions

Expected Performance: It is expected that patterns of employment and placement be consistent with peer institutions and that the perceptions of graduates be positive.

ACCESS Objective C. Opportunity: Weber State provides access to higher educational opportunity

Institutional Indicators:

Opportunity Indicator 1. Student enrollments reflect support for non-traditional students

Rationale for Indicator: This indicator monitors efforts to make programs and courses available to people within the region who are homebound, older, working fulltime or otherwise not traditional university students. WSU research has established that an important consideration for such students is that courses and programs are offered at times, places and prices that are convenient for them. The measures associated with this indicator include analysis of student demographics and costs as well as enrollments in programs and courses offered at non-traditional places and times and through distance delivery modes.

Metrics:

    a. Enrollments by location

    b. Enrollments by time offered

    c. Online enrollments

    d. Cost to students

    e. Student demographics

Expected Performance: It is expected that patterns of enrollments by non-traditional students taking classes at various times and locations and through different delivery methods be comparable to, or exceed, those of in-state peer institutions. It is expected that the rate of increase in tuition be comparable to, or fall below, that of in-state peer institutions.

Opportunity Indicator 2. Student enrollments reflect diversity and inclusion

Rationale for Indicator: This indicator monitors efforts to make programs and courses available to people of the region who are historically under-represented in higher education.

Metrics:

a. Enrollments by ethnicity

b. Enrollments by under-served

Expected Performance: It is expected that the pattern of enrollments for traditionally under-served students be comparable to in-state peer institutions.

Core Theme 2: LEARNING

Mission Alignment: WSU is first and foremost an institution of higher education that provides and supports "excellent learning experiences for students" in an environment that values "freedom of expression" and engaged learning through "extensive personal contact among faculty, staff and students in and out of the classroom" and "research, artistic expression, public service and community-based learning."

Objectives, Indicators of Achievement, and Rationale

LEARNING Objective A. Engagement: Students experience an engaging learning environment founded on extensive personal contact among faculty, staff and students in and out of the classroom

Institutional Indicators:

Engagement Indicator 1. Students participate in learning experiences such as undergraduate research, service learning, involvement and other forms of experience-based learning

Rationale for Indicator: Student learning is at the heart of Weber State's mission. Students' participation in enriched learning experiences such as undergraduate research, service learning and other forms of experience-based learning has been established nationally and institutionally as a means of enhancing undergraduate learning.

Metrics:

a. Rates of student participation in engaged learning experiences

b. Students' learning improvement through engaged learning experiences

Expected Performance: It is expected that patterns of involvement indicate that the majority of WSU seniors have participated in an engaged learning experience and that assessment indicates improved learning as a result.

Engagement Indicator 2. Students experience extensive contact with faculty, staff and other students

Rationale for Indicator: WSU's mission includes an expectation that there will be "extensive contact among faculty, students and staff in and out of the classroom." Students' perceptions of these contacts provide direct evidence, and relative class size and faculty/student ratios provide secondary evidence that the institution is meeting this expectation.

Metrics:

a. Student perceptions of faculty contacts

b. Class size

c. Student/faculty ratio

Expected Performance: It is expected that perceptions and ratios be comparable to those of national peer institutions.

LEARNING Objective B. Support: Students receive effective educational support

Institutional Indicators:

Support Indicator 1. Students utilize and are satisfied with academic support services

Rationale for Indicator: Student utilization and satisfaction with services are indicators of the quality of support. In some cases, such as tutoring, learning outcomes are indicators of the efficacy of academic support services.

Metrics:

a. Student utilization of services

b. Student satisfaction with services

c. Learning outcomes

Expected Performance: It is expected that student satisfaction and learning be comparable to that at peer institutions.

Support Indicator 2. Students utilize and are satisfied with general support services

Rationale for Indicator: Student utilization and satisfaction with general student support services are indicators of the quality of that support.

Metrics:

a. Student utilization of services

b. Student satisfaction with services

Expected Performance: It is expected that student satisfaction and learning be comparable to that at peer institutions.

LEARNING Objective C. Success: Students learn to succeed as educated persons and professionals

Institutional Indicators:

Success Indicator 1. Students achieve General Education learning goals

Rationale for indicator: WSU's General Education program has established core learning objectives that reflect the background and skills students will need to succeed as students and as contributing citizens. Student performance on standardized exams and local assessments structured to assess attainment of those learning objectives reflects the effectiveness of the General Education program.

Metrics:

a. Standardized exam scores

b. Capstone, portfolio and senior evaluations

Expected Performance: It is expected that assessment of General Education learning be comparable to peer institutions using national assessment instruments. Institutional assessment will meet defined learning outcomes.

Success Indicator 2. Students achieve the learning goals of Major programs

Rationale for indicator: Each WSU Major has established learning objectives to prepare students to succeed within that discipline. Achievement of these objectives, as measured by performance on standardized exams and local assessments, measures the effectiveness of the Major programs in facilitating student learning.

Metrics:

a. Professional exam scores

b. Portfolio, capstone projects and other locally developed assessments

Expected Performance: It is expected that Institutional assessment of learning in the Major programs meets defined learning outcomes.

LEARNING Objective D. Inquiry: Students and faculty learn, explore and create in an environment that sustains free inquiry and free expression

Institutional Indicators:

Inquiry Indicator 1. Faculty and students engage in creative and scholarly activity

Rationale for Indicator: Rates of faculty and student creative and scholarly activity, which are normed against the rates at regional and national peer institutions, provide evidence of students' access to research-based learning. WSU assumes that the most meaningful way for students to experience an environment of knowledge creation, free inquiry and free expression is for faculty

and students to actively engage in research and creative activity, evidenced by publications, presentations, exhibitions, performances, and pursuit of sponsors.

Metrics:

> a. Faculty creative and scholarly activity
>
> b. Sponsored projects
>
> c. Student creative and scholarly activity

Expected Performance: It is expected that faculty and student scholarly and creative activity be comparable to that at national peer institutions.

Inquiry Indicator 2. Faculty and students perceive that WSU fosters knowledge creation, free inquiry and free expression

Rationale for Indicator: Student and faculty perceptions about the educational environment directly impact behavior. Consequently, perception data best measure the way that members of the campus community will respond to its educational environment.

Metric:

> a. Faculty and student perceptions

Expected Performance: It is expected that faculty and student perceptions be comparable to national peer institutions.

Core Theme 3: COMMUNITY

Mission Alignment: "Public service and community-based learning" represent both pedagogical emphases and community commitments. For "the university [to] serve[s] as an educational, cultural and economic leader for the region," WSU must be an active participant in regional learning endeavors and the social and economic life of the community.

Objectives, Indicators of Achievement, and Rationale

COMMUNITY Objective A. Education: Weber State contributes to pre-K through 12 education in the region

Institutional Indicators:

> Education Indicator 1. WSU contributes to Pre K-12 education and professional development
>
> Rationale for Indicator: Among the ways that WSU contributes to pre-K through 12 education is by partnering with the public education community and by providing quality continuing education to teachers and administrators.
>
> Metrics:
>
> > a. The number of educational partnerships
> >
> > b. Local educator enrollments in advanced degree and continuing education programs

Expected Performance: It is expected that patterns of partnerships and enrollments be comparable to in-state peers and evidence positive trends.

Education Indicator 2. WSU promotes preparation for higher education

Rationale for Indicator: WSU also contributes to pre-K through 12 education by assisting in the preparation of pre-college students. Current programs and measures focus on the preparation of targeted populations that have been traditionally underrepresented in higher education. The measures include the number of students who participate in preparation programs and the number of participants who later enroll in a college or university.

Metrics:

    a. Target populations enrolled in WSU outreach

    b. WSU outreach participants completing high school and enrolling in a college or university

Expected Performance: It is expected that rates of participation and completion evidence increasing trends.

COMMUNITY Objective B. Culture: Weber State contributes to the richness of the regional culture

Institutional Indicators:

Community Indicator 1. The community participates in a diverse offering of WSU events

Rationale for Indicator: An important way Weber State contributes to the richness of the regional culture is by providing a wide variety of events to which the public is invited. Attendance at educational, cultural, entertainment and sporting events reflects WSU's contribution to the regional culture.

Metrics:

    a. Number of cultural and intellectual offerings to the community

    b. Number of participants in exhibits, lectures, performances and sporting events

    c. Results from community perception surveys

Expected Performance: It is expected that patterns of community cultural events evidence increasing trends.

Community Indicator 2. WSU facilitates community development through public service

Rationale for Indicator: An important way Weber State contributes to the richness of the regional culture is through participation of faculty, staff and students in public purpose and non-profit organizations. The measure of the impact of service by faculty, staff and students is illusive. The institution is exploring ways to assess the direct impacts of these behaviors, but the best current measure is hours served

Metric:

    a. The number of hours of service to community organizations by faculty, staff and students of WSU

Expected Performance: It is expected that measures of service contributed by WSU faculty, staff and students are comparable to national peer institutions.

COMMUNITY Objective C. Economy: Weber State contributes to the economic development of the region

Institutional Indicators:

Economy Indicator 1. WSU facilitates economic development in the region through professional development and technical support

Rationale for Indicator: In addition to the large direct economic impact of a major university in the community, WSU is uniquely positioned to support local economic growth through focused research and technical support. The numbers of sponsored projects and the funding associated with those projects infuse funding and knowledge into the local economy. Direct assistance of businesses through commercialization of new technologies, assistance with patents and development of spinoff companies reflect those efforts. Growth in WSU's Research Foundation reflects increasing capacity for the university to assist local businesses.

Metrics:

a. The number and level of funding associated with sponsored projects

b. The number of new patents registered, newly commercialized technologies and spinoff companies facilitated, and businesses assisted annually

c. Professional continuing education offerings and participation

d. The number of businesses assisted

e. The revenue received from the WSU Research Foundation

Expected Performance: It is expected that patterns of increasing economic impact be comparable to in-state peers.

III. Conclusion

Weber State University has welcomed the opportunity to reconsider its mission and develop Core Themes. This process has also allowed it to review its strategic and long-term planning and systems for gathering and maintaining evidence of student learning and other important university activities.

As important as any other outcome has been the opportunity to involve a significant percentage of the university community in considering best practices for institutional programs and appropriate indicators of challenges and achievements. WSU is confident that the process of revisiting and refining the themes, objectives and indicators will tighten its focus and strengthen its capacity to enhance its future.