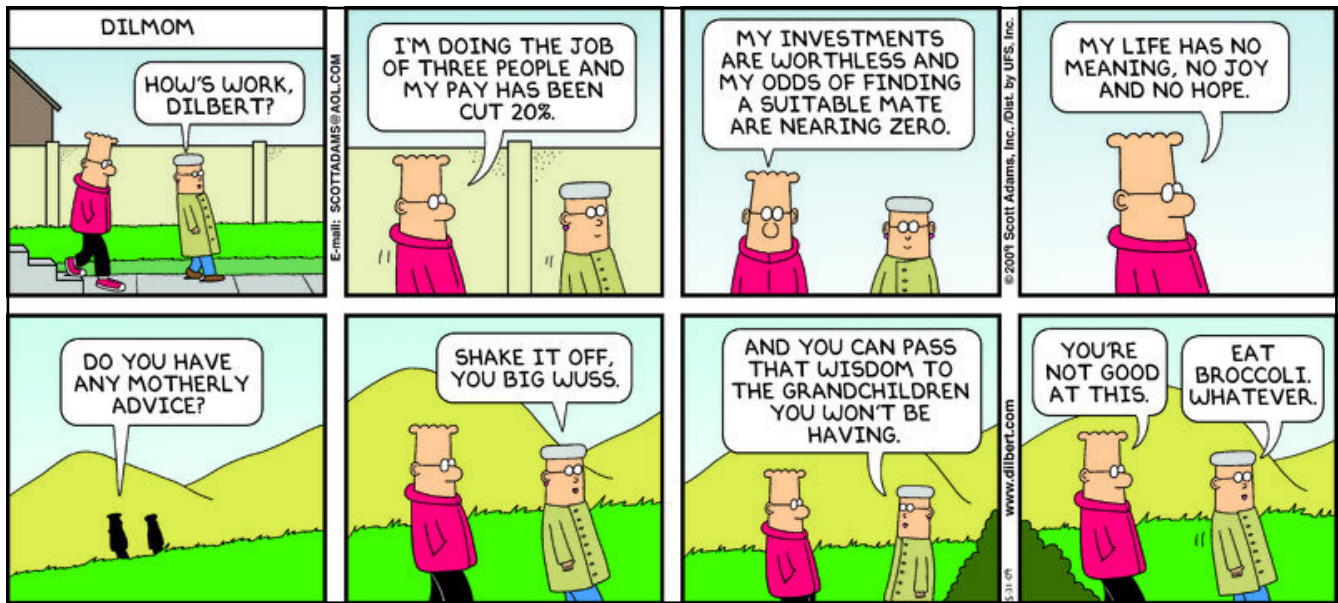


WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY

ACCREDITATION UPDATES

September 1010 Newsletter

New Accreditation Standards



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There are times that the specialized and regional accreditation processes in which we participate may seem as insensitive to what matters to our university as Dilbert's mother is to his life dilemmas. In an attempt to make their process more relevant, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) has changed the accreditation standards that apply to Weber State University for all future regional accreditation visits. While we will have to wait to see if the new standards increase the relevance of the process, we are obliged to recognize and incorporate the new NWCCU approaches in our planning and assessment processes. The changes include:

1. A reduction of the number of standards from nine to five
2. Significant differences in the three standards which relate to mission and planning and related assessment of mission fulfillment

The new Standard One deals with mission, core themes, and expectations:

The institution articulates its purpose in the form of a mission statement and identifies core themes that manifest essential elements of that mission. It defines mission fulfillment in the context of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations. Guided by that definition, it identifies an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.

Weber State University's current draft Core Themes are:

- Core Theme I: Responsive Regional University
- Core Theme II: Exceptional Teaching and Learning
- Core Theme III: Engaged Campus and Supportive Student Culture
- Core Theme IV: Vibrant Research and Scholarship

Subsection 1.A.2 of the new standards helps to define operational expectations associated with the institutional mission:

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 new requirements for Core Themes and Associated Outcomes, Indicators and Thresholds will require our planning to be more operational. For example, under Weber State's draft Core Theme I: Responsive Regional University, an appropriate objective with an appropriate outcome, indicator, and threshold might be:

Objective	Outcome	Indicator	Threshold
Provide access to education for Northern Utah students	Northern Utah students will choose to attend WSU	WSU will maintain the proportion of college-bound students choosing WSU from primary feeder schools	15% of graduates = Threshold 2008 = 16.8% of graduates

With the new focus on operational elements of mission attainment, our data collection must focus on primary indicators, rather than secondary or tertiary data. Under new Standard 3, subsection 3.B.3, these data requirements are explained:

Core theme planning is informed by the collection of appropriately-defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate accomplishment of core theme objectives. Planning for programs and services is informed by the collection of appropriately-defined data that are used to evaluate achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of those programs and services.

In order to move us to the new seven year evaluation cycle, we will prepare for our first report to NWCCU under the new standards in the Fall of 2011. Following our first report and visit, we will have annual reports and visits each of the next two years.

Ryan Thomas
Associate Provost