Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report

Eastern Oregon University

La Grande, Oregon

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Introduction

Originally established in 1929 as a teacher's college, Eastern Oregon University (EOU) is now one of Oregon's three regional comprehensive public universities. In 2018 EOU was designated "Oregon's Rural University" by the state legislature. Offering 24 baccalaureate and three master's degrees, it serves students through its campus in La Grande, 11 regional centers, and online courses and programs. Business is the largest undergraduate major and the MBA is one of the two largest graduate programs, the other being the MAT.   The Integrative Studies program, an interdisciplinary degree with mainly online enrollments, is the second largest undergraduate major.   These four programs have awarded more than 47% of the degrees granted by EOU for the past three years, but EOU also offers undergraduate programs in many of the sciences, social sciences, humanities, and arts typically found at regional universities. EOU does not offer engineering programs.

Since the Year Three Report, the mission of EOU has remained unchanged, but the institution has faced a number of challenges and has undergone significant change. The most fundamental was the dissolution of the Oregon University System in 2015. Now, EOU has its own Board of Trustees, rather than being governed by the Oregon State Board of Higher Education. The most difficult circumstance during the past four years was lack of sufficient revenues relative to expenditures, which led to a slightly negative E&G (Educational & General) Fund Balance of -$177,000 in 2014. Consequently EOU undertook sustainability planning, which included review of academic programs, and programs and services were streamlined or eliminated as necessary. Tuition and fees were increased, and a change in the State of Oregon funding formula to an outcomes basis resulted in a modest funding increase. The EOU Board of Trustees policy specifies a required fund balance of 5 to 15% of unrestricted operating funds, which EOU has met for FY15 to FY18. However, a significant concern is the falling enrollment since academic year 2012-2013, with SCH (student credit hours) decreasing from 43,025 in fall 2012 to 31,761 in fall 2017. Fall 2018 figures were not quite final at the time of the site visit, but SCH appear to be up slightly while headcount is flat. Many institutions saw recession-related peaks in enrollment in the 2010-2013 time frame, but the enrollment decrease since then has been notably steep for EOU.

Amidst these changes, there was also nearly complete turnover of the higher administration, and several positions were held by interim administrators for one or two of the four years. President Mr. Thomas Insko has been in his position since July 2015, while Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Sarah Witte served as interim from 2014-2016 and has served in the continuing position since May 2016. The current Vice President for Student Affairs was appointed in 2017. In addition, as detailed in the self-evaluation report and summarized in this document under Standard 2.A.9, many other key positions in higher administration have been vacated and refilled since 2013. Having many new, interim, and acting administrators posed difficulties for the institution in terms of maintaining the "business as usual" cycle of planning, implementation, assessment, and improvement that underlies the accreditation standards.

Response to Student Achievement Data

The following questions are answered based on discussions with institutional representatives and information contained in the Year Seven Self-evaluation Report and supporting materials, with due consideration of the data on student retention, graduation, and transfer provided by NWCCU.

1. What are the key challenges of the institution related to the institution's graduation rate and other data provided?

EOU academic advisors noted that one of the challenges that the institution faces with respect to graduation rates is that there are not always enough of the required courses available when the students need to take them. They indicated that there is not a formal process in place to engage in enrollment management as the registration period is happening, although the Registrar reported that departments are notified when wait lists for classes develop. The evaluation committee also heard concerns about full course sections from several students, but enrollment data indicated that this was an issue for only a small minority of classes, mainly science laboratory sections (see page 25).

The academic advisors also communicated that one of the challenges in increasing graduation rates is that some EOU students are not academically ready for college and thus sometimes withdraw before intervention by the university can occur. University staff emphasized that some EOU students face significant financial needs and extreme life circumstances, which cause some students to drop out and not graduate. The evaluator notes that data provided to the committee by NWCCU shows that EOU has an unusually high transfer-out rate, which is also impacting graduation rates (see pages 14-15).

An evaluator asked EOU representatives the following question: What is the institution doing to assist in lowering the student default rate? The rate is currently at 10.0%—up from 8.0% and 9.0% over the last couple of years. It was reported that about four years ago, the financial aid office added a full-time financial literacy advisor/counselor, who is also bilingual and who is charged with providing financial literacy programming, selecting books on financial literacy for the library, and organizing evening scholarship application events.

Additionally, there is now a default management coordinator position that was put into place about two to three years ago. The institution is aiming to be proactive, instead of reactive, by providing more financial literacy programming up front. The institution is working on getting information to the student before graduation and before the individual has the potential to default. For example, the month prior to graduation, students are contacted with information and an invitation to have an exit counseling session to discuss how they plan to repay loans.

Additionally, the TRiO staff also provides financial literacy training for students. Academic advisors include financial aid literacy conversations during their advising sessions. Financial literacy information is also included in the summer bridge experience and the first-year experience. Finally, EOU staff also provide financial literacy programming for local high school students before they come to the university, near the FASFA filing time period.

2. What is the institution doing to improve graduation rates?

Formal onboarding/orientation for all new students is in place. All new students and freshmen are required to see an advisor before they enroll. Once they see an advisor, the enrollment hold is lifted. Additionally, intensive support services for identified at-risk student populations are available. The integration of the federal grant supported TRiO programming is worthy of note in this regard.

Degree Works software for degree auditing is now in place. Institution staff noted that the institution's CRM (Customer Relations Management, by Salesforce) technology has been instrumental in helping to maintain one record for each student, so that multiple advisors (and others) can track students to

graduation. All student advising notes are housed in the CRM database.   Further, it was reported that faculty and staff have embraced and are utilizing the early alert system to help increase student completion.

3. What initiatives appear to be effective in improving graduation rates?

EOU created a scholarship for students who were nearing completion but had stopped out. This "Reach the Peak" scholarship awards up to $3,000 to students who are less than 24 credits away from completion, to help them complete their degree. It was reported that this scholarship is helping to increase graduation rates.

The early alert initiatives are about three years old in the current system and are helping to retain students and keep them on track to graduate. It was reported that a high percentage of staff engage in the e-alert process. These e-alerts seem to be comprehensive and effective in initiating follow-up.

EOU established a strategic enrollment management team. It was reported that this team has a lot of synergy in regularly looking at student achievement data, enrollment data and other early student success indicators. This team makes changes, improvements and assesses student success work across the institution.

Finally, EOU established credit recovery courses to help students who are struggling in a course. Struggling students can withdraw from the course that they are failing and take late starting courses that are credit-equivalent to the courses that were dropped, allowing them to maintain financial aid eligibility provided the recovery courses are completed satisfactorily.

4. What might accreditors do to assist institutions to improve graduation rates?

It was suggested that the Commission consider organizing and/or hosting focused information and innovation-sharing sessions for institutions in the region, to offer opportunities to learn about data-informed best practices focused on increasing student achievement.

Distance Education

NWCCU practice requires that an institution's distance education programming be reviewed as part of its comprehensive evaluation for compliance with the NWCCU Distance Education Policy and other Commission Policies and Standards.

The evaluators reviewed how EOU ensures that the student who registers for a distance education course or program, participates in and completes the course or program, and receives the academic credit are all the same student.   EOU does not charge any fees associated with the authentication of distance education students, since the only online student authentication process that EOU currently has in place is through issuing a unique student ID and personal password to access the learning management system, as described in the next paragraph.

Consistent with the EOU Self-evaluation Report, the staff interviewed stated that identity verification for students in online courses and programs is managed with a unique student ID and a personal password

to access the Online Learning Management System (Canvas). Additionally, many online classes include the requirement for face-to-face exam proctoring. In this case student identity verification by photo ID takes place prior to the exam at EOU regional centers and other certified testing centers.

However, it was noted during the site visit that there is some inconsistency between what was reported in the self-study and what is actually happening at the university regarding student verification. Contrary to what is noted on page 109 of the EOU Self-evaluation Report (Standard 2.D.14), there does not seem to be any movement toward additional student verification processes, such as tracking IP logging to verify computer location, utilizing web cameras for verification and monitoring, and/or using lock down browser software for tests or exams that are taken online.

The evaluators looked at how the EOU distance education programs are integrated into the regular planning process at EOU. Most of EOU's online programs were face-to-face programs first, and continue to be delivered to on-campus students as well. Many of the online courses in these programs are taught by full time faculty, who also teach on-campus students, and so to a substantial extent planning for online programs is wrapped into planning for on-campus programs. It was reported that the demand for additional online programs is rising and this is evidenced by EOU online student enrollment growth across the whole state. A lot of internal research is being done to determine program growth areas, using data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics as well as other local and regional job outlook data. It was also reported that there is an online admissions person coming on board at EOU, and the person who will fill this position will be engaged in the planning processes at EOU. Finally, it was noted that the Executive Director of online programming is in regular communication with several planning groups around the university.

The evaluators looked at how the operation of the distance education programming is incorporated into the governance system of EOU as well as how the academic units of EOU provide oversight of the distance education programming. It is evident that the EOU faculty members have a designated role in the design and implementation of the online learning offerings. Further, academic deans have direct oversight of online course and program offerings and, in conjunction with the Office of Academic Quality, regular assessment of student learning takes place. EOU might consider providing more faculty professional development in areas like online teaching pedagogy and online program evaluation.

Each academic college handles the online course scheduling, and academic quality is supported by vetting instructor qualifications appropriately. Most classes are taught by full time faculty (either tenure line or fixed term) under the supervision of the dean. Student learning outcomes are assessed with oversight by the Office of Academic Quality, using the same program, university, and general education outcomes established for face-to-face students. Assessment information for online students is disaggregated, however, and analyzed separately as well as together with that from face-to-face students. Some gaps in online student learning have been identified and efforts to improve through instructional and curricular change are occurring. The program leadership is beginning to include the online adjunct faculty in conversations related to assessment outcomes. Further, retention rates are tracked for online students and students who stop out are contacted and offered advice, and sometimes financial or other assistance, to get them back on track. The regional center directors are instrumental in this work.

The evaluators found evidence that students enrolled in distance education programs access and make effective use of learning resources include the library, information resources, laboratories and equipment. Courses that require specialized lab equipment are not offered online at this time.

Compliment: EOU faculty and staff are complimented for their focus on providing learning resources to all students, including students who are taking their courses fully online. Students have effective access to online tutoring, advising, library resources and more. Further, students taking courses online gain access to other student services, such as financial aid and career counseling through the regional centers and online advisors.

Commendation: Eastern Oregon University is commended for its commitment to quality online education, including the advising and other services provided to online students through regional centers, and for evidence of good completion rates and attainment of student learning outcomes for online students.

Recently, EOU considered contracting with a for-profit Online Program Management (OPM) firm. Several faculty told evaluators that the Faculty Senate was not given opportunities for input early in the process. These faculty were very concerned because the OPM firm would have changed the role of the full-time faculty to coaching a group of less qualified instructional staff, rather than teaching the online courses themselves. According to the faculty the contract was not finalized, but the administration remains interested in contracting for OPM and is exploring other options. The Faculty Senate was asked to appoint some representatives to an *ad hoc* committee that is reviewing the options, but the faculty who spoke with evaluators on this subject remain concerned that the terms of any future contract may affect program quality and their roles in program delivery.

Concern, NWCCU Distance Education Policy: EOU should ensure that any contractual relationships are clear and guarantee that the institution maintains direct and sole responsibility for the academic quality of all aspects of distance education programs. If the institution enters into contractual relationships involving credits and degrees, it needs to obtain Commission approval for the substantive change.

Student Complaint Procedures and Recordkeeping

For recording student complaints, EOU has two systems to back up one other. All complaints are held in a safe file cabinet in the Director of Student Relations office. The cabinet is locked and is accessible only to her. Additionally, the University has contracted with an off campus organization to house their electronic files. CoCo (Conduct Coordinator case management software) is a secure system that works with many universities around the country to store student conduct files and complaints. The Director of Student Relations asserted that great care is given to student complaints and they are handled appropriately and consistently, in accordance with the University Policy 2.10.20.

University Policy 2.10.20, the Student Complaint and Grievance Policy, was reviewed by an evaluator; it provides for appropriate consideration and resolution of student complaints and grievances. However, relative to academic grievances, the evaluator notes the following provision of the policy, section C.3: "The assignment of course grades are at the heart of the faculty member's responsibility. Only the responsible faculty member can judge students' performance in a particular course. Thus, only the responsible faculty member can assign or recommend changes of letter grades (A, B, C, D, F) for his or her courses." While this is a common provision of such policies, and is appropriate in most circumstances, the evaluator notes that it can prove problematic in rare cases, for example, when a faculty member has been found through appropriate processes to have committed misconduct such as

illegal discrimination or gross dereliction of duty, and refuses to change a grade. The EOU Academic Catalog, p. 27, does address such situations, stating that a college dean may change a grade in certain circumstances, for example, to correct clerical, procedural, and calculation errors or to address concerns involving the equitable and ethical treatment of students. The EOU Faculty Senate and academic administration should consider revisions to Policy 2.10.20 to address this inconsistency.

EOU provided an evaluator with an accounting of student complaints (EOU terms these "grievances") for the past three academic years, and the initial part of AY 2018-19. These were not unduly numerous, ranging from 18 to 24 in number per academic year, and all had been acted upon, except when the student failed to follow up, which was the case for only a few grievances. From the brief descriptions in the accounting, most of the grievances appeared to relate to academic issues.

Recommendations from the Year Three Evaluation and Institutional Responses Included in the Year Seven Self-evaluation Report

Eastern Oregon University received four recommendations as a result of the Year Three Evaluation. The first was relative to Standard 1.A.2: *"The evaluation team recommends that Eastern Oregon University continue its work on articulating mission fulfillment to more clearly describe the process and criteria which determine an acceptable level of Mission fulfillment in cases where the institution has not yet met its ambitious targets."*

EOU did redefine mission fulfillment, and so addressed the specific recommendation, since the process and criteria which determine an acceptable level of mission fulfillment are clear enough: "Mission fulfillment is demonstrated through meeting or exceeding the majority of thresholds for each core theme…" However, the new definition sets the bar for mission fulfillment rather low and could allow the institution to assert that it fulfills its mission even if there were some serious deficiencies in performance. This point is further explained in this evaluation committee report under Standard 1.A.2.

The second recommendation was *"The evaluation team recommends that EOU take the necessary steps to ensure that all catalog listings are accurate and that certificate programs meet NWCCU requirements for related instruction."* In the Self-evaluation Report, EOU describes a thorough catalog review process that has been instituted by the Registrar with the strong backing of the Provost, and a formal process to assure that deleted programs are removed from the catalog. These steps appear sufficient to reasonably assure accuracy, and the evaluation committee found no substantive errors in the current catalog. EOU does not currently offer any undergraduate certificates, so the second part of the recommendation is moot.

The third recommendation was *"Whereas the evaluation team acknowledges that EOU has made significant progress towards uniform application of academic portfolio assessment, it recommends that the university continue to ensure application of assessment across all academic programs."* During academic year 2017 EOU decided to end the academic program portfolio assessment process, and instead institute Annual Program Reviews and, on a five year cycle, Comprehensive Academic Program Self-studies. Program assessment is now based on Key Performance Indicators related to mission fulfillment, academic quality, and productivity. Program reports also include analyses of student learning outcomes assessments for the academic program and for general education, if the academic unit delivers general education courses. This new process responds to the recommendation – in

particular, the Annual Program Review should help to assure that programs consistently assess student learning outcomes – but it has been in place for only a short time.

EOU provided evidence that university learning outcomes for academic programs and general education learning outcomes are now being consistently assessed, via a website that included the relevant reports for the years 2015 to 2017. The reports collected on this website also included substantial information on academic program content area learning outcomes for some programs, but not all. The evaluation committee was told that, for some programs, the data and analyses are kept only by the departments and are not posted on websites. It was not feasible for committee members to track down and review those assessments during the site visit. There are earlier program student learning outcomes assessment reports for the years 2009-10 through 2012-13 posted in an "Archive" section of the website. Overall, considerable progress has been made in consistently carrying out and documenting student learning outcomes assessment at the university level.   These points are discussed further under Standards 2.C.1, 2.C.5, and 4.A.3 in the following report.

The fourth recommendation was *"Although the majority of EOU's academic programs demonstrate a coherent design with appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing of courses, and synthesis of learning, the Liberal Studies degree program represents an exception. While recognized as meeting the needs of a large number of students and resulting in the second-highest number of degrees awarded annually, the Liberal Studies degree program is vulnerable to weak academic oversight, a potential paucity of senior-level credits, and an inadequate number of faculty to oversee capstone experiences. The Commission recommends that the university refocus assessment efforts on the Liberal Studies program (Standard 2.C.4. and 2.C.5.)."* EOU took a number of steps to strengthen this degree program, including redesign of the program, which is now named Integrative Studies. Formal faculty oversight was instituted through an Integrative Studies Faculty Council of seven elected members, and 0.66 FTE faculty was assigned to deliver the two-course capstone sequence each quarter. The degree requires 60 upper division credits, which is the same as the university requirement for all baccalaureate degrees. These changes address the specifics of the recommendation.

Assessment of the Self-evaluation Report and Support Materials

The Self-evaluation Report and support materials met expectations for clarity and completeness. Except as noted in the following report from the evaluation committee, EOU provided sufficient and appropriate evidence that it is complying with NWCCU eligibility requirements, policies, and standards.

As detailed in other areas of the evaluation committee report, the website that compiles university and general education student learning outcomes reports is a very good resource that made it easy for the evaluation team to ascertain that those assessments are being completed. However, most other assessments of programs and services were less readily available and usually were not in a central location, making it difficult for the evaluation committee to fully examine evidence relative to Standards 3 and 4. As processes of planning, assessment, and improvement mature and are consistently carried through a full accreditation cycle, it would be very helpful if EOU (and other institutions) developed comprehensive central repositories of assessment data, showing linkages to the continuous cycle of planning, implementation, assessment, and improvement, including resource allocation as needed.

The evaluation committee thanks the EOU faculty, staff, and administrators who contributed to the preparation of the self-study and who met with the evaluation committee during the site visit. We particularly thank President Thomas Insko for his leadership during the past three years of this process; Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) Karen Clay for all of her efforts in leading the preparation of the Self-evaluation Report, finding resources to answer our questions, and facilitating our site visit; and Vice Provost for Academic Quality Donald Wolff for informative meetings with us and for logistical support.

Eligibility Requirements

EOU provided evidence that it meets all NWCCU Eligibility Requirements. Each requirement is addressed briefly below, but when the eligibility requirement is substantially the same as a Standard or Standards, the evidence is evaluated under the Standard to avoid redundancy.

ER2. AUTHORITY: EOU is a public university established by the State of Oregon [ORS (Oregon Revised Statute) 352.002(7)] as a comprehensive university, authorized to offer baccalaureate and graduate programs through the master's degree [ORS 352.011].

ER3. MISSION AND CORE THEMES: The evaluator found evidence of compliance with all these requirements in the Self-evaluation Report and other accessible documents. The Mission Statement was approved as Board of Trustees Resolution 16-08. The Self-evaluation Report states that "The EOU Board of Trustees reaffirmed the Core Themes in November 2017. The Board discussed the Core Themes in conjunction with the university strategic plan…" This is not an entirely clear statement, but the evaluator reviewed the Board minutes from the November 16, 2017 meeting, and they record that EOU Core Themes were unanimously approved. Other evidence pertaining to this Eligibility Requirement is discussed under Standards 1.A.1, 1.A.2, and 1.B.1 of this evaluation report.

ER4. OPERATIONAL FOCUS AND INDEPENDENCE: As a public university established by statute, EOU is only authorized to operate as an institution of higher education. It is independently governed by a Board of Trustees, as addressed under Standard 2.A.4, and the EOU President has their delegated authority to manage all operations and affairs of the institution, including accreditation.

ER5. NON-DISCRIMINATION: EOU is subject to federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination. EOU policies, published on its policy website, forbid discrimination in employment or with regard to applicants or students based on race, color, religion, national origin, disability, age, marital status, sex or sexual orientation.

ER6. INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY: Evidence of ethics policies is addressed under Standards 2.A.22 and 2.A.23. The evaluators heard no complaints concerning institutional integrity from employees or students, and the number of student complaints recorded by the institution was low, less than 1% of enrollment per year.

ER7. GOVERNING BOARD: Evidence addressed under Standard 2.A.4.

ER8. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Evidence is addressed under Standard 2.A.10.

ER9. ADMINISTRATION: Evidence is addressed under Standard 2.A.9.

ER10. FACULTY: Evidence is addressed under Standards 2.B.4 and 2.B.6.

ER11. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: Evidence is addressed under Standard 2.C.1.

ER12. GENERAL EDUCATION AND RELATED INSTRUCTION: Evidence is addressed under Standards 2.C.9 and 2.C.10. EOU does not offer applied associate or undergraduate certificate programs.

ER13. LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES: Evidence is addressed under Standard 2.E.1.

ER14. PHYSICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE: Evidence is addressed under Standard 2.G.

ER15. ACADEMIC FREEDOM: Evidence is addressed under Standards 2.A.27, 2.A.28, and 2.A.29.

ER16. ADMISSIONS: Evidence is addressed under Standard 2.A.16.

ER17. PUBLIC INFORMATION: Evidence is addressed under Standard 2.D.5.

ER18. FINANCIAL RESOURCES: Evidence is addressed under Standards 2.F.1 and 2.F.2.

ER19. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY: Evidence is addressed under Standard 2.F.7.

ER20. DISCLOSURE: To the best of the evaluation committee members' knowledge, they were provided with accurate information in the Year Seven Self-evaluation Report, supporting materials, and verbal statements by EOU employees.

ER21. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ACCREDITATION COMMISSION: The stance of the EOU administration relative to the evaluation and evaluators indicated that they are committed to compliance with NWCCU Policies and Standards.

ER22. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: Evidence is addressed under Standards 2.C.1 and 2.C.2.

ER23. INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS: Evidence is addressed under Standards 4 and 5.

ER24. SCALE AND SUSTAINABILITY: Evidence is addressed under Standards 2 and 5. In summary, the evaluation committee members consider the evidence sufficient relative to this requirement.

STANDARD ONE – MISSION AND CORE THEMES

1.A Mission

1.A.1. The institution's mission statement, which has been in place since 2007, was approved by the Oregon State Board of Higher Education in 2008 and the EOU Board of Trustees in 2016. It articulates an appropriate purpose for an institution of higher learning, namely, "EOU guides student inquiry through integrated, high-quality liberal arts and professional programs that lead to responsible and reflective action in an interconnected world…" The mission statement is widely published, for example, an

evaluator found it easily on the first page of the *EOU Catalog* and through a "quick link" on the EOU President's website. Members of the campus community who were asked about the mission statement indicated that they understood it and that it helps to direct the efforts of the institution. Although the mission statement derives from a process conducted years ago, the Self-evaluation Report and members of the campus community confirmed that it has been periodically reviewed, with opportunities for broad input.

1.A.2. The EOU Self-evaluation Report states that "Mission fulfillment is achieved by the core themes collectively and consistently meeting or exceeding the majority of established thresholds for each core theme." The evaluation committee is not convinced that this definition is sufficient to assure that the institution is serving its students well. For example, there are six thresholds for Core Theme One, High quality programs. Two of those have to do with student learning outcomes for general education and academic programs. Three of the other four are based on NSSE survey results, with the threshold being results comparable to peers, and the fourth is whether >85% of graduates [have engaged] in high impact practices [while students]. The potential problem with this is that it is at least theoretically possible for the institution to assert that it is fulfilling its mission relative to Core Theme One, even if student learning outcomes are not met, or are simply not assessed. There are seven Indicators for Core Theme Two, which include retention and graduation rates for first-time, first-year students, graduation rates for online students, employment plus graduate school enrollment rates for graduates, admission of underserved populations, diversity of the campus community, and credit transfer. Again, in theory, it would be possible for EOU to assert mission fulfillment even if its completion rates were <20%, i.e., well below those of comparable institutions. A related issue is that a near miss (for example, a 34% six-year graduation rate for first-time first-year students) is considered the same as very poor performance (e.g., 20%), in terms of the mission fulfillment definition. The evaluation committee recognizes that severe degradation of performance is probably not going to occur, but the institution is striving for changes, such as a substantial increase in enrollment, particularly for online students, and increasing diversity of the student body, that could make it harder to maintain current performance.

There are a variety of ways that EOU could improve its definition of mission fulfillment. For example, a few Indicator thresholds, that are very basic to an institution of higher education, could be identified as essential to mission fulfillment. Alternatively, a mission fulfillment "floor" threshold (perhaps somewhat below current performance, if the expected variance warrants) could be set for selected Indicators in addition to a more ambitious target for improvement, such as The Ascent 2029 goals. Another approach would be to define mission fulfillment with some sort of weighted scoring system, which considered both the importance of a particular Indicator (by giving it greater weight) and the proportional performance relative to the target. (In this case the possible range of variation of the Indicator would need to be considered in developing the formula.) The goal is to find a way to define mission fulfillment that would not accept poor performance on fundamental Indicators.

Recommendation, Standard 1.A.2: The evaluation committee recommends that Eastern Oregon University further refines its definition of mission fulfillment in the context of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations and better articulates institutional accomplishments or outcomes that represent an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.

1.B Core Themes

1.B.1. On page 19 of the Self-evaluation Report, EOU provides a table that illustrates the relationship between its Core Themes and its mission statement. Although the Core Themes presented are worded

as they were in the Year Three Report, rather than the Year Seven Report, it is clear enough that either version can be mapped onto the mission statement. Core Theme One, "High quality programs", derives directly from "high-quality liberal arts and professional programs" in the mission statement. Core Theme Two, "Access for all," ties to the mission statement phrases "enhance the personal attention our students receive," and "add to the educational possibilities of our region and state." EOU's Core Theme Three, "Live, learn, succeed," closely aligns with the part of the mission statement that describes it as "an educational, cultural, and scholarly center" that "connects the rural regions of Oregon to the wider world."

1.B.2. The Indicators for Core Theme One, "High quality programs," appropriately include student learning outcomes, relative to both general education and academic programs. In the opinion of the evaluators, these are the most fundamental Indicators for this Core Theme, since three of the others are based on indirect measures (selected results from the National Survey of Student Engagement, NSSE). Also, Indicators for Objectives 1.2 and 1.3 assess inputs rather than outcomes.   For example, the NSSE survey questions that form the basis for the Objective 1.2 Indicators ask about faculty and student actions, such as whether a student talked about career goals with a faculty member or whether faculty members clearly explained course goals and requirements. For 1.3, the measure is whether a program completer enrolled in certain courses, practica, or internships while a student, with no direct or indirect assessment of the value of the experience. However, such input information is meaningful relative to the student educational experience and much easier to obtain and benchmark than outcomes, and so the use of such indicators is common.   The question that the evaluator raises is whether EOU should consider giving greater weight to direct assessments of outcomes rather than indirect assessments of inputs, in terms of its definition of mission fulfillment.

Regarding Core Theme Two, EOU has selected numerical values for performance thresholds for retention, progression, and completion (RPC), including a first-year student retention rate threshold and a six-year graduation rate threshold that are similar to those of their comparator institutions. EOU's Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) provided a list of comparator institutions during the site visit, as they were not included in the Self-evaluation Report. The interview with the ALO indicated that comparator institutions were selected using IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System) data to identify similarly sized, similarly located (rural) mostly public, teaching-centric institutions.

For Indicator 2.1.3, the university currently uses a self-report survey to assess post-graduate employment and graduate school enrollment, but is examining possible sources of objective data such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The threshold for this measure is set based on National Association of Colleges and Employers Placement Rates. An evaluator reviewed the 2016 report and found that the threshold adopted is that for all institutions in the Far West region, rather than the performance reported for public universities or Carnegie master's institutions nationwide; the Far West and Southwest perform below other U.S. regions on this measure. Indicator thresholds for graduation rates of online students, percentage diversity, and (incoming) transfer credit loss (Self-evaluation Report, page 22) are internal benchmarks based on recent performance. Overall, institutional Objectives are appropriate for Core Theme Two, and the Indicators and selected thresholds are meaningful relative to the Core Theme Objectives. They are assessable, since data can be readily obtained and analyzed, and verifiable, either through IPEDS or with reference to EOU data curated by Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

The evaluators suggest that students who transfer out to another higher education institution should be included in some way in performance assessment relative to the comparators. EOU has a high transfer

out rate, on the order of 40%, which is certainly impacting graduation rates. Yet, many of these students probably regard their educational experience at EOU as successful, allowing them to complete, at low cost, the general education and prerequisite courses to qualify for programs elsewhere, including programs like engineering that EOU does not offer. These students, although not retained, are not in the same category as students who are academically unsuccessful.

The Indicators selected to represent progress on the Core Theme Three objectives are relevant, but are somewhat limited in their ability to assess the achievement of the objectives. The measures are largely process or participation based, rather than outcome based, and are quite narrow in scope. For example, the measure for Objective 3.1.1, to assess whether academic programs meet regional needs, is limited to a measure of enrollment in *new* programs, only. It does not assess the impact on the region of existing programs, many of which meet regional needs, or graduates' preparedness for employment. Although the Indicator 3.2.1 is "Employees actively participate…", no measure of staff participation is currently included in this Indicator. Faculty participation is very high, averaging (≥95%), since such participation is one of the criteria for faculty evaluation. The Objective 3.2 is "ongoing engagement enriches our communities", and this raises the question whether simple participation is a meaningful Indicator, or whether it would be better to have some measure of the quality or impact of the participation. The choice of threshold for student civic engagement of ≥45%, which is simply current participation in a subsample of relevant activities, seems overly modest given the centrality of the Indicator to mission fulfillment. The Self-evaluation Report indicates that EOU is working on securing data on student participation in co-curricular activities and would then increase the threshold appropriately. However, as noted for the employee participation Indicator, the quality or impact of the student participation would be a more meaningful Indicator.

Objective 3.3 is "Systems and processes ensure a sustainable university environment." One of the Indicators is "3.3.1. Adequate financial resources for operations", as measured by primary reserve ratio, debt burden ratio, and fund balance % of annual revenue.   A sustainable university environment clearly requires adequate operating funds each year, as does Standard 2.F.1. Although the chosen measures are more specific than the Standard, and are fairly conservative for a public institution, in the opinion of an evaluator this Indicator does not add much to the basic accreditation requirements in the area of finance, and omits some other important aspects of sustainability, including physical and technological infrastructure, continuity of operations planning, and ongoing assessment of the operating environment to inform institutional adaptation, that are addressed in the Standards.   Indicator 3.3.2 is "Administrative and personnel policies and practices ensure both an effective and sustainable workforce." The associated measures are faculty and staff turnover rates. The evaluator suggests that employee turnover rates are somewhat weakly linked to "administrative and personnel policies and practices", except when those fall significantly outside the range that an employee might find at an alternative employer. Other factors that impact turnover may include institutional financial problems (as illustrated by the spike in faculty turnover in 2015); opportunities for other employment (e.g., a major new employer enters the region, or conversely, a recession); age structure of the employee population; stagnant compensation, particularly if living costs are increasing much more rapidly; and livability of the institution's region. Hence, employee turnover rates might show no relationship at all to institutional improvements in policies and procedures, as desirable and beneficial as those might be. Alternative or additional approaches to Indicators might include results of employee satisfaction surveys (although this is an indirect measure), or a more in-depth breakdown of the reasons for employee departures to better identify those that are linked to dissatisfaction.

Concern, Standard 1.B.2: Indicators for Core Theme Three could be improved, to make them more meaningful in terms of informing efforts to improve institutional performance.

STANDARD TWO – RESOURCES AND CAPACITY

2.A Governance

2.A.1. EOU has a conventional Faculty Senate, composed of representatives of the faculty elected by academic units. The Senate also includes single student, administrative professional, and University Council representatives. The EOU Constitution, last revised in 2018, delineates the membership, duties, and responsibilities of the major governance groups and committees, and the Constitution states that "The Faculty Senate shall have the authority to discuss and to take action as provided by Oregon law on any University issue the Faculty Senate deems necessary," and "The Faculty Senate shall be governed by its own set of bylaws."   The Senate Bylaws, last revised in 2012, give it broad responsibilities:

Article II. Purpose. The purpose of the Faculty Senate is as follows.
1. To discuss and to take action as provided by Oregon law on any University issue the Faculty deems necessary.
2. To make recommendations to the Provost on any issue of academic concern to Eastern Oregon University;
3. To consider and act upon the recommendations of the Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee, the Academic Standards Committee, and the Faculty Personnel Committee;
4. To review the actions of the University Council and if necessary, by majority vote, to request their reconsideration by the council; and
5. To serve as the faculty voice for recommendations to the University President on any matter of concern to the University.

On the other hand, the figure illustrating the EOU Shared Governance Model (Figure 2.A.1.1) in the Self-Evaluation Report gives the Senate just three areas of responsibility: Educational Policy & Curriculum, Faculty Personnel, and Academic Standards, which are encompassed in purpose number 3, above.

Some faculty complained to evaluators that the Faculty Senate does not have a central role in providing input to important decisions that affect the university, and particularly, its faculty. The most-cited example was the recent consideration of a specific Online Program Management (OPM) vendor. The faculty felt that they had no input into that process until it was close to completion. Now that other vendors are being considered, the input pathway is via an *ad hoc* committee, with faculty (appointed by the Senate), staff, and administration representatives. Some faculty expressed the opinion that since the choice of OPM could affect academic quality and faculty work, that the Faculty Senate should be the primary body engaged in this decision-making process. Another example mentioned was the split of the College of Arts and Sciences into two colleges; some faculty reported that the Faculty Senate did not have opportunity for timely input on this decision. A third example was the policy transition process that was undertaken when the OUS was dissolved. Academic policy transition was not, initially, assigned to the Faculty Senate, and so some of the transition work needed to be redone once the responsibility and authority of the Senate was recognized. Some faculty stated that it appears that the administration is relying more on *ad hoc* committees, often with minority faculty representation, rather than the Faculty Senate as the major avenue for faculty input. Some faculty stated that while they have often had input into decisions, they have not received any feedback concerning whether their input affected

the decision, or if it did not, why.

The evaluator notes that Standard 2.A.1 does not require that faculty input be obtained only through a Faculty Senate, nor does the standard require that input is heeded or responded to in any specific manner, although of course responding to input usually improves understanding of decisions. Further, the evaluator understands that decisions often impact students and staff and the university's financial and infrastructure resources, and so the broader perspectives of the University Council or *ad hoc* committees with specialized expertise can be valuable. However, it appears to the evaluator that some additional work on better communication and establishing more clearly defined and well-understood authority, roles, and responsibilities for the Faculty Senate would be worthwhile, particularly because its current bylaws seem to give it a larger role than is currently exercised.

Other governance organizations at EOU are the ASEOU (Associated Students of Eastern Oregon University) and the University Council. The University Council has representation from the Faculty Senate, the ASEOU, staff (both classified and professional), and administration. Both of these groups expressed mostly satisfaction with their roles and opportunities for input into decisions. For example, the University Council is proud of its role in developing the EOU Values and Principles statement. They were also satisfied with their role in reviewing the input of the Budget & Planning Committee and transmitting that with their recommendations to the Cabinet and President. ASEOU did express some concern about the fate of past input by students and others on the proposed renaming of the Pierce Library. However, evaluators were told that this matter is currently under review by an *ad hoc* committee.

In summary, evidence presented by EOU indicates that it has an effective and widely understood system of governance and that there are provisions for the views of faculty, staff, students, and administrators to be considered on matters in which they have a direct and reasonable interest. Improved communication about the authority, roles, and responsibilities of the Faculty Senate could be warranted.

2.A.2. EOU is no longer part of a system. It was part of the Oregon University System (OUS) for most of the current accreditation cycle, until 2015. OUS was a long established system, with stable policies, regulations, and procedures, and no major issues with those were identified in the 2008 Comprehensive Evaluation Committee Report.

2.A.3. The Self-evaluation Report asserts and the ALO confirmed that is it her responsibility to monitor the institution's compliance with accreditation standards. The ALO reports that she has direct access to the Provost, should she identify any concerns, and the Provost could introduce matters to the Executive Cabinet as necessary for correction. The evaluator notes that the institution, despite the period of financial duress several years ago, has invested in areas important to accreditation, in particular establishing the new position of Vice Provost for Academic Quality.

Governing Board

2.A.4. Evidence of compliance reported in the Self-evaluation Report included the fact that the first EOU Board of Trustees was appointed by the Oregon Governor and confirmed by the Oregon State Senate in 2014. The Board of Trustees assumed control of EOU from the OUS on July 1, 2015. The Board consists of 14 voting members, 11 of whom are volunteers from the general public without contractual, financial, or employment interest in EOU. Board Statement No. 6, among other provisions concerning ethics and

conflicts of interest, requires the following: "On or before April 15 of each year, a Trustee must file with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission a verified statement of economic interest." The public members of the Board who met with evaluators confirmed that no member had reported a contractual, financial or employment interest in EOU.

The Board of Trustees also has four members drawn from the EOU community. One voting member each is appointed from the faculty, staff, and students, and the EOU President is an *ex officio* member of the Board, without a vote.

2.A.5. Evidence of compliance described in the Self-evaluation Report includes the Bylaws of Eastern Oregon University, which state that authority is vested in the Board, and not in any individual Trustee, including the Chair and other officers. The Self-evaluation Report did not address the rules governing subcommittees, but the evaluator found the necessary information at the Board of Trustees website. The Board has three standing committees, consisting of five to seven members. Board Statement No. 3 delegates specific responsibilities to the Governance Committee, and states that both the Finance and Administration Committee and the Academic and Student Affairs Committee shall refer all matters that require Board action to the Board, unless authority to act on behalf of the Board has been expressly delegated to the committee. The Board is permitted to establish *ad hoc* committees, but those have no decision-making authority by the terms of Board Statement No. 3. Members of the Board who met with evaluators said that the Standing Committees referred nearly all decisions to the Board, and that the usual role of the standing committees was to recommend actions to the full Board.

2.A.6. The EOU Board of Trustees has only been in existence since 2015, and spent considerable time and effort during its first year in developing, with reference to Oregon State Board of Higher Education policies and other resources, its own Bylaws and policies, which are called Board Statements. Institutional policies formerly approved by the Oregon State Board of Higher Education were readopted, after review and any needed revision, by the EOU Board of Trustees. As new institutional policies are developed, those are reviewed by the appropriate standing committee and approved by the Board.

2.A.7. Evidence of compliance is found in Board Statement No. 3, which describes the Board and its Governance Committee's roles in selecting and evaluating the EOU President. The current EOU President was hired by the Oregon State Board of Higher Education, but with the full participation of the EOU Board of Trustees in reviewing candidates for the position. Board Statement No. 2 establishes the authority of the President ("…the President is the executive and governing officer of the University…"), and Board Statement No. 7 requires a process by which the Board evaluates the President. Board of Trustees members who met with the evaluators stated that Governance Committee members were fully engaged with this process and that it occurred annually, as required by the Board Statement.

2.A.8. Evaluators met with representatives of the Board of Trustees, and they confirmed the evidence of compliance presented in the Self-evaluation Report. The Board approved Board Statement No. 8 and, as subsequently amended, this guides the annual self-evaluation process, which is accomplished by a questionnaire that is completed by each member. The Board Chair summarizes the results of the survey, and they are discussed by the full Board at the first meeting each calendar year. The evaluator found documentation of this in the Board meeting minutes. This evaluation has been done for three years, since soon after the EOU Board of Trustees was established.

Leadership and Management

2.A.9. Evidence of compliance includes the fact that EOU has a complement of senior administrators that is similar to that of many smaller universities. The President's direct reports comprise the Executive Cabinet, including the Vice President for Finance and Administration, the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Advancement & Executive Director of the Foundation, University Counsel & Board Secretary, and Athletic Director. Of these, five were hired in 2013 or later (i.e., President Insko in 2015, Vice President for Finance and Administration Moore in 2013, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Witte in 2016, Vice President for Student Affairs Karpilo in 2017, and University General Counsel Burford in 2015); only the Athletics Director and the Vice President for Advancement have served in their positions for the entire accreditation cycle. The Self-evaluation Report states that most were hired as the result of competitive national searches or "have moved up through the ranks of the university." The academic qualifications published in the catalog show that the two academic administrators (Academic Affairs and Student Affairs) hold a Ph.D., while the others have MBA, JD, or BS degrees consistent with their positions. In interviews with the Executive Cabinet (except the Athletics Director, who was not present), evaluators heard that all were well aware of the accreditation process and its major requirements, including assessment of institutional achievements and effectiveness and incorporation of assessment results into planning. Administrators provided several good examples of the collection and use of assessment data, mainly from the Academic Affairs area.

Similar to the Cabinet level positions, many in the next tier of dean and director level positions within Academic Affairs were hired fairly recently: the Dean of Business and Education (2016, although serving in interim and acting positions for a total of six years before that); Dean of the College Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (2017); Dean of the College of Sciences, Technology, Mathematics, and Health Sciences (2017); Executive Director of Regional Outreach and Innovation (2017); Vice Provost for Academic Quality (2017, but with interim service for the prior three years); Registrar (2016); and Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Research & Planning (2015). Of these direct executive reports to the Provost, only the Library Director & ALO has served in her position for more than a few years. Other areas also have new administrators, such as the Director of Admissions (2015) and the Director of Human Resources (2016).

This information is summarized by the evaluator to point out that institutional memory in the executive ranks is mostly rather short-term. While NWCCU expects that the processes of planning and assessment will be sustained throughout the period of review, examples provided to evaluators in meetings and summarized in the Self-evaluation Report are predominantly from the last three years. Maintaining a centralized (or at least, centrally accessible record) of planning and assessment work would help the institution report more completely, despite administrative turnover. The evaluator recognizes that there is a central website for some aspects of student learning outcomes assessment and strategic planning, which was quite helpful.

2.A.10. Mr. Thomas Insko was selected by the Oregon State Board of Higher Education, with concurrence from the newly formed EOU Board of Trustees, in 2015. He was hired after a national search and is well-qualified for his position. He is an *ex officio* member of the Board of Trustees and does not serve as its chair.

2.A.11. The evidence provided in the Self-evaluation Report indicates that EOU employs qualified administrators to lead and to manage the support and operational functions. Each of the major support

areas (Finance & Administration, Advancement, and Counsel) is led by an administrator who is a member of the President's Executive Cabinet, and this group is a formal opportunity for communication and collaboration among operational and support functions and academic and student affairs. As detailed under Standards 2.D, 2.E, and 2.F, evidence indicates that the operational and support functions of EOU are managed effectively and support the institution's mission well.

Commendation: Eastern Oregon University faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees are commended for accomplishing the successful transition to an independently governed institution that is increasingly responsive to the needs of the students and the region it serves.

Policies and Procedures

Academics

2.A.12. EOU provided evidence that it is in compliance; in particular, EOU maintains a well-organized policy web page, easily found with the institutional website search engine, where current EOU academic policies can be found. The policies are indexed on that page by major subject area. PDF documents for EOU policies are clearly formatted and written to be easy understood, meeting the NWCCU criterion of "clearly communicated." At a meeting with evaluators on October 29, 2018, EOU staff explained that some policies are in transition via the Policy Transition Project, as a result of EOU's transition from the Oregon University System (OUS) to a self-governing institution that began in 2015. EOU still abides by some legacy OUS policies that have not yet been formerly adopted as EOU policies. Under the terms of Oregon Senate Bill 80, which abolished the OUS, all regulations of the Oregon State Board of Higher Education became policies of EOU, which the University was authorized to amend or repeal.

2.A.13. EOU provided evidence that it is in compliance. Library use policy web pages are available online at the library website. Student interviews on October 29, 2018, indicated that the library hours policy is observed and that the library is welcoming and easy to use. Students can obtain any book or journal through either inter-library loan or e-delivery.

2.A.14. EOU provided evidence that it is in compliance. EOU's Self-evaluation Report, online transfer web pages, and information obtained during interviews on October 29, 2018, indicate that EOU has effective and clearly stated transfer-of-credit policies that are followed. Faculty, staff and student interviews indicate that EOU makes significant efforts to facilitate mobility of students from in-state and out-of-state institutions. EOU transfer-of-credit policies exist, are published on its website and in its catalog, and are followed. Student interviews on October 29, 2018 indicated that the policies are effective. The students reported high satisfaction with EOU's transfer processes.

Compliment: EOU is complimented for its integrated, institution-wide approach to addressing student transfers and improving student retention, progression, completion; it is well-received by students.

Concern, Standard 2.C.7: To improve timely faculty review and reduce delays to students, EOU is encouraged to consider creating mechanisms, such as break stipends, to ensure that faculty members are available in the summer and during inter-term breaks to evaluate transfer requests and transcripts and portfolios.

Students

2.A.15. Eastern Oregon University publishes a *Student Handbook* online, which was reviewed by an evaluator. The *Student Handbook* is updated yearly to make sure students have current policies and procedures. The *Student Handbook* clearly states the students' rights and responsibilities. The information is very thorough and helps each student to be in compliance with campus and state policies. The *Student Handbook* also includes academic honesty, appeals, grievances, and information on disability services. Since this information is online, both future and current students have access at all times. Students are encouraged to read the information, but both employees and students believe the *Student Handbook* is generally not read until a student needs to know a process or procedure.

Compliment: Students believe their voices are heard around campus. They are very proud of the new Multicultural Center. Students expressed their appreciation for the amazing faculty at EOU.

2.A.16. Admissions policies are clearly written for each of the categories in which the institution admits students, i.e., first-time, first-year; transfer; international; and graduate, and can be found at the Admissions web page. An evaluator noted, however, that graduate admissions are not directly linked from the Admissions home page; to find any mention of graduate programs, the prospective student must click "apply" or "transfer". According to all information provided to evaluators, students are treated equitably throughout the admission process and communication back to the students is done in a timely manner. Admissions works with the Registrar, advisors, Athletics, and faculty to help assure that admitted students have the initial preparation and EOU support that they need to succeed.

Placement in initial mathematics and English courses is partly based on Accuplacer scores, according to information available at the admissions website, and most entering students are required to take Accuplacer. The exact wording is "Eastern Oregon University uses a computerized placement tool called Accuplacer as one method for identifying the mathematics and writing courses that are the best fit for you!"   Students are instructed to see their advisor to find out what Accuplacer scores mean in terms of course placement. As far as the evaluator could ascertain, EOU does not have a mandatory placement policy based on test scores, nor are specific placement scores for introductory or remedial courses published in a location that is easy to find. In the opinion of the evaluator, placement practices could be clearer. Holistic approaches to placement are fine if they are consistently implemented, but if students are being sorted into classes mainly based on test scores, publishing cut score information would be helpful to students and prospective students.

The policies on academic suspension for undergraduates, which makes students ineligible to register and so is in essence termination from their program, are published in the *EOU Catalog* and also on the website of the Academic Standards Committee and the EOU Policies website. There is a clear appeal process, and students have the opportunity for two appeals before they are suspended for a calendar year. The criteria for reinstatement (24 quarter credits completed with a C or better at another institution, or passage of at least one year) are clear enough, but the published process (suspended students are advised to contact the Registrar for instructions) could be clearer. Students' admitted status also ends if they are not registered for more than three quarters, and the reapplication process in that circumstance is straightforward and is linked from the Registrar's home page.

2.A.17. Several areas around campus provide co-curricular activities for the students. Some activities are for a small group of students and some are intended for the full student body. Students who met with evaluators said that there are enough activities and clubs on campus to meet their needs. Social media

are used to get advertisements out to the students, but posters and word of mouth are also important to communicating about these activities. It appears students are willing to invite and encourage their peers to attend activities.

Human Resources

2.A.18. and 2.A.19. Human resource policies and procedures are published on the EOU comprehensive policy website under the "Employment Policies" category. Staff members that evaluators spoke with stated that they know exactly what their job descriptions are, as well as their rights and responsibilities, and they know when they will be evaluated each year. EOU just revised all the classified staff job descriptions, and a process has been established to update those every three years. The classified staff is evaluated yearly on their anniversary date of hire.

Most policies applying to classified staff and to employees could be found on the comprehensive policy website at the time of the site visit. However, links to policies applying to faculty (e.g., promotion, tenure, evaluation) were not yet active. Currently, the *Faculty Personnel Process and Procedure Handbook* (dated 2013) is linked from the Faculty and Staff Resources webpage, but not the Human Resources (HR) home page. The Faculty and Staff Resources webpage also has a link to the calendar for faculty evaluations. The *Administrative Professionals Handbook* is linked from the HR website, and not directly from the Faculty and Staff Resources webpage. Classified Staff and full-time faculty are also subject to collective bargaining agreements; those are linked from the HR webpage. Overall, there is perhaps some room for improvement in making these policies, procedures, and bargaining agreements extremely easy to locate, but as it is most people could find them with a few minutes' effort.

There have been recent updates to some of the employment policies, and more changes will take place in the near future to meet the new law in the State of Oregon that addresses equity across the state. The Human Resources Director has plans to assure EOU compliance with the new law. Employees did not raise any issues about employment policies or their communication in the open forums or other meetings with evaluators.

2.A.20. An evaluator verified during an interview with staff that all employee records are housed in the Human Resources Office in a locked file cabinet and the door to the office is locked nightly. Supervisors have access to the file to check on salary and job descriptions, and the employee has the right to see their own file. The Human Resource office is very conscientious in keeping the records confidential and up to date.

Institutional Integrity

2.A.21. The *EOU Academic Catalog* includes intended learning outcomes for each of its programs and four-year course completion plans that show how each baccalaureate degree can be completed in that nominal time period. The EOU response to Year Three Recommendation 2 indicates that there is now a systematic and thorough review of each edition of the catalog, which is the responsibility of the Registrar and the Provost.

An evaluator reviewed the EOU publications policy that applies to all external publications that display the institution name, seal, or logo. This particular policy appears to apply mainly to hardcopy publications, formal public presentations, and social media "campaigns", rather than web pages, bulk e-mail, or social media efforts that are not "campaigns". The policy includes a requirement for review:

"…all publications meant for outside distribution are to be channeled through the Office of University Advancement for consistency, content, approval, specifications and production," and states that publications must meet a standard of excellence, although it does not expressly address accuracy.

The Self-evaluation Report asserts that EOU regularly reviews all of its publications for integrity and accuracy, but except for the above policy, and information on catalog review, it does not specify which offices or positions are responsible. The Publications Policy indicates that the President has overall, delegated responsibility for EOU publications, public information and advertising, but beyond that the evaluator could not find any written policies on responsibility and authority, either for the original web and electronically distributed materials or their periodic review. It could be assumed that executives are responsible for anything published within their domains, but EOU might want to consider some more specific policies or guidelines on this. It is difficult to control the quality and accuracy of communication via websites, bulk e-mail, and social media, but a lot of important communication with students and prospective students occurs this way.

The evaluator did not find any substantial errors in any materials that she reviewed. She largely focused on websites and the catalog. Hence, the evidence is that EOU is in compliance with the standard, and the above comments are just suggestions that might help that to continue.

2.A.22. EOU adheres to the ethical standards of the Oregon Government Ethics Commission, which include ORS Chapter 244, the Oregon State Ethics Law, as well as EOU Board of Trustees Ethical Statement No. 6 on Ethics and Conflict of Interest. The evaluator scanned these quickly (the Law is quite lengthy), and they appear to cover all of the usual rules that must be observed by public officials and public institutions.

For the represented staff and faculty, complaints concerning terms and conditions of employment are handled in accordance with the collective bargaining agreements. The grievance procedure for administrative professionals is included in the *Administrative Professional Employment Handbook*. The evaluator noticed that Policy 6.05.05. Affirmative Action and Anti-discrimination Policy, unlike the 6.05.15 Sexual Harassment Policy and the 6.05.10 Policy Prohibiting Illegal Discrimination Affecting Students, does not include a section on reporting. In fact it was not easy for the evaluator to find out how to report non-gender based discrimination or information on how such complaints would be reviewed. She examined the HR website, and searched "discrimination" and "discrimination complaint" with the search engine, but did not find generally applicable information. The student reporting process is clear, and the evaluator assumes that any employee could file a complaint with the HR Director (who is also the EEO and Affirmative Action Officer). However, that position title might not be self-explanatory to every employee.

The EOU policy website provides students with easy access to Policy 2.10.20, Student Complaint and Grievance Procedures, as well as policies and procedures concerning prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment, although those are under "General Policies" rather than "Student Affairs Policies", and might possibly be overlooked by a student. That could be easily overcome by replicating links under a category name like "Other Policies for Students". The Student Complaint and Grievance Procedures have guidelines for timely response, as does the sexual harassment policy.

The evaluators did not receive any complaints from students, faculty, or staff about either fair and equitable treatment or the complaint and grievance processes of EOU.

2.A.23. ORS Chapter 244, the Oregon State Ethics Law (specifically 244.040 Prohibited use of official position or office; exceptions; other prohibited actions) prohibits conflicts of interest for public officials. EOU Board of Trustees Statement No. 6 on Ethics and Conflict of Interest has the following related content: "Each individual Trustee is personally responsible for complying with the law applicable to ethical conduct and conflict of interest" (i.e., ORS Chapter 244). Statement No. 6 also has the specific provisions. The evaluator reviewed the relevant sections of both documents and these appear to address the standard. EOU is a public university without affiliations to social, political, corporate, or religious organizations.

2.A.24. By action of the Oregon State Senate in 2015, the Oregon University System policies on ownership, copyright, control, compensation, and revenue derived from the creation and production of intellectual property are now EOU policies.

2.A.25. The evaluator used the EOU website search engine to find references to accreditation and also reviewed the statement in the catalog. All references to institutional accreditation that she could find were either the brief statement, "Eastern Oregon University is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities," or included the wording provided by the NWCCU policy on Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status.

2.A.26. The evaluator reviewed EOU Policy 3.15.01, which addresses procurement and contracting. It includes a provision C. Code of Ethics, which among other provisions requires honestly, good faith, and avoidance of conflict of interest of university employees, and an appropriate control, E. Designation of Contract Officers, but does not specifically address all aspects of this standard. A major concern of this standard is contracts that procure for-credit educational services or student services.   All such need to be reviewed by individuals who are knowledgeable concerning NWCCU Standards and Policies, and some contractual arrangements must be approved by the Commission.

Academic Freedom

2.A.27, 2.A.28, and 2.A.29. EOU has an academic freedom policy that is consistent with those of other public institutions of higher education in the state. The university also has posted on the university's web site a Public Demonstrations Policy, a Classroom Decorum Policy, and the Academic Honesty Code Policy. A freedom of expression policy currently is in development via a Faculty Senate task force formed in 2017. The Faculty Senate, in March of 2018, approved a draft statement to initiate dialogue aimed at producing a final policy. The university provides guidance to administrative professionals through the *Administrative Professional Employment Handbook*, which was developed over the past three years and posted on the university's web site in 2018.

Finance

2.A.30. The institution has established policies, vetted and recommended through internal units, committees, and the President, to guide oversight and management of financial resources. The policies require financial planning and board approval and oversight for all funds under the auspices of EOU, including operating and capital budgets. Further, EOU has established policies that support operating reserves, investments, fundraising, cash and debt management, as well as transfers and inter-fund transactions.   An evaluator reviewed the established policies and observance of these policies was confirmed in consultations with the Board of Trustees and Vice President for Finance & Administration.

2.B Human Resources

2.B.1. Evidence shows there are adequate and qualified personnel to support the mission of the University. Classified staff are very pleased with their recently updated job descriptions. However, they believe that they could use more help in getting all their different jobs done each year.

2.B.2. Executives and administrators are evaluated annually. Executives are evaluated annually by their supervisor and every three years undergo a "360" evaluation, as delineated in the "Triennial Reviews of Senior Leadership Policy". Some administrators (managers) are within the Administrative Professional group and their evaluation frequency and process is described in the *Administrative Professional Employment Handbook*. Staff are evaluated yearly on their anniversary date, as specified in the applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement. Each group is evaluated based on performance of their work duties and responsibilities. Staff who met with evaluators did not express any concerns about the evaluation process and indicated that they had been evaluated as scheduled.

2.B.3. Faculty, staff, and administrators have opportunities for professional development. It is often funded by the budget in each department, and department resources vary. However, the university has some professional development speakers come to campus, and some of these programs are mandatory for all employees. If there is a need for professional development and the department budget cannot provide the funds, the evaluator was told that the university will work with the department to find the money.

2.B.4. In general, EOU presented evidence that it employs sufficient qualified faculty. Altogether the self-study reports 107 full-time faculty, 63 of whom hold a doctorate, and nearly all of the remainder a master's degree. These faculty include a relatively large proportion of "fixed term faulty" (about 30%), which at EOU normally have no non-teaching work assignment. That is, they do not usually participate in university service, such as academic program assessment, but rather teach more courses per quarter than tenure-line faculty. The full-time faculty numbers appear in line with those of other institutions of higher education that do not have a significant amount of sponsored research and that offer a fairly small number of baccalaureate programs, in this case, 24. The evaluator notes that the category "administrative faculty" reported in the Self-evaluation Report (e.g., Figure 2.B.1.1.) includes administrative professionals with no role in instruction, so the numbers discussed here do not include them.

Some students expressed concern with the number of faculty and feel there is a need for more. The students have experienced having to wait a year to take a class, because many classes are offered just once a year, and some academic advisors also indicated this was sometimes a problem. Students believe the faculty are amazing, but also think there need to be more faculty to meet the needs of the students and to keep the student to faculty ratio low.

In response to some student complaints about infrequently offered classes filling beyond capacity, an evaluator examined spreadsheets of by-section enrollment and capacity data available on the Institutional Effectiveness website. Overall, only about 10% of sections were at or above enrollment capacity. However, as reported by the students, science laboratory sections were more often completely filled. Sometimes this involved the first class of a two or three course sequence offered only once per year, so when a student could not get into the initial class, they could not progress. Some of the students involved acknowledged that they tried to enroll near the start date of the quarter, and in those cases many universities would not have spaces available in every class. In summary, this does not

seem to be a pervasive problem, but rather one that might be alleviated by just a few additional faculty or even by contingent faculty, if qualified individuals are available.

EOU has worked on addressing full sections; the Registrar's office keeps track of the waitlists and notifies academic departments if more sections need to be added in a term. The deans are also tracking the low-enrolled classes and streamlining them to prevent low-enrollment in the future, which may free up resources to offer classes that are in higher demand. However, if ambitious goals for EOU enrollment growth and new programs to better serve regional needs are realized, there will be need for additional faculty; that future need is fully recognized by the College deans.

Concern, Standards 2.B.1 and 2.B.4: Some students stated that more effort needs to made in hiring faculty and staff who are as diverse as the students who attend EOU. Students believe they would feel more comfortable if there are employees that look like them.

2.B.5. EOU deans track faculty workload and for full-time faculty, the workload is specified in the Associated Academic Professionals: American Federation of Teachers collective bargaining agreement. For example, tenure track appointments for instructional faculty are normally 36 credit hours of instruction and 9 hours of committee, advising, scholarship, and service work for a total of 45 load credits per academic year, while fixed term faculty are usually assigned 45 units of instruction, although the Senior Instructor II faculty can be assigned 9 units of committee, advising, scholarship, and service work if need by the program.

The proportion of tenure-track faculty workload assigned to scholarship is minimal (around 10 to 15%), particularly because of the expectation for community engagement in addition to university committee work. However, the criteria for tenure are strongly focused on teaching, i.e., *The Faculty Personnel Process and Procedure Handbook* states "To be awarded tenure, the teaching faculty must demonstrate excellence in teaching, a productive commitment to research or scholarly activity, a competence and willingness to participate in the work of the institution, and engagement in outreach beyond the university." Hence the workloads appear to the evaluator to be commensurate with performance expectations.

2.B.6. An evaluator reviewed the collective bargaining agreement and the *Faculty Personnel Process and Procedure Handbook* referenced in the Self-evaluation Report. The Collective Bargaining Agreement for full-time EOU faculty states that fixed-term faculty shall be evaluated annually for their first three years, and every three years thereafter, and tenure line faculty shall be evaluated according to the *Faculty Personnel Process and Procedure Handbook*. That document specifies that pre-tenure faculty have some type of evaluation each year; post-tenure faculty are evaluated every two years; and fixed-term faculty are evaluated annually for their first three years, and every three years thereafter. According to the *Handbook*, adjunct faculty are evaluated annually by designated tenure-line faculty, and every third year are expected to submit a portfolio of teaching accomplishments for review by the dean. The evaluation criteria for both tenure line and fixed term faculty are sufficiently outlined in the *Faculty Personnel Process and Procedure Handbook*. There are processes for establishing improvement plans for pre-tenure, post-tenure, and fixed term faculty who have areas of unsatisfactory performance. In meetings with evaluators faculty indicated that the CBA is followed and full-time faculty are aware of the evaluation criteria.

2.C Education Resources

2.C.1.The institution provided evidence that it is in compliance with this standard. Its academic programs are designed to be consistent with the EOU mission. Nearly all of the degrees awarded by EOU are in fields of study common to universities nationwide. A few, such as Integrative Studies and Fire Services Administration, are not as widespread, but would be recognized by other higher education institutions. Learning outcomes have been identified by faculty and are aligned for courses, programs and degrees.

During meetings with administrators, faculty and staff, all indicated that an emphasis is placed on four broad university learning outcomes: gaining breadth of knowledge; strengthening their ability to inquire, create, and communicate; being engaged in the community and exercising personal and social responsibility; and integrating, applying, and reflecting on their skills and knowledge. The Self-evaluation Report provided links to document this information.

It was evident from the Self-evaluation Report and supporting documents linked to it that General Education Core requirements and intended learning outcomes were identified and in place. Policies and committees were in place to guide and provide oversight for the learning outcomes and the criteria to demonstrate breadth of knowledge in these areas. This was documented by conversations with administrators, faculty and staff, as well as links to curriculum, committee minutes, and data, particularly the annual reports available through the Institutional Effectiveness website. (Please see the next paragraph for evaluation of this evidence.) Gateway courses are offered at basic levels and a strong emphasis is placed on outcomes and criteria for success in General Education. As students progress through programs and near graduation, a capstone course is required and an emphasis is placed on student-centered learning. Content knowledge is assessed in part through capstone assessment in specific subject areas. Program learning outcomes are published in the *EOU Catalog* and focus on educational objectives and learning outcomes for each degree. Faculty who met with the evaluator discussed the ways that learning outcomes and learning objectives are developed and tailored to each degree, with approval through a series of steps.

The student learning outcomes assessment reports linked from the Institutional Effectiveness website are publicly available, but in a fairly secluded location. The reporting process was substantially revised since the Year Three Report, and reports under the new procedures are available for the 2015-16 academic year and later. These reports address the General Education learning outcomes of communication and critical thinking; each was assessed in one of the past two years. The other two areas, civic engagement and inquiry, have no General Education assessment reports after 2009-10 and 2011-2012, and in some cases those compiled earlier do not appear to cover all departments, but some of the academic program learning outcomes reports addressed these university learning outcomes. (Not all programs have selected both of these two learning outcomes.) Academic program student learning outcomes have been reported consistently for the past three years. For two of the years 2015-2018, the reports concerned learning assessment for capstone courses. For academic year 2017-18, critical thinking in the discipline was assessed via specific courses designed for that purpose. The capstone assessments mainly focused on university learning outcomes of communication, inquiry, critical thinking, civic engagement, and integrated learning. Each academic program is expected to assess at least four out of the five university outcomes, plus learning in the content area. However, the latter assessment is not consistently posted on the Institutional Effectiveness website. The Vice Provost for Academic Quality told evaluators that content area outcomes assessment data are often retained by the departments, and are not generally available on websites or at any particular central location, such

as the dean's office. Evaluators were not able to contact each department during the site visit due to time constraints, and so only saw content area learning assessments for those programs that had included consideration of that in the capstone assessments.

The outcomes assessment reports posted on the Institutional Effectiveness website are all formatted based on a template, and hence all include a "closing the loop statement" that explains the steps that have been or will be taken to improve student learning outcomes. However, in the opinion of the evaluator, these were often somewhat vague and tentative. As one example, a particular program noted that nationally standardized testing showed deficiencies of student learning that faculty attributed to elimination of certain courses due to budget reductions; they indicated that some courses should be restored, but without a concrete approach to doing so. The other issue, throughout, is that since this assessment and reporting process has been in place for only a short time, there has been very little opportunity to reassess to determine whether program changes have been effective in improving student learning. There are earlier program student learning outcomes assessment reports for the years 2009-10 to 2012-13 posted in an "archive" section of the website. These reports focus on program-specific learning outcomes, and there appears to have been a consistent approach of assessing one of about four chosen learning outcomes each year, mainly through student performance in a specific, relevant course. This demonstrates some consistent assessment effort, but some of the reports seem to have been written by an individual rather than program faculty collectively ("I" rather than "we" pronoun). Also, some of the curricular changes proposed were, as above, tentative or lacking in specifics, and some programs expressly stated that they could not draw any conclusions because of small sample size. Because most learning outcomes were assessed only once, and they were not all the same as those assessed more recently, there was little opportunity to demonstrate that improvements in pedagogy or curriculum improved student learning.

In summary, EOU has made progress on assessment of university and general education learning outcomes, but an approach and reporting process must be sustained through at least one complete accreditation cycle to more strongly demonstrate full compliance with this standard. EOU needs to continue to work on embedding assessment into the culture of the institution, so that leadership changes don't sidetrack it. Also, relative to the process established three years ago, the content area student learning outcomes reports need to be more consistently, readily available for evaluator review.

2.C.2. The institution provided evidence that it is in compliance with this standard. Learning outcomes have been identified by faculty and are aligned for courses, programs and degrees, and those for EOU majors and minors are published in the *EOU Academic Catalog*. Course learning outcomes are included in syllabi and are the same whether the course is taught on campus or online. College master syllabi for each course are linked to the Academic Degrees and Programs website, and so are readily available to students, a best practice. Faculty members who met with evaluators expressed a sincere intention of meeting learning outcomes for their courses and evidence that these outcomes are being addressed was found within data provided.

Online programs are providing opportunities for student achievement at the undergraduate and master's levels. These programs are generating data and supporting assessment and continuous improvement. Many faculty members are teaching both on campus and online. Additional online offerings are anticipated and strategies for growth are being pursued.

2.C.3. The institution provided evidence that it is in compliance with this standard. Policies and procedures are evident that define the awarding of degrees. EOU maintains an Academic Policies and Procedures section in the catalog that clearly spells out the grading system.

Policies for course approvals are in place and must be followed at each level for courses designed by faculty. This process ensures that learning outcomes and equivalencies are addressed and aligned to program goals and objectives. Credit hour review processes are in place and the University Policy and Curriculum Committee is charged with review of educational programs and courses. Representation on this committee consists of faculty, staff, students and administrators.

Although EOU faculty and staff commented on the value of small class sizes and personalization of education, there are still some large classes, such as introductory biology. Because of declining enrollment, steps are being taken to recruit additional students. Transfer students are welcomed and efforts are being made improve the processes of transfer and experiential learning credit review and to develop more articulation agreements. Discussions with deans, other administrators and faculty brought out the focus on supporting transfer credit and reaching out to high school students who are jointly enrolled. EOU is seeking partnerships with high schools in the region through a program called the Oregon Teacher Pathway. This program has been successful in generating credit hours and strengthening enrollment.

Conversations with the Registrar and others from that office clearly explained how they manage documentation and ensure that records are properly handled. They gave convincing explanations regarding policies and their roles and oversight.

> **Credit hour policy**
> The EOU credit hour definition is published in its Academic Catalog (p. 25 of the current edition). It states that a student can expect to spend at least 30 clock hours of time for every term hour of credit earned.   All effort related to the course, including but not limited to attending classes or laboratories, reading, studying, and research, are included.

2.C.4. The institution provided evidence that it is in compliance with this standard. Admission and graduation requirements for degree programs are evident through the EOU website, where web pages for each program provide information for students on requirements and expectations for success. Degree programs and courses are clearly spelled out and an online *Student Handbook* is also available. Graduation requirements are clearly delineated. An effort is made to provide institutional research to assist programs and academic program assessment, as well as continuing with longitudinal data gathering and reporting. The dedication of the institutional research team is impressive.

There are challenges transitioning from the academic portfolio assessment to the current program of Annual Program Reviews and the five-year cycle of Comprehensive Academic Program Self-Studies. The set of metrics is developing and will be expanded upon. Deans indicated that an annual review by program faculty takes place and action plans are developed in areas where improvements are needed. Because faculty are responsible for curriculum in their respective disciplines, the focus should continue to be on continuous improvement for attainment of the Core Theme Indicator thresholds.

2.C.5. The institution provides evidence that it is in compliance with this standard. There is evidence of policies and procedures describing the faculty role in revising curriculum, selecting faculty, and assessing

achievement of student learning outcomes. There are formal processes and policies in place for approval of programs and changes to existing programs. Faculty and other stakeholders are engaged in course and curricular changes, including design, review, and approval.   A committee named the Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee facilitates this process. The authority and responsibilities are clearly defined, and faculty acknowledge their responsibilities for curriculum and student assessment. An example of a positive curricular revision is the recent redesign of the Integrative Studies baccalaureate degree.

Faculty stated that they are actively engaged in hiring and participate on search committees, and college deans oversee the hiring process. Paperwork and procedures are monitored by the HR staff.

For the most part, learning outcomes are clearly identified and student achievement is assessed specific to coursework. However there is still work to be done to formalize the collection of data and develop a longitudinal assessment system that impacts decision making and continuous improvement. Conversations with the Vice Provost for Academic Quality addressed the assessment process and how it has been improved over the past three years. He explained that it is still evolving and there will be additional emphasis on assessment of specific academic program outcomes.

2.C.6. Instructional support from Library staff is made available to faculty during course development and for inclusion in course delivery. In some courses, library instruction is integrated into the class, with librarians providing direct instruction in research methods and in the use of library and information resources. At present, limited Library staffing levels preclude a greater degree of instructional course integration. As a consequence, the Library plans to deemphasize its own direct course offerings in favor of increasing their support for courses taught by other faculty.

2.C.7. EOU provided evidence that it is in compliance. EOU faculty assess experiential learning academic quality. Transfer advisors work with students to help them assemble an Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) 390 portfolio, which is evaluated by faculty to provide variable APEL credit for either APEL 299 (lower division) or APEL 399 (upper division). Students must provide certain documents for review for Agency Sponsored Learning (ASL) credit. Interviews with faculty transfer advisors during the site visit indicate that faculty experiential learning evaluations, through either APEL portfolios or ASL documentation, takes place after the documentation is completely assembled. Faculty evaluate transfer portfolios for APEL and ASL learning as they come in, and then send a transfer credit decision back to a department chair who sends the decision to the Registrar. Redacted student transcript samples provided to an evaluator by the Registrar indicate that APEL and ASL credits are clearly identified.

2.C.8. EOU provided evidence that it is in compliance. EOU Faculty work with the Registrar to set up transfer equivalencies. EOU provides conditions and limits on transfer credits which can be found through links on the Registrar's website. Limits include limiting transfer credits to those earned at regionally accredited institutions, or those approved through International Baccalaureate (IB) and American Council on Education (ACE) programs, as well as limiting the number of transfer credits for ASL documents and APEL portfolios. Faculty review upper division transfer requests in the majors, and also review APEL portfolios and ASL documentation. EOU's Registrar provided examples of redacted transcripts that clearly indicate transfer courses, the EOU course to which transfer applied (if applicable) and level of transfer credit. EOU has articulation agreements with numerous Oregon community colleges and some in Washington, Idaho and Texas, as well as with Micronesian community colleges.

Undergraduate Programs

2.C.9. The institution provided evidence that it is in compliance with the standard. EOU offers a 60-credit general education program that emphasizes outcomes of critical thinking, inquiry, communication, and further learning/civic engagement. The program requires at least 6 hours each in the content areas of natural, mathematical, and computer information sciences; aesthetics and humanities; and artistic processes and creation. Course proposals for the General Education curriculum must demonstrate how the proposed course will achieve the required learning outcomes. Gateway courses must be at the 100 level. The program also includes upper-division courses designed for majors, including a capstone experience.

2.C.10. The institution provided evidence that it is in compliance with the standard. EOU has a detailed general education assessment site that includes program objectives, information about the assessment plan, cycle and methods, and a document from 2011 describing expectations for alignment of content and outcomes. A table that nicely illustrates an example of how academic programs map to university learning outcomes was provided in the Self-evaluation Report.

2.C.11. EOU does not offer applied associate degrees or applied certificates.

Graduate Programs

2.C.12. The institution provided evidence that it is in compliance with the standard. EOU offers graduate programs in business and education. A Master of Fine Arts is on hiatus, but university leadership indicated that it is likely to be revived soon. The MBA is externally accredited by the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education. The Education MAT programs adhere to requirements of Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission and are regularly reviewed against CAEP (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation) requirements.

2.C.13. The institution provided evidence that it is in compliance with the standard. Admission requirements to EOU's graduate programs are appropriate and are explained on the university's web site.   An evaluator noticed that there are some inconsistencies in how transfer credit policies were presented. The Self-evaluation Report says that no transfer credits are usually accepted for the MBA. At the "Steps to the MBA" page, linked to the admissions website and in the catalog it states that up to 10 quarter credits can be accepted.

Graduate student retention policies could be clearer. Normally these would be found with the Academic Policies in the catalog, but the *EOU Catalog* addresses only undergraduate policies there. An additional problem with clarity is that this section of the catalog does not clearly specify that it applies only to undergraduates, either overall or in the specific section on Academic Standing. Under "Grading Policy" the MBA program description in the catalog does list specific conditions that will lead to a student being suspended (more than two grades below B-), but does not specify how the student can be reinstated. The MBA program website addresses that: meet with the faculty, re-take the course. However, many institutions would have additional criteria, for example, there would be an upper limit (often two or three) on the total number of unsatisfactory grades that could be earned in the program before permanent dismissal, and/or there would be a time limit for completing all requirements. The catalog information on these topics for the Education graduate programs is sparser. There are "Program Completion Requirements", but as far as the evaluator could tell those are in a section that applies only to the Special Education program. The Special Education completion requirements say that no grade

lower than C will be accepted and overall GPA of 3.0 is required to graduate. The evaluator did find these same rules for the MS program on a FAQ web page, but the MAT FAQ does not have them, and there is no express provision for a student being suspended from any of these programs that the evaluator could find.

Concern, Standard 2.C.13: The evaluation committee suggests that EOU publishes clear conditions for academic good standing and suspension from graduate programs in its catalog and at each program website.

2.C.14. EOU grants graduate credit for clinical practices integral to the MAT program as part of the program, but does not otherwise grant graduate credit for internships or experiential learning.

2.C.15. The institution provided evidence that it is in compliance with the standard. The MS in Education requires a research project, while the MBA and MAT require demonstration of high level performance skills in addition to subject matter knowledge.

Continuing Education and Non-credit Programs

2.C.16. EOU provided evidence that it is in compliance. With the exception of an externally-funded GED program, EOU does not offer continuing education credit or non-credit classes. The GED classes are offered through a program of external grants from Union County (Oregon) and the State of Oregon. EOU hosts and supports the external grant-funded GED program through its office of Regional Outreach and Innovation (ROI). EOU's hosting of and support for the externally-funded GED program is consistent with the portion of its mission statement that states "… partnerships with colleges, universities, agencies and communities add to the educational possibilities of our region and state," Core Theme Two: "Access for all," and Core Theme Two, Objective 2 "Programs and processes promote student access."

Compliment: EOU is complimented on providing, from its own resources, guidance and support for the externally-funded regional GED program and its administrator through its office of Regional Outreach & Innovation.

2.C.17. EOU provided evidence that it is in compliance. While the GED certificate is not awarded by EOU (instead the certification of meeting the GED is awarded by Pearson VUE based on students earning scores greater than or equal to the required minimum values in four subject areas on Pearson VUE examinations), EOU provides administrative support to the part-time externally-funded staff person who runs the program. EOU also supports a test-taking site for the examinations. The part-time administrative staff member provides information, counseling, administers practice tests, recommends educational interventions in areas where more learning is needed, and coordinates secure taking of the GED exams. EOU's support efforts enhance the academic quality of the offered GED program. The responsibility of EOU Regional Outreach and Innovation Operations Manager in providing support to the GED administrative staff person is clearly defined.

2.C.18. EOU provided evidence that it is in compliance. GED self-guided instruction is conducted using national standards and subject matter, so it is appropriate to GED course objectives. Pearson VUE credit for a pass of a GED subject area test is also based on national norms, and therefore measures student achievement of learning outcomes. Use of Pearson VUE norms meets the NWCCU criterion of generally accepted norms. EOU does not issue GED transcripts; the certification of passing the GED is provided by Pearson VUE. An interview with the GED administrative staff person, Regional Outreach & Innovation

operations manager and Executive Director of Regional Outreach and Innovation on October 30, 2018, validated that GED policies are consistently enforced.

2.C.19. EOU provided evidence that it is in compliance. EOU supports GED record-keeping through providing a workstation, network back-up and network access to GED databases for Oregon. Otherwise, EOU does not offer non-credit instruction.

2.D Student Support Resources

2.D.1. EOU provides student support services that are appropriate to the size and mission of the institution. Students are encouraged to use the Learning Center, Writing Lab, and Math Lab. Students with a documented disability are provided accommodations to support their needs. The TRiO Student Support Services Program is a well-functioning service for those students who qualify. The Multi-Cultural Center also provides academic support as well as help on being a college student. EOU also offers a three credit first year experience course.

2.D.2. EOU does not employ its own police force, but the La Grande Police Department is directly across the street. The University and Police Department have an excellent working relationship, of which they are very proud, and believe it is important to continue working together. EOU does have Campus Security Officers who are not sworn officers, but they are able to monitor 911 calls and oftentimes are the first on the scene. Campus Security provides security escorts and access to buildings after hours. Students feel safe on campus and are aware of the safest routes to take during the evening hours.

In the opinion of the evaluator, there need to be more drills and trainings on safety/security. The emergency website does let students know what to do should they experience an active shooter. However, most students the evaluator asked were not aware of the training video or the website. Students who met with the evaluator did not know what to do should they need to evacuate the campus or shelter in place. A safety packet is handed out to all students during WOW (Week of Welcome, new student orientation), but it appears most students do not read or retain the material.

EOU provided the evaluator with evidence that the Annual Security and Fire Safety report is completed on time and all categories are answered. The report is readily available on-line. The Annual Security and Fire Safety Report and Title IX are important to the personnel creating the report. Trainings are available and attended by the Director of Student Relations.

> ### Clery Required Policy Statements Checklist
> The University is in compliance with the Clery Act requirements compiled on the checklist provided by NWCCCU.

Concern, Standard 2.D.2: There need to be more trainings, drills, and reference materials or websites available to all faculty, staff, and students, so that they know what to do should an emergency occur on or around EOU.

2.D.3. According to the Self-evaluation Report and supporting materials and to interviews that evaluators conducted with staff and students, the admissions office strives to recruit students who can be successful while at EOU. All students are admitted under the same expectations and qualifications. No privileges are offered to potential athletes or transfer students. Students are informed in a timely manner of their acceptance and are given information about orientation, degrees, advising, and

housing. Students are aware of the services available to them, even though, many do not use all the services. They do know when they should graduate and what they need to do to be a part of graduation.

2.D.4. Evidence shows the information provided to the evaluation committee in the Self-evaluation Report is correct. However, most faculty and some administrators are not aware of the process for eliminating a program because it has not been done in many years. Academic program reviews during the financial difficulties of 2011-2014 led to suspension of admissions to the MFA but not its elimination. Some minors were suspended, as well. Many on campus have not experienced an elimination of a program.

2.D.5. The required items for Standard 2.D.5 are all found on-line in the catalog. Students rely on advisors and Degree Works to make sure they are taking the correct classes and are on schedule for graduation. Students do have concerns that some courses are not offered more than once a year, which can make it impossible to graduate on time, e.g., if the class fills before the student registers or if a student gets an unsatisfactory grade in the first course of a sequence. Students are very active; they are involved in committees, clubs, and working on campus. Resources throughout the campus are available for students to know what their options are for employment and advancement.

2.D.6. The only EOU programs leading to licensure are in the field of Education; EOU offers an MAT and an undergraduate pathway to licensure. The Education program information in the catalog does not discuss the fact that criminal history can disqualify an individual from being licensed as a teacher. However, that information is provided with the application instructions, and a criminal background check based on fingerprints is part of the application requirements.

2.D.7. EOU adheres to all standard policies and procedures regarding the secured retention of student records. FERPA is followed and addressed on the Registrar's Office website.

2.D.8. Evidence in the Self-evaluation Report and institutional websites indicates students are given sufficient information about financial aid. However, students who spoke with the evaluator do not feel they are aware of all scholarships available to them. The students thought that the scholarships are for first year students or the requirements to apply for the scholarship do not address continuing students. Students would like to see more scholarships available for all.

2.D.9. EOU informs their students about financial aid at several events throughout the year. They inform students who need to pay back financial aid given in the form of loans and will meet with the students one-on-one as needed. The University is aware of the rising loan default rate and is continuing to monitor the rise. They are working with their students to make sure they understand their responsibility when receiving financial aid and the importance of paying off their loans. The institution has also hired a financial aid counselor to educate future and current students about financial literacy.

2.D.10. Student advising has been developed on campus and at each of the off-campus regional centers. Advising is shared across campus, with both professional advisors and faculty providing advising. Students meet with their advisor one-on-one during their first year and then some choose to work through the plan on their own through their junior year. Once they approach their final year, they meet again with their advisor and go through Degree Works to make sure they are on track to graduate. There is a clear plan for each degree, published in the catalog and available through advisors, to help students stay on track to graduate.

Compliment: Advising for students on and off campus exceeds the expectations of the evaluators. The advisors are taking their responsibilities above and beyond. The system that has been established at EOU is strong and includes ongoing planning for improvement.

2.D.11. ASEOU, clubs, and the Director of Student Involvement are energetically bringing activities on campus. Most of the activities are for students, but they also reach out to faculty, staff, and the community. Students believe there are enough activities on campus and enjoy all the options available to them.

2.D.12. Auxiliary services at EOU support the institution's mission and the students who attend and live on campus. Residence Life has a philosophy of working on relationships with each student and not just programs. Much care is given to the staff and students in the Residence Life department. The University has a contract with Sodexo for their dining needs. They offer five different meal plans to attract not only the students living on campus, but non-residential students as well. EOU has a contract with Barnes & Noble for their bookstore. Students interviewed are pleased with this service. Faculty, staff, and students are involved in each area of the auxiliary services. Many get involved with activities and educational programs.

2.D.13. Students participating in co-curricular and athletic programs are treated equitably compared with other students. All students must meet the same admission and graduation requirements. Athletics program administrators and staff are following the rules of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics in their sports programs.

2.D.14. All students are required to have a student ID. Each student has a unique 9-digit ID number which is required for both on campus and distance learning students. Distance learning students also have a unique login for testing. IT staff interviewed were not aware of any work moving forward with Canvas by Instructure or any other platform to help with additional online identity verification.

Commendation: Eastern Oregon University faculty, staff, and administration are commended for remaining student centered, as exemplified by the successful efforts to improve student retention through improved advising and support services and to increase the diversity of the student body through new recruiting efforts and the establishment of the Multicultural Center.

2.E Library and Information Resources

2.E.1. Pierce Library provides services to the faculty and students of the university through the development of their own collection of print and electronic resources and through membership in two separate consortial agreements, the Orbis Cascade Alliance of 38 academic libraries and the SAGE library system of 10 multi-libraries in eastern Oregon. Through these agreements, faculty and students have access to an expansive number of books, periodicals, and electronic resources. Anecdotally, students expressed satisfaction with the library facility and the resources it provides.

EOU has been financially supportive of the library and ongoing collection development, even providing a recent budget increase during a financially difficult time for the university. The Pierce Library is a frequently used facility, and after undergoing a renovation in 2012, offers ample study space, computers, and collection space.

2.E.2. Pierce Library primarily relies on circulation and usage data to guide the ongoing curation and development of library holdings and access agreements for online database and journals. Statistics on occupancy and usage of the library's physical resources is gathered through the use of automated sensors. Reference usage statistics, whether in-person or online, is also collected and used to inform collection decisions.

Direct library user feedback, whether from faculty or students, is not currently collected in any systematic way. While Pierce Library staff employ methods such as social media to engage patrons, these are informal and sporadic in nature. In addition, it is unlikely that these methods are reaching a large number of the library's current users. It is also unclear how these interactions are being used to inform the activities of the library or how it influences library planning. In particular, these approaches are unlikely to reach faculty, a vital constituent population.

The Library is actively included in the development of new courses and programs, providing collection information as part of the Education Policy and Curriculum Committees' review of course proposals. Through a complex formula, the Pierce Library allocates its limited resources to collection development by discipline.

2.E.3. Library instruction is provided directly by Pierce librarians, as well as through integration with university courses, such as University Studies 101. Limited staffing, however, prevents the Library from providing more integrated instruction. Library courses are equally available in-person and online with one course, LIB 307, especially popular for online students. Library staff also provide support to faculty during course design and delivery, integrated into Canvas course templates. Reference support is available in-person and online.

2.E.4. As mentioned previously, Pierce Library collects extensive statistics on circulation and usage of online resources. In addition, people counters throughout the library provide data on physical usage of the library's rooms and resources. Direct user feedback, however, is currently only solicited through informal means and much of it is inferred through the use of other statistical measures. It is unclear how information is collected regarding the usage of library resources in the university's extensive online programs.

Pierce Library is an active participant in the multi academic library Orbis Cascade Alliance, providing EOU students and faculty with access to resources that would otherwise not be available to a regional university. The Library is dependent on the consortium for its integrated library system and consortial pricing agreements. The evidence shows that the library not only regularly evaluates this arrangement, but actively derives significant value for the university from it.

2.F Financial Resources

2.F.1. Eastern Oregon University provided evidence of financial stability. The Self-evaluation Report reported one recent year (FY14) when expenditures exceeded revenue.   Since then, EOU has aggressively established financial stability and has positive cash flow and a reserve policy to foster the sustainability of the institution.   The University has sufficient cash flow and reserves to support ongoing operations.   EOU noted that institutional reserves are being spent at a minimal level in FY19 in order to comply with Board of Trustees policy (range of 5-15%) of operating funds; otherwise the year would close slightly above the higher end of the range, according to projections.   Expenditures are prioritized

according EOU's strategic plan and Core Theme Objectives, which support of the institution's mission. These include, but are not limited to, increasing enrollment.

Through evidence provided in financial reporting that included audited financial statements, revenue and expenditure reports, and analysis of all funds, the University has maintained stability of financial resources. Projections are realistic, and address operating requirements. EOU is diligent in the analysis of revenues, expenditures, and over-all operations. Enrollments have been declining in recent years; however, EOU is aggressive in enrollment management, particularly in expanding online programming across the state. The institution is mindful of the need to consider the interrelationships of enrollment levels, tuition and fees, and state support, and this has resulted in a current strategy of keeping tuition increases as small as possible.

2.F.2. EOU has established a comprehensive resource planning and development methodology. As noted, enrollment levels have declined at the institution in recent years and the University is mindful of the relationship between enrollments and budgetary resources. EOU has developed conservative enrollment projections, consistent with recent actual performance. Enrollment projections are the primary variable in revenue projections, affecting both tuition and state funding, and the "trueing" up to match expenditures to projected revenue is done on the census date for state appropriations. The University has effective auxiliary units, which provide predictable resources in support of appropriate units (i.e., residence halls).

2.F.3. EOU has an established and well documented financial planning and budget development model, in place in its current form for about two years. Engagement across the institution from units/departments, deans, vice presidents, committee participation and through to the Board of Trustees is effective and inclusive. Annual budget development is initiated in late fall of each year through a process facilitated by Finance & Administration. Units prepare and submit budget requests through their respective Vice Presidents. Along the way, decisions are communicated to unit and department heads regarding recommendations. Budget submissions are connected through the request process to the Strategic Plan and Core Themes. The Budget & Finance Committee of EOU provides recommendations to the President, with final recommendations submitted to the EOU Board of Trustees. Upon final approval, budgets are communicated to departments and provided in a timely manner.

2.F.4. EOU utilizes Banner as the ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) Financial System. Banner adheres to generally accepted accounting principles (Governmental Accounting Standards Board, GASB) and, coupled with policies and appropriate workflow, ensures proper internal controls.

2.F.5. EOU has a comprehensive capital budget process, not only in development, but also incorporating periodic review. Capital budgets are connected with the Strategic Plan and Core Theme Objectives. Capital resources appropriately meet deferred maintenance and equipment requirements in support of student success and learning. Capital project requests, for new or renovated space, are submitted for consideration through the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), and if supported funding is provided through the State of Oregon. EOU does not issue debt for projects approved by the State of Oregon. However, auxiliary enterprise operations can incur debt, if necessary, with approval of the EOU Board of Trustees.

2.F.6. EOU has an effective separation of auxiliary enterprises and general operations. This was evidenced in all reporting of financial information. Budgets, expenditures, and projection models are

distinct for general operating and auxiliary funds. EOU has established separate reserve levels for general operating and auxiliary services.   These distinct reserves are reported to the Board of Trustees.

2.F.7. EOU has an annual external financial audit performed by a professionally qualified organization in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards.   Prior year audits were available for review and examination by the evaluators; the financial audit for the period ending June 30, 2018 was in process at the time of the site visit. The Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees receives the annual audit each year and approves it on behalf of the institution.

2.F.8. EOU has established processes and agreements that guide fundraising activities. The Vice President for University Advancement is the responsible party for administering fundraising activities at EOU.   Fundraising planning considers The Ascent 2029 strategic plan and Core Theme Objectives.

2.G Physical and Technological Infrastructure

Physical Infrastructure

2.G.1. EOU provided evidence that it complies with the requirements of Standard 2G. The EOU campus located in La Grande, Oregon is beautiful and reflects the surrounding environment.   The campus facilities are likewise beautiful and reflect the splendor of the locale and history of the university. The buildings promote an environment of student learning, community engagement, and culture. A combination of classrooms, laboratory space, athletics facility, and residential halls provide for a quality learning environments for faculty, staff and students. The campus library and student-learning center provide students and the community with access to resources and support to assist them in college studies and lifelong learning interests. Facilities are compliant with ADA and provide access to students with disabilities.

2.G.2. EOU has policies and practices in place to ensure that hazardous materials are handled effectively. Policies and procedures are understood and followed by faculty and facilities department staff. The science faculty and staff and maintenance personnel are the main users of hazardous materials. The campus has limited laboratories, predominantly used for instruction rather than research, so overall hazardous waste generation is small.

2.G.3. EOU develops and operates campus facilities consistent with its mission, strategic plan, Core Themes and institutional priorities. Planning of campus development has been quite comprehensive, with both regular master planning and recurring updates being completed in a systematic manner. Campus personnel are involved in the process and it reflects integration of input from campus and community constituencies. The EOU Campus Master Plan (CMP) was last updated in 2012 and was designed to provide a ten-year planning framework. The CMP addresses Core Theme Objectives, such as student and faculty retention, along with NWCCU standards, by providing for technology upgrades and a campus infrastructure that is environmentally and fiscally sustainable.

2.G.4. EOU manages its physical resources in a manner that ensures adequacy and availability for instruction and other student support functions. The University leverages its resources for equipment purchases and prioritizes infrastructure demand that may occur, particularly in utility needs.

Commendation: Eastern Oregon is commended for its master planning and the care of its facilities and grounds, which enhance the beauty of the campus and its harmony with the splendor of the institution's locale.

Technological Infrastructure

2.G.5. EOU's Information Technology department offers a comprehensive set of services that supports the educational and administrative operations of the university. The majority of the university's critical systems, including its enterprise resource planning system (Banner), learning management system (Canvas), communication systems (PBX), and collaboration systems (email, Google Drive) are cloud-hosted. Through a capital allocation, the university is building a new data center to address significant issues with the existing facility. Information Technology's future plans include a migration of most remaining on-premises systems to the cloud.

2.G.6. Technology support and training is primarily provided by the Information Technology department, although support for Canvas is shared with the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment. IT provides a comprehensive knowledgebase and as preparation for a major enterprise system upgrade, licensed additional online training materials. As a small department, however, training resources are limited. From anecdotal reports from staff and students, IT support is generally well regarded. Implementation of a formal and regular assessment of technology support should be considered by the university.

2.G.7. Information Technology governance is currently a work in progress. There is a user and governance group for their customer relationship management system and a Banner notification group. There is no formal data governance or comprehensive IT committee. There are no formal surveys or other assessments of information technology performance or service.

Concern, Standard 2.G.7: The evaluation committee is concerned that there are insufficient opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to participate in technology planning and assessment.

2.G.8. The university, led by the Information Technology department, has recently established a technology replacement cycle for academic computing and infrastructure. Classroom technology replacement is currently considered inadequate by the university, although an effort to establish a technology standard is in place and a pilot classroom is currently under renovation, with plans to renovate additional classrooms as the model is standardized. As noted previously, the university is investing in a new data center and planning to migrate additional campus systems to the cloud, addressing concerns about the continued adequacy of their infrastructure.

STANDARD THREE – PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

3.A Institutional Planning

3.A.1. The self-evaluation report did not provide much information about institutional planning during the first part of the accreditation cycle; it states that "institution level planning prior to 2015 was focused on shorter-term tactical responses to financial issues…" Since the evaluation team needs to

consider the entire accreditation cycle, the evaluator found earlier plans through the Institutional Effectiveness website, which compiles all institutional planning documents for the 2010-2018 period. "Positioning Eastern Oregon University for Mission Fulfillment and Financial Sustainability" was completed in June 2011 and widely distributed at that time. Although this plan mentioned broader national trends, such as new technologies and increasing demand for online courses and programs, it was largely focused on adjusting to a reduction in state appropriation revenue, from nearly $18M to $14M at the time the report was completed. The plan included substantial cuts to expenditures for administration and academic programs, along with moderate tuition increases and a projection of substantially increased enrollment. The latter has not been realized. The evaluator skimmed this plan and could not see many express linkages to the Core Themes and Objectives, except that the then-president Bob Davies stated these goals – which resemble the current Core Themes -- in a cover letter:

- Meet the needs of our students
- Meet the demands of our region—economically, culturally, socially
- Be financially viable over the long term

It's of course true that no institutional objectives could be attained unless EOU survived, so the 2011 plan focus on finances is understandable. However, the evaluator did not see evidence that this plan was part of a larger, ongoing institutional planning process.

President Davies followed up on this plan with a communication to his cabinet in 2012, which discussed areas of institutional focus in relation to the Core Themes and Objectives, and with a series of annual updates. In June 2014, with a new interim president and provost, there was an additional plan distributed, "Financial Sustainability Plan for Eastern Oregon University, from Retrenchment to Reinvestment." In the introduction, this plan was characterized as the third update to the 2011 sustainability plan. The introduction states that it is based in part on a wide range of input received since 2011, plus the need to address the ongoing challenge of falling enrollment and a projected negative fund balance at the end of that fiscal year, and that it is intended to further reduce expenditures, by about $4M, over the following three years, through such measures as reducing non-instructional faculty workload, eliminating concentrations within majors, eliminating a number of minors and a few majors (the latter was not implemented), and eliminating some faculty positions within continuing programs. While the focus of the plan was reducing expenditures, there were recommendations for strategic investments in areas including marketing, an early college program, and additional efforts toward student retention. Information within the Self-evaluation Report and in reports to the Oregon University System Board compiled at the Institutional Effectiveness website indicates that many of the changes recommended in this plan were implemented.

In 2015 the newly constituted EOU Board of Trustees and new president, Thomas Insko, recognized a need for long-term strategic planning. The initial step was development of a statement of Values and Principles, led by the University Council. This task was completed in April 2017, with the approval of the Values and Principles by the Board of Trustees. The EOU president then directed the development of a strategic plan, via a document titled "Strategic Planning Project Scope," which indicated that the mission statement should be the point of departure for planning, and that the plan should be aligned with the Core Themes. The process started with a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis, directed by the University Council and managed by the Strategic Planning Organizing Committee, that considered several sources of information and earlier planning reports. A series of draft strategic plans was produced, each receiving feedback from campus constituencies. The ultimate product, The Ascent 2029, described in the Self-evaluation Report as a "strategic framework" and "living document", was approved by the Board of Trustees at the May 2017 meeting. The six The Ascent 2029 goals have clear alignment with the EOU Core Themes, but are a bit more specific. The Ascent 2029 is intended to guide

EOU for the next decade. Annual planning efforts, which begin at the department or unit level and ultimately roll up to vice presidents, the president, and the Board of Trustees, will fill it out with more specific goals and actions and allow for adaptation as conditions change. There is an annual summary report of this process that is presented to the Board of Trustees.

The institution's description of this new planning process provides good evidence that it is ongoing, purposeful, systematic, integrated, and comprehensive. However, it is quite new, and institutional planning during the first part of the accreditation cycle was more reactive to urgent financial and enrollment challenges, and less comprehensive, integrated and systematic.

Concern, Standard 3.A.1. The evaluation committee suggests that EOU strives to strongly institutionalize its planning processes, so that the institution consistently engages in ongoing, purposeful, systematic, integrated, and comprehensive planning that leads to fulfillment of its mission.

While EOU plans will need to change over time, as internal and external conditions change, a solid framework of a planning processes should be able to survive and promote adaptation to such changes, as well as continuing uninterrupted through leadership changes. The new planning process appears appropriately structured, but needs broad understanding, support, and participation over time to become part of the institution's culture.

3.A.2. The Institutional Effectiveness website did not include very much information on how plans before 2015 were developed.   The 2011 and 2014 plans were written by senior executives, but text within them indicated that broad input from the campus community had been received and considered. Since the institution was facing urgent financial problems, both plans were prepared in a shorter time frame than would be usual for university planning. There was no documentation available to the evaluator that discussed how each of the institution's key constituencies (faculty, staff, students, and public in the region served) were engaged.

In contrast, it's clear from the evidence presented at the Institutional Effectiveness website and in the Self-evaluation Report that The Ascent 2029 planning process included systematic and broad opportunities for input. The University Council led the creation of the strategic planning framework. The University Council includes representatives from professional and classified staff, administration, Faculty Senate, and ASEOU. There was also a Strategic Planning Organizing Committee assigned to manage the process, which included the University Council Chair, a Faculty Senate Representative, the Budget & Planning Committee Chair, the Director of Institutional Research, the Accreditation Liaison Officer, and the Director of Academic Assessment & Faculty Development.   There was a broad survey soliciting open-ended input on institutional priorities and a public forum on the major goals to be included in the plan. There were six drafts of the plan, with substantive changes in each, particularly to the earliest versions. As stated in the evaluation of compliance with Standard 3.A.1, institutionalization of this planning process would help assure that future EOU planning is inclusive.

3.A.3. There was some evidence that data informed the development of the 2011 sustainability plan. There were revenue and expenditure data of course, along with consideration of enrollment trends, which were relatively favorable at that time. The Academic Program Review that informed the proposed reduction or elimination of some programs was based on data including program quality, productivity, cost and revenue. Similarly, the 2014 "Financial Sustainability Plan for Eastern Oregon University" drew from revenue and expenditure data, historical and projected enrollments, and some criteria for identifying programs or minors for reduction or elimination. Those appeared to be mainly

enrollments, graduates, and faculty FTE. However, in both cases the data used did not include the entire range of data that are the basis of the EOU definition of mission fulfillment.

The Ascent 2029 includes 31 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which include Indicators that EOU chose for Core Theme Objectives, although with substantially higher performance aspirations in some cases, along with a number of additional ones. The annual planning process involves each department or unit monitoring and reporting on unit KPIs (which are self-selected and not the same as The Ascent 2029 KPIs) for the major functions that unit has identified. For example, two of the Library's are "Maintain a library collection that supports the mission and goals of EOU" and "Provide access to the collection and other information sources". Each of the unit goals must be related to a The Ascent 2029 goal. Informed by current performance and other information and data, each unit identifies actions to improve performance.

3.A.4. There was no comprehensive strategic plan in force during this accreditation cycle until The Ascent 2029 approval by the Board of Trustees in May, 2017. Earlier, to direct the institution, EOU had the Core Themes and Objectives developed for the Year One and Year Three Reports, and the 2011 and 2014 financial plans. Although both of the latter were cognizant of the need to continue to fulfill the institution's mission, some of the priorities established therein were not expressly related to the Core Themes, Objectives, and Indicators, but rather to the need to expediently cut costs. Of course, that did relate directly to Core Theme Objective 3.3, "Systems and processes ensure a sustainable university environment," but that particular Objective was unavoidably taking precedence over the others.

Under the process that has been in place since 2017, units are expected to change internal resource allocation in order to implement improvements that will help progress toward department and ultimately institutional goals, as measured by the unit and institutional KPIs. Department/unit heads can request additional resources by submitting a "Scope Document" to the responsible Vice President that describes the need, the plan for improvement, and expected outcomes in terms of the KPIs. These are reviewed by the Vice President and some with highest priority are incorporated into the annual budget cycle.

The Budget & Planning Committee is charged with making recommendations concerning institutional budget allocations to the University Council, which provides recommendations to the Executive Cabinet. The Budget & Planning Committee is expected to review and analyze data on the institutional KPIs (which include the Core Theme Indicators) and to ensure that their recommendations are aligned with the EOU mission, Core Themes, Objectives, and The Ascent 2029.

The Executive Cabinet, based on Budget & Planning Committee input and their own review of performance in light of the Core Theme Objectives and the goals of The Ascent 2029, makes recommendations to the President, who in turn approves the final budget request that is submitted to the Board of Trustees. The institution presents sufficient evidence to show that it has articulated priorities in The Ascent 2029 and that this is currently guiding decisions on resource allocation and the application of institutional capacity.

3.A.5. EOU has a Security & Emergency Management Team that has been charged with creating a campus plan for security and crisis management and has taken some steps toward comprehensive emergency planning. In particular they assessed the security issues of each campus building, in collaboration with the La Grande Police Department, and recommended improvements. They also organized security training for the campus in 2016. EOU has a crisis communication plan. Staff members

told evaluators that Residence Life has plans in place for campus evacuation and contingency plans for the loss of individual residence halls. There is an emergency alert system that sends text, e-mail, and voice messages, and an emergency website that provides members of the campus community with general information on what to do in an emergency (dial 911) and some specific instructions relative to active shooter situations. While the focus on shooters is in line with tragic national events, most universities are planning for a wider range of emergencies, ranging from wildfire to bombs to contagion and beyond, and the evaluator did not find evidence of this broader planning.

EOU did engage an outside contractor in summer 2018 to help the institution develop a disaster recovery/continuity of operations plan. At the time of the site visit, there was a draft plan that appeared to be largely a template, with a number of sections that needed to be further developed. Four policies that require units to back up data, train employees, develop contingency plans, and test them were developed – they appear to have been recommended and drafted by the consultant – and are linked from the Year Seven Report. However, the evaluator could not find them on the EOU policy webpage; they are posted on a site for policies under review. None of those policies appeared to have been implemented as yet.

The evaluator asked faculty, staff, and students (about 30-40 individuals in total) about what emergency training they had received. Students said that there was some information on emergencies provided during orientation, but their memories of the specifics were vague as it was years ago. Staff and faculty indicated that there had been no required trainings, but that there was at least one voluntary training a couple of years ago on active shooter scenarios. The evaluator inquired about emergency drills and simulations, but no one was aware of those occurring, excepting fire drills for some buildings.

Recommendation, Standard 3.A.5: The evaluation committee recommends that Eastern Oregon University completes, widely disseminates, and fully implements the emergency preparedness and continuity and recovery of operations plans that it is in the process of developing.

3.B Core Theme Planning

3.B.1. General

The evaluators could not find much evidence of systematic planning relative to Core Themes before 2015; the Self-evaluation Report focuses on the post-2015 processes. There might well have been some Core Theme planning efforts, but there was little documentation of them available to evaluators.

Evidence indicates that EOU's Core Themes are consistent with EOU's Strategic Plan, TheAscent 2029. This is discussed in detail in the Self-evaluation Report, so here only a few illustrative examples are provided. Goal 2 of The Ascent 2029, Transformational Education – Enrich academic quality and enhance intellectual vitality, is closely aligned with Core Theme One, High Quality Education, and shares several Indicators, including achievement of University learning outcomes. Goal 3 of The Ascent 2029, Grow the Number of Lives Impacted – Expand student access, opportunity and completion, ties to Core Theme Two, Objective 2, Programs and processes promote student access. Goal 4 of The Ascent 2029, Thriving University – a Great Place to Work and Learn, ties to Core Theme Two, Access for all, and Core Theme Three, Objective 3, Systems and processes ensure a sustainable university environment.

The new Annual Planning process requires programs to assess themselves against their own goals and performance indicators, in relation to The Ascent 2029 goals and indicators and the institutional Core

Themes, Objectives, and Indicators. This is consistent with the intent of the standard, but this process only began in 2017. Also, in the opinion of the evaluator, the process would probably not lead to "selection of programs and services" by itself, since departments and units are unlikely to propose deselecting themselves. An evaluator was told that the Comprehensive Academic Program Self-study, to be produced every five years, could be a basis for deciding to reduce or eliminate an academic program. Academic program review for continuing programs has focused on student learning outcomes, but is moving to an emphasis on retention, completion, student/faculty ratio, capacity analysis, and efforts to streamline choices for students. The reports are reviewed by deans.

The evaluator did not hear about a comparable, comprehensive planning process that might guide reduction or elimination of support programs and services. Presumably Vice Presidents who receive a series of annual reports that fail to substantiate the value of the support program or service would take appropriate action, but that was not expressly stated in the Self-evaluation Report. Evaluators also wondered how all of the many department and unit plans would be coordinated to produce overall institutional improvement. The College deans will presumably accomplish that for the academic programs; various directors, associate vice presidents, and vice presidents would be doing that for the support units. Figure 3.A.11, the "EOU Pyramid", shows that strategic goal planning relative to The Ascent 2029 is the responsibility of a number of groups, including the Board of Trustees and President, the Cabinet, the Accreditation Steering Committee, Goal Teams, and the Budget & Planning Committee. There had been a layer of Core Theme Assessment, carried out by the three Core Theme Teams. That is now eliminated, however, to be replaced by the Budget & Planning Committee, which will assume this task in addition to existing workload.

Selection of programs and services also includes adding new ones, as necessary to support attainment of Core Theme Objectives and continuous improvement. During the evaluation team's visits, faculty and staff demonstrated a clear understanding that proposed new programs and hiring plans must refer to the Core Theme Objectives and discuss how they will help contribute to their achievement. The new Annual Planning process incorporates a planning calendar and requires submission of evidence-based proposals.

In summary, the current planning processes are clearly connected to the Core Themes and Objectives and to The Ascent 2029, as required by the Standard. Because of the short time they have been in place, it remains to be seen whether they can be sustained and effectively implemented to achieve institutional improvement.

Core Theme One

The Ascent 2029 and the Core Theme One Objectives are a very high level, of course, and most planning for delivering High Quality Programs would occur at the level of departments and colleges and would involve many small adjustments along with, perhaps, a few larger changes such as new or substantially redesigned academic programs. The new planning process should document this well, but it has not been in place long enough to result in much change.

The evaluator could not find much evidence of systematic planning relative to High Quality Programs before 2015; the Self-evaluation Report focuses on the post-2015 processes. The main exception to that is the archived set of student learning outcomes assessment reports compiled on the Institutional Effectiveness website. There, some program improvements were suggested, based on the assessment data. These were mostly quite modest in scale, e.g., adding additional learning activities to the assessed

course, or at a medium level, e.g., adding a faculty position to broaden course offerings. There was no documentation of whether most of the proposed changes were made. The more recent assessments of general education and university learning outcomes likewise proposed a number of small to moderate improvements. Going forward, it will be important to document implementation of changes based on the assessments, and to make and document subsequent assessments to determine whether changes had the desired effect.

As far as the evaluator could ascertain, the main changes to academic programs that have occurred during this accreditation cycle were the elimination of concentrations within majors, an efficiency measure instituted based on the 2014 sustainability report. While certainly justifiable in the circumstances, this was not the result of regular or systematic Core Theme planning.

Core Theme Two

Evidence indicates that EOU's current planning in the retention, progression, and completion area has led to allocation of resources and capacity, such as funding for the Learning/Writing Centers, math tutoring, and facilitation of transfers via the Advising Center and Office of Admissions. These are in alignment with Core Theme Two "Access for All", with meeting students where they are, and with EOU's strategic plan, The Ascent 2029, although the latter was completed after some of these changes and investments were made. Additionally, meetings, decisions, and actions taken to address shortfalls in 6-year graduation rates and percentage of underrepresented students indicate that EOU is undertaking planning and implementing additional changes. Additionally, external evaluation of regional needs for new programs has been incorporated into new program planning and evaluation processes, again indicating institutional support for fully implementing Core Theme Two: "Meeting students where they are," as well as Core Theme 3: "Live, Learn, Succeed" while serving as economic engine for eastern Oregon.

Regarding selection of programs and services, EOU has created centers (Writing Center, Learning Center, and the Math Lab) that support student learning, improve pass rates and thereby improve retention, progress, and graduation rates. The Centers' Web pages are well-formatted and easy to use. Evidence provided in meeting with Center Directors on October 30, 2018, shows that a substantial portion of the on-campus student body utilizes the Centers' resources. This resource allocation is consistent with Core Theme Two "Access for All." Course pass rates and retention and graduation statistics are measurable outcomes.

Evaluators note that while some of these student success initiatives and investments are new, their implementation preceded the current Annual Planning process. There was clearly effective planning occurring, but some of it seems to have been on an *ad hoc* basis.

Core Theme Three

Core Theme Three focuses on the EOU commitment to serve as the educational, cultural, and economic engine for Eastern Oregon. The Objectives are consistent with this priority. Evidence exists that the university is aligning its planning efforts to ensure emphasis is placed on meeting the Objectives of Core Theme Three. In particular, the university is using its shared governance processes (particularly University Council and the Budget & Planning Committee) to require that every division head's funding requests indicate which Core Theme and Objective will be advanced through the proposed hire or initiative. The Academic Futures Group looks at potential new programs, using data for employment

opportunities based on regional data. Consideration of new programs requires an extensive cash flow analysis, consistent with the Core Theme Three emphasis on sustainability.

3.B.2. General

The comments under 3.B.1. apply here as well. There is not much available evidence concerning selection of components of programs and services based on a systematic, regular planning process before 2015. It appears likely that the new Annual Planning process will accomplish this, but it is too new for there to be much evidence that it is working as intended.

The newly established process of Annual Planning appears to the evaluator to be more likely to be effective in guiding the selections of contributing elements of those programs and services. While units are likely to be unwilling to deselect themselves entirely, they (or the administrator one level above) might be willing to cut ineffective components in order to make the unit stronger.

Core Theme One

A number of components of academic programs, i.e., the concentrations, were eliminated, but as pointed out above this was not the result of Core Theme One Planning, but rather addressed the Core Theme Three Objective of financial stability on an *ad hoc* basis. The evaluator was not able to find evidence, yet, that regular and systematic Core Theme One planning has contributed to improvements in learning outcomes, student-faculty interactions, or high-impact learning experiences by selection of programs or components or improved alignment of their components.

Core Theme Two

There is more evidence of planning and new resource allocation surrounding Core Theme Two than for the other two Core Themes, although much of that planning occurred before the new Annual Planning process was established. The 2017-2018 Student Affairs annual report (filename: SA End of Year Report Full Report 2017_2018.pdf, provided internally to NWCCU reviewers but not available on the web), indicates that EOU Division of Student Affairs operates an extensive and effective set of administrative, outreach and support services that address Student Affairs' three primary objectives, which are to enable students to:
- Engage in the campus community and global world
- Thrive personally and academically,
- Succeed in reaching their academic and career aspirations.

However, the report only occasionally and briefly mentions EOU's Core Theme Objectives, indicating that EOU needs to do more document compliance with NWCCU Standard 3.B.2 within the new planning process. That is, more explicit and tangible connections should be made between unit objectives and the Core Theme Objectives in planning meetings and in subsequent planning documents. The evaluator could read between the lines and see that connections exist, but it's risky to leave those steps to evaluators.

Core Theme Three

The evaluator did not find examples of planning beyond what was mentioned under Standard 3.B.1.

3.B.3. General

Since evidence of systematic, regular Core Theme planning before 2015 is very limited, it is hard to say how data were analyzed and used in those processes. Core Theme Indicator data were, for the most part, collected, although there were gaps. Since 2015, the use of data in planning is clearer and will be described for each Core Theme below.

Core Theme One

A lot of relevant data are being collected, including student learning outcomes assessments, student participation in active and out-of-class learning experiences, and NSSE survey information on student-faculty interactions. The institution provided clear evidence in the Self-evaluation Report of how those data have been used to evaluate accomplishment of Core Theme Objectives. The Report also provides examples of how data have informed planning. However, some of the examples illustrate that the institution is still at a fairly early stage in accomplishing this. One of the examples was that General Education and Program Learning Outcomes were not being assessed consistently, so the change made was to assign an administrator to oversee the process, which improved compliance. However, some other examples have the potential to improve quality more directly, such as providing professional development opportunities for faculty teaching General Education Courses, or a redesign of the Economics capstone sequence. Overall it is clear that data are being used to plan for improvement, but there was not enough evidence available for the evaluator to conclude that this is a sustained, widespread, and ultimately effective process. In part that is because the current processes of University student learning outcomes assessment and General Education outcomes assessment have only been in place for a few years.

Core Theme Two

EOU is collecting a substantial amount of data relative to Core Theme Two Indicators. Collected data indicate that in some areas the desired thresholds are being met and in others, not met. An example of data collection is records of student utilization of EOU's Learning and Writing Centers and Math Lab services, where overall course pass rates are obtained and compared for Center utilizers vs. non-utilizers. The EOU First Year Experience (FYE) course, Financial Aid Office and Multicultural Center all operate counseling and workshops for students to improve financial literacy. The EOU FYE course also includes time management instruction, so the combined effects should improve EOU student financial choices and course efficiency, with a desired result being that they need not work as many hours and will make better use of their time, thereby improving retention, progression, and completion. The collected, appropriately defined data are being used evaluate achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of the support programs.

Core Theme Three

Institutional Research has dedicated a great deal of effort to providing more easily accessed data for planning and Core Theme assessment. An example of program innovation tied to regional needs and opportunities, as well as making use of planning data, is the new Emergency Medical Services Administration program, which builds on existing university strengths in Fire Services Administration along with identified regional needs in Emergency Medical Technician administration. Planning for this degree made use of a new Program Niche Dashboard developed by Institutional Research. Enrollment in this program began at 9 students in FY 16 and has climbed to 16 in FY 17 and 19 in FY 18.

STANDARD FOUR – EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPROVEMENT

4.A Assessment

4.A.1. EOU provided clear evidence that it is collecting and analyzing meaningful, assessable, and verifiable data appropriate to the Indicators of achievement for Core Theme One. Some institution faculty expressed a concern, shared by some evaluators, that the NSSE questions concerning faculty student interaction, best-practice pedagogy, and preparation for a diverse and interconnected world are basic, and don't by themselves demonstrate a very high quality standard. However, NSSE does have the advantage of peer comparisons, and there is no readily available alternative. EOU continues to consider how to best assess the Objective "Effective Teaching Practices… " The other shortcoming relative to this Standard is that not all data have been consistently collected and analyzed for the entire eight-year period since the last comprehensive review. This issue includes student learning outcomes assessment data, which are discussed under Standard 4.A.3.

Information in the EOU Self-evaluation Report and at EOU institutional web pages shows that EOU is collecting data relevant to Core Theme Two Indicators, and is undertaking actions to improve student success and completion (summarized on page 171 of the Self-evaluation Report). EOU retention, progression, and completion efforts are driven by an outcomes-based State of Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) funding model, approved in April 2015 and put into place in 2016. Called the Student Success and Completion funding Model (SSCM), it establishes Mission Differentiation Funding, Activity-based Funding, and Completion Funding calculations for institutional funding. The document established a transition process from the prior funding system and provides for Two-Year, Six-Year and annual reviews of institutional performance under the new plan. This funding framework creates substantial incentives for EOU to improve student full-time attendance (Activity-based Funding) and retention, progression, and graduation rates (Completion Funding), which are reflected in Indicators for Core Theme Two and College-level Key Performance Indicators.

EOU is systematically collecting and analyzing meaningful, assessable and verifiable Core Theme Two Indicator data to address the HECC's SSCM model, including Year-to-Year Retention, SCH completed, and six-year graduation rate. EOU is also collecting data addressing the conditions that affect year-to-year retention and six-year graduation rates, such as student academic performance and the percentages of students working and needing financial aid. These additional measures allow investigation of the causes of student and institutional performance on the EOU Core Theme Two Indicators that tie back to the HECC's SSCM model.

The reasoning for the choice of thresholds to assess Core Theme Three is somewhat uneven, with some measures limited in their ability to capture achievement of the stated Objective. In the case of the faculty threshold for civic engagement, the threshold of >=95% clearly reflects the emphasis placed on this measure for tenure review. Currently no measure exists for staff contributions to this Objective. The measure for student civic engagement of >=45% seems to reflect the difficulty and limitations of collecting this data from service-learning and civic engagement-designated courses delivered on campus. This threshold, however, seems low given the centrality of the metric to mission fulfillment. EOU's institutional research staff, ACC, and the Core Theme Three Team indicated that they are working on better data collection mechanisms, such as through Handshake, and intend to incorporate staff measures of civic engagement not yet developed. The Self-evaluation Report explains that the university also monitors internships in the local community, along with co-curricular activities offered through

clubs and team sports. It is unclear the extent to which students taking courses online are participating in the civic engagement outcomes articulated in Core Theme 3.2. It is unclear what impact on learning outcomes this participation has for these students. Many of these students already are working adults involved in their local communities in some fashion, but it is unclear how their involvement in EOU education is strengthening this connection and benefitting them and their communities.

The Indicators 3.3.1 for Core Theme Objective 3.3 reflect those required in reporting to the HECC board. New program sustainability is examined for increases over the first three years, and ongoing programs participate in a new annual academic program review process.

In summary, EOU is now regularly collecting and analyzing data corresponding to the Core Theme Indicators, although data collection and analysis has not been absolutely regular and systematic throughout this accreditation cycle. A few Indicators might not be sufficiently meaningful as they are currently defined, but EOU is reexamining these. A majority of the Indicators are assessable and meaningful, and all collected data are verifiable.

Commendation: Eastern Oregon University is commended for elevating the performance of Institutional Research, which is producing enhanced data products and analyses and making them readily accessible to inform the process of improvement of programs and services.

4.A.2. As described below, there is evidence that EOU is evaluating programs and services that contribute directly to the Core Theme Indicators.   There has been some such evaluation during the whole review period, but until recently it was not as regular and systematic (or at least, not as regularly and systematically documented) as required for full compliance with the Standard. The Self-evaluation Report focuses on the past three years.

The evaluators found relatively little evidence of systematic and data informed evaluation of programs and services that are not directly related to a particular Core Theme Indicator before Academic Year 2016-17. The new Annual Planning process does encompass all EOU departments and units, and so this evidence should accumulate after another few years.

Core Theme One evaluation is being carried out, and faculty have a primary role in evaluating student learning outcomes, which comprise two of the Indicators, general learning outcomes and program learning outcomes. Faculty have also been engaged in review of assessment data for the other Core Theme One Indicators, as members of the Core Theme Team. Because the evaluation has been occurring for only several years in many cases, there are few instances in which there is evidence that the system of evaluation has been effective in improving performance, but that should become available soon if these processes are sustained.

EOU collects institutional and college-level Key Performance Indicator data to evaluate collective student and institutional attainment of Core Theme Two Indicators. EOU evaluates these data through institution-wide meetings such as the February 2015 retention workshop that addressed issues of concern, evaluating collected data and taking actions as a result of the evaluation. Results of meetings in terms of actions taken are organized into EOU's Accountability Matrix, which was linked from the Self-evaluation Report. Interviews conducted on October 30, 2018, indicate that at least three additional retention workshops have been held since 2015. Some actions taken or planned to improve student success are documented on page 171 of EOU's 2018 Year 7 Self-evaluation Report. Overall, evidence is available to show that EOU is operating an effective system of evaluation of its programs and services as

they relate to Core Theme Two. Workshops and meetings have been held, plans have been made and subsequent actions are taken to improve collective performance in areas where Indicator thresholds are not yet being met, specifically the six-year graduation rate and percentage diversity thresholds.

EOU has devoted considerable effort to evaluating its financial position throughout the period of review. That is one piece of evidence of ongoing evaluation relative to Core Theme Three Objectives.   Another example is that EOU has examined regional needs for additional academic programs, resulting in the establishment of the Emergency Medical Services Administration Program in 2015.

Recommendation, Standard 4.A.2: The evaluation committee recommends that Eastern Oregon University fully implements and sustains an effective system of evaluation of all of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered, to evaluate achievement of clearly identified program goals or intended outcomes and evaluate the impacts of program and service changes.

4.A.3. Student learning outcomes assessment has been conducted at some level throughout the review period, and faculty with teaching responsibilities are responsible for evaluating student achievement. However, assessment has had some gaps, most notably for General Education. General Education Learning Outcomes for Communication and for Critical Thinking have recently been assessed, once each since the new processes were put in place. However, there is a gap of several years in the middle of the review period when it appears that General Education learning outcomes were not being assessed; the GEC Assessment Plan schedule for this accreditation cycle, posted at the Institutional Effectiveness website, was mostly not implemented in its original version. General Education learning assessment needs to be sustained throughout the next accreditation cycle.

Assessment of Program Learning Outcomes now includes using capstone courses in the disciplines to deeply examine learning on a particular university learning goal during each year. The process is fairly recently implemented, with one cycle completed to assess critical thinking and a second cycle in process to assess civic engagement. The university examines how each discipline defines the focused outcome. A colloquium and CTL summit provide opportunities to present and discuss findings university-wide. Program Learning Outcomes Assessment Reports have been submitted quite consistently each year during this accreditation cycle (except for academic year 2014-15, when there was a hiatus for Academic Program Review), although the format and content of reports has changed somewhat over time.

The other gap, in terms of the ability of evaluators to view the results, was in recent assessment of content area learning for academic programs, since those data were not consistently collected or summarized centrally since the new system of academic program learning assessment has been implemented.   A central repository for all student learning outcomes assessment would be highly desirable for the next cycle. Content area student learning outcomes assessment appears to be uneven across programs, with some of the most developed efforts ongoing in business and education, which have specialized accreditation.   Education faculty have access to detailed assessment results via a password-enabled archiving site, meet to discuss assessment processes and findings in small committees and as a college, and submit annual reports to the state.

Concern, Standard 4.A.3. EOU should ensure, through an effective, regular, and comprehensive system of assessment of student achievement, that students who complete its courses, programs, and degrees achieve identified learning outcomes.

Student learning outcomes assessment is a subset of the assessment required under Standard 4.A.2., and so the Recommendation under that Standard encompasses it. The evaluation committee recognizes that there has been significant improvement in regular and comprehensive learning outcomes assessment, and documentation of that assessment, during the past several years, but this needs to be sustained throughout the next accreditation cycle.

4.A.4. Evidence of holistic assessment relative to the accomplishment of the Core Theme Objectives is not abundant. In most cases the Indicator data can't be disaggregated to look for correlations. A few examples might help to explain what the evaluator means. There is no way to relate NSSE data on student-faculty interaction with another Indicator, like graduation rate, to see if more faculty interaction improves graduation rate for subpopulations, like first-generation students. Student learning outcomes assessments don't draw in other information about students – for example, are learning outcomes different for those who have been strongly engaged in co-curricular activities? This sort of assessment is quite difficult, and would be particularly so for EOU since sample sizes would often be too small for meaningful analysis. It would obviously be a very daunting task to evaluate all of the potential correlations amongst programs and services, and evaluators don't think that is the intent of the standard. However, the idea is to look for and strengthen major alignments and integration between programs and services when those are beneficial.

As regards Core Theme Two, many EOU units (Admissions, Registrar, Advising, Learning Centers, and Financial Aid) are working together to address retention, progression, and completion issues, percentage diversity targets, and transfer yield rates. During interviews on October 30, 2018, EOU faculty and staff reported that EOU has held a total of four retention workshops in the past three years. Information collected is being presented in the workshops; the participants use the information to make recommendations for administrative changes, such as hiring a full-time administrative or classified staff for Learning Center front desk, so that 100% of student tutor time can be assigned to tutoring appointments. Regarding transfer students and their success, EOU has held across-university workshops and meetings to evaluate alignment, correlation and integration of programs and services, created plans and implemented plans regarding accomplishment of Core Theme Objectives. However, EOU's Division of Student Affairs' goals and division-wide objectives, as documented in the internal file "SA End of Year Report Full Report 2017_2018.pdf," while indirectly addressing Core Theme Two, need to demonstrate better integration with Core Theme Two's Objectives and Indicators. The write-up of Areas of Excellence makes only one mention of a direct tie to EOU's Core Themes, and there are only two direct staff assignments to EOU's Core Theme committees, one from Career Services and one from the English Writing Center for Core Theme One. The evaluator cites this example to make a more general point: Units have set their own goals and performance indicators, and the Annual Planning reports that evaluators saw (a small subsample) tended to focus a bit too much on those, and less on how the work of the unit contributes to the institutional Core Theme Objectives.

Information provided to evaluators in University Advancement and Budget & Planning Committee meetings on October 30, 2018, indicated that EOU budgeting and fundraising activities are not yet fully synchronized with the strategic plan or Core Themes. For budgeting, as noted in other areas of this evaluation report, the new Annual Planning process should accomplish that alignment, but has had limited effect so far. For Advancement, evaluators were told that closer integration with Mission and Core Themes would be part of a Phase 2 fundraising campaign over the next 5 years, and also part of the longer-term fundraising campaign associated with the Ascent 2029 Strategic Plan.

Under the new Annual Planning process, the primary mechanism for holistic review of Core Theme accomplishment takes place through the University Council and Budget & Planning Committee. The Academic Year 2018-19 cycle will be the first one that incorporates the new review structure, which requires division heads to submit budgetary proposals through the shared governance deliberations of the Budget & Planning Committee, together with reference and discussion of how the proposed initiative, program or hire will support specific Objectives of the Core Themes.

4.A.5. The current processes of planning, assessment, and improvement have not been in place long enough to enable the holistic assessment required by this Standard. The evaluator believes the Standard asks the institution to consider whether its overall set of processes for planning, assessment, improvement and allocation of resources and capacity have actually facilitated attainment of its Objectives, or at least progress in that direction. However, this is the first cycle during which EOU has been under the new accreditation standards, and for most of the cycle the assessment, planning, and resource allocation (or de-allocation) processes were largely *ad hoc*. Only in the past several years has EOU implemented the systematic processes that were envisioned when this Standard was established.

Concern, Standard 4.A.5. After the Annual Planning process has been in place for several more years, EOU should evaluate it in accordance with this Standard.

4.A.6. There is evidence that EOU has been reviewing its assessment processes in terms of whether they appraise authentic achievements, at least during the past two years. The summary table of Institutional Monitoring Metrics - multi-year trend that is linked from the EOU Institutional Effectiveness home page shows that EOU has been monitoring its Core Theme Indicators and The Ascent 2029 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). One ("Graduates engage in high impact practices") has been flagged for review on the grounds that performance consistently exceeds the target and is nearly 'perfect', so the Indicator is not particularly useful for improvement. Interviews with faculty and staff yielded the information that EOU has given thoughtful consideration to other Indicators for Core Theme One, i.e., whether to continue to use NSSE data as Indicators for Objective 2 and inclusion of a wider range of applied learning experiences in the Indicator for Objective 3. During interviews, staff and faculty indicated that EOU has evaluated assessment data to determine if additional information is needed to address Core Theme Two retention, progression, and completion Indicators. EOU determined in AY18 that the current assessment structure was requiring too much staff and faculty time and has moved the monitoring of Core Theme Indicators to designated administrative points of contact and the Accreditation Coordinating Committee (ACC). The ACC group is developing ways to add measures for Core Theme Three to represent employee satisfaction, and for student participation in civic engagement and preparedness for career placement. Currently the university has a student self-report survey that assesses participation internships and practicums. The university also is considering how to better represent the experience of online students in civic engagement.

The review of the Core Theme Indicators, KPIs, and other measures has not yet culminated in a decision to change the assessment approach. Also, consistent assessments and associated planning and improvement have not been sustained long enough to strongly demonstrate that the assessment results are meaningful and lead to broad improvement.

4.B Improvement

4.B.1. As pointed out already, the evaluators found evidence that the Indicators identified by EOU are meaningful, although some have weaknesses, such as being measures of inputs rather than outcomes.

However, all institutions need to weigh a variety of factors in choosing Indicators, including availability of data and peer benchmarks. There is also evidence that data are informing planning, decision making, and allocation of resources and capacity, but, particularly in terms of decision making and resource allocation, that evidence is limited and mainly from the past several years. Because the current processes of planning and assessment are newly implemented, there are few examples of performance improvement that can be linked directly to assessment-based planning, and these are mostly related to Core Theme Two (retention improvements) and Core Theme Three (improvements in financial stability). For Core Theme One, Student Learning Outcomes Assessment has not been consistent enough in the area of "closing the loop" to solidly demonstrate a substantial number of resulting improvements (see 4.B.2.)   No improvements were documented at the institutional level for "Effective teaching practices…" or "Applied learning experiences…"

An example of change that led to broad improvement was provided, for learning support services. Interviews conducted on October 30, 2018, indicate that EOU's regularly collected data can document collective student improvement in course pass rates for students who use Learning Center, Writing Center and Math Lab tutors compared to non-utilizers. Information has been collected for several years and shows that Center and Lab utilizers have higher pass rates compared to non-utilizers, indicating that there are ongoing student and institutional benefits to operating these centers. When such positive impacts of change are demonstrated through assessment, it can be strong evidence of the potential value of additional investment. Action Teams have been formed to implement additional changes based on collected data; additional, recent changes to improve retention include the Credit Recovery courses. Assessments of pass rates conducted by the Writing, Learning Centers and the Math Lab have been used to adjust tutoring staffing and pedagogy, as well as to organize and conduct institution-wide events such as Night Against Procrastination (NAP) that are well-received by students. Another proposal, not yet implemented, is for faculty stipends to perform transcript evaluations during winter and summer breaks, when admissions are continuing and transfer decisions need to be made.

A positive example of resource allocation for improvement is that Advancement plans to include Core Theme Two priorities and needs as part of its Phase 2 campaign through 2023, and also as part of its Ascent 2029 fund-raising campaign. The EOU Advancement Office is committed to raising funds for scholarships to assist retention, progression, and completion. However, there wasn't evidence of alignment of fundraising with Core Theme Objectives during the current period of review.

EOU has placed a great emphasis on retention initiatives focused on staff and faculty, as detailed in the Self-evaluation Report. This includes work on administrative structures and systems that foster trust, collaboration, and awareness of how each contribute together to a larger set of institutional priorities and values. One related change was the move to create separate colleges for sciences and for the arts & humanities. To facilitate trust, collaboration, and awareness, committee structures include representatives from each college, and from staff, faculty and students. Budgetary decision making has been made more transparent, with shared responsibility engaging the Budget & Planning Committee and University Council.

Assessment data are provided to faculty, staff, and administrators engaged in assessment, planning, and resource allocation. The Board of Trustees is given assessment information, such as the KPIs, and the President's Office publishes an annual report that, in its first 2017 edition, focused on the financial status of the institution. However, it would be difficult for students, prospective students, parents or others outside the institution to access most of the assessment data and analysis.   A determined individual could find a wide variety of assessment data and some analysis on the Institutional

Effectiveness website, and further analysis by reading the Year Seven Self-evaluation Report, which is also posted online. However, in the opinion of the evaluators the results have not been "made available" to all appropriate constituencies in an understandable and usable form. It is possible to access many of the assessments, but only if one knows they exist and where to look.

EOU is not yet able to provide evidence that it is in fully compliance with a portion of Standard 4.B.1 part b), "Results of core theme assessments are…*used for improvement by informing planning, decision making and allocation of resources and capacity…"* With the processes of planning and budget development that have been implemented over the past two years, EOU should be able to fully meet the Standard during the next budget cycle, provided these new processes are sustained.

Recommendation, Standard 4.B.1: The evaluation committee recommends that Eastern Oregon University improves core theme assessment and the utilization of assessment data, so that results of core theme assessments and results of assessments of programs and services are completed regularly throughout the accreditation cycle; consistently used for improvement by informing planning, decision making, and allocation of resources and capacity, for example, fundraising and budget planning; and made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner.

4.B.2. EOU did not provide sufficient evidence that it has used the results of assessment of student learning outcomes to inform planning and implementation of improvements that led to enhanced student learning. A significant gap in the evidence of compliance with this Standard is that there is little documentation of complete closure of the student learning outcomes assessment loop. As required by EOU reporting templates, program and general education assessments do each have a "closing the loop" statement.   However, an evaluator reviewed many of the Capstone assessments at the Institutional Effectiveness website and found that most of the "closing the loop" statements could be placed in one or more of five categories that aren't likely to produce improvement:

- All students met the learning outcomes at least at an "adequate" level, so no change is needed. (The evaluator suggests that even if 'adequate' is enough to meet the benchmark, wouldn't it be good to strive for 'proficient' for all students?)
- There were a few students that missed the mark, but they were exceptional in some way, so change is not needed.
- The assessment was flawed.
- The sample size was too small to draw any conclusions.
- There is an improvement in curriculum that the faculty could consider, but that consideration will occur later.

In part, this is symptomatic of assessment that is in an earlier stage of development; in many cases the assessment did actually need refinement and a single year sample size was too small. (The evaluator suggests that small enrollment programs aggregate data over several years). There was only a minority of cases in which the report indicated that a specific change for improvement had been implemented. Because the current program learning outcomes assessment process has been in place for only three years, and because there have been no repeated assessments in that time, another missing element is repeated assessment to show that implemented changes led to improvement. Although more time was available for the archived program and general education assessments from early in the review period, assessments of particular courses were often not repeated, and so the impact of improvements was not documented. To sum up, "closing the loop" has two elements that were not sufficiently demonstrated: implementation of change for improvement, and assessment of change to document that improvement occurred.

It is possible for anyone to access student learning outcomes assessment reports and a summary table of Core Theme Indicators and The Ascent 2029 KPIs at the Institutional Effectiveness website. The Year 7 Self-evaluation Report, with many pages concerning assessment, is also available there. However, it would be difficult for students, prospective students, parents or others outside the institution to access most of the assessment data and analysis. Some of it was not readily available even to the evaluators, i.e., some of the program learning outcomes data relative to discipline-specific learning. It is possible to access many of the assessments, but only if one knows where to look, and only if one can interpret information that is intended mainly for an internal audience. An approach used by some institutions is to have a very short summary linked to program web pages, where the expected learning outcomes are currently listed, with a further link to the long version of the assessment. The synopsis might be a few, very direct statements like: "92% of graduates 2014-2018 attained all of the intended learning outcomes," and "Since a small number of graduates did not participate in community engagement activities, we have added more options for them to gain this experience."

Concern, Standard 4.B.2: Eastern Oregon University should more consistently use the results of its assessment of student learning to inform academic and learning support planning and practices that lead to documented enhancement of student learning achievements. Results of student learning assessments should be made more readily accessible and understandable for external constituencies.

Student learning outcomes assessment is a subset of the assessment included in Standard 4.B.1, and so the Recommendation under that Standard encompasses it.

STANDARD FIVE – MISSION FULFILLMENT, ADAPTATION, AND SUSTAINABILITY

5.A Mission Fulfillment

5.A.1. As detailed under Standard 3.B. EOU has provided sufficient evidence that it has regularly and systematically assessed its accomplishments, both relative to Indicators for the Core Theme Objectives and the Key Performance Indicators for The Ascent 2029 goals, for the past two to three years. This assessment has been participatory, self-reflective, and evidence based. However, relative to this standard, there are some gaps in the evidence presented, particularly that there is less evidence of assessment before 2015. There was some assessment of student learning outcomes, compiled in an archive at the Institutional Effectiveness website, but there were also some gaps particularly in assessment of general education, during the earlier part of the cycle. Owing to financial challenges there was intense interest in financial data, and there was review of academic programs based partly on cost and productivity data and partly on other considerations. However, these assessments did not appear to be part of a regular and systematic assessment of accomplishments, but rather were *ad hoc* efforts to address urgent situations.

Currently, the annual planning process incorporates the requirement for each unit to assess itself against its own Key Performance Indicators for those functions that it has identified as central to its purpose, and the larger aggregations of units under each Vice President are likewise expected to assess performance on the relevant institutional KPIs and Indicators for Core Theme Objectives. Most of this assessment falls under the Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, but there are some Indicators – financial ones, in particular – that are the purview of the Vice President for Finance and

Administration and other Vice Presidents. This appears to be a satisfactory approach and implementation for systematic assessment, but it needs to be sustained longer to demonstrate full compliance with this standard.

One area in which some evaluators had unanswered questions is how assessment at the unit level (based on unit level indicators) contributes to assessment at the Vice President and institutional level, particularly for units that are not direct contributors to KPIs or Core Theme Indicators. The connection is clear enough for academic units, because many of their performance indicators are aggregated to yield institutional KPIs and Core Theme Indicators. However, the connection is less clear for certain support functions. For example, excellent IT and IT support are important in areas ranging from student recruiting and retention to employee satisfaction. However, an evaluator reported that there is no formal regular assessment (except the annual self-assessment) of Information Technology and there are few opportunities for constituent communication and input. Another example would be Athletics. There is a KPI for student participation in co-curricular activities, but as yet no systematic approach to demonstrating that these improve educational outcomes, enrollment, access, or other aspects of institutional performance that evaluators saw. These sorts of assessments are required by Standard 4.A.4. The evaluator does not want to leave the impression that these are the only two areas that need to be considered in holistic assessment, they are just examples. Ways to identify areas of focus for these sorts of assessments of support areas could be broad institutional impacts or total net cost.

5.A.2. EOU presented evidence that it is maintaining standards of quality and effectiveness in its Year Seven Self-evaluation Report, and also demonstrated that its definition of mission fulfillment was met. The Self-evaluation Report is available to anyone via the Institutional Effectiveness website, but some constituencies, such as students, parents, and the general public are not very likely to look at it, and self-evaluation reports in general are difficult for the average person to read and understand. A summary table of Core Theme Indicators and KPIs, for the entire cycle and including the Ascent 2029 targets, is available on the Institutional Effectiveness home page. Although the data would often be hard to understand without context, this is evidence that performance information is available to the public.

EOU has begun publishing an annual report, with the first appearing in November 2017, and this report is intended for the interested public. The initial edition presents The Ascent 2029 goals, but doesn't present or analyze current institutional performance data except financial data, which are provided with many pages of detail. Administrators told the evaluator that the subsequent annual reports would likely track progress toward The Ascent 2029 goals. That would be stronger evidence relative to the communication part of this standard.

5.B Adaptation and Sustainability

5.B.1. There is evidence that EOU was evaluating its resources and capacity during the first five years of this accreditation cycle, particularly the 2011 and 2014 sustainability plans. The assessments in those reports were spurred by financial data, and especially, declines in revenue. However, there is not much evidence that there was regular and systematic assessment of effectiveness of operations. The summary table on the Institutional Effectiveness website indicates that most of the Core Theme Indicators were being monitored, but there is little documentation of what was being done with the information.

Currently, EOU has demonstrated sufficient resources and capacity as well as mission fulfillment and achievement of the thresholds for most Core Theme Objectives. Policies have been established that guide targets for reserve funding to address fluctuations in funding and/or enrollments. EOU has

effectively managed resources to ensure resources are available, not only to support current campus operations, but also to make strategic investments to improve performance, particularly in increasing access and student success.   After a period of disinvestment, the university is beginning to address necessary investments in information technology infrastructure, a new data center, and migration to cloud-based services.

For the past two years, EOU has placed the mission, strategic plan, and Core Theme Objectives at the foundation of its resource allocation model.   The institution has developed a budget process that enables units and departments to document a commitment to the mission and request resources that support continuous improvement of programs and services. However, the process is very new and EOU has not completed a full cycle of reporting.   At the end of calendar year 2018, departments will submit their first status reports on resource allocations and goals and objective completion.

5.B.2. There is not much evidence of *regular* assessment of the cycle of planning, practices, resource allocation, application of institutional capacity, and assessment of results. There is evidence that the approaches used before 2015 were assessed and found to be unsatisfactory. Since the hire of President Insko, EOU has completely revamped its planning and resource allocation processes, and has added performance goals (via The Ascent 2029) that are considered in assessment. Although some adjustments were made to the Core Themes, Objectives, and Indicators since the Year One and Year Three reports, the substance of them was retained, and so they have provided a constant thread though a decade of change. The new processes appear to be likely to foster compliance with NWCCU standards. Before they were implemented, there were some significant gaps in systematic assessment, planning, and allocation of resources to achieve performance goals, so revamping the processes was warranted based on that background. However, it's now important to sustain these approaches long enough so that their effectiveness can be assessed, and to carry out such assessments regularly.

5.B.3. EOU presented evidence that it has assessed its internal and external environment. Examples of internal assessments have been described throughout this report, and include (but are not limited to) the analysis of revenues and expenditures, academic program productivity, and faculty capacity necessitated by sharp decreases in revenue; student learning outcomes assessments; the annual assessments based on Core Theme Indicators and KPIs; and the 5-year cycle of academic program self-studies.

EOU has also incorporated a variety of information and data concerning its external environment into its planning processes. One example is the SWOT analysis that occurred at the beginning of The Ascent 2029 planning process, which is posted in the Strategic Planning section of the Institutional Effectiveness website. The process of developing the document included an opportunity for broad input from the University community, and SWOT identified were both internal and external. The tabulation was extensive (totaling nine pages); some examples of identified threats were competition from other institutions for students and uncertainty in future State funding levels.   Opportunities included further development of an early college program (Eastern Promise), alignment of EOU programs with regional needs, and many others. Board of Trustees members and administrators that evaluators spoke with were all well aware of the SWOT and the need for EOU to adapt; The Ascent 2029 was developed to provide the framework for this.

Summary

EOU is notable for its focus on students and on meeting the higher education needs of its region. Evaluators were favorably impressed by the commitment of the Board of Trustees to the institution and its success, and by the current group of administrators, who likewise appear committed to EOU and who have made a substantial number of difficult but necessary changes to help assure its sustainability. EOU has weathered considerable stress during this accreditation cycle, including cuts in state funding, enrollment declines, dissolution of the Oregon University System and the subsequent transition to an independently governed institution, and rapid turnover of senior administrators. Understandably, this was disruptive to the systematic implementation of regular cycles of assessment, planning, resource allocation, and improvement. Over the past three years new processes have been developed and implemented, and there is now much better evidence that EOU is complying with NWCCU standards on assessment and planning. However, the new processes need to be carried on through the next accreditation cycle to fully demonstrate strong compliance with the standards.

Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations

Eastern Oregon University faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees are commended for accomplishing the successful transition to an independently governed institution that is increasingly responsive to the needs of the students and the region it serves.

Eastern Oregon University faculty, staff, and administration are commended for remaining student centered, as exemplified by the successful efforts to improve student retention through improved advising and support services and to increase the diversity of the student body through new recruiting efforts and the establishment of the Multicultural Center.

Eastern Oregon University is commended for its master planning and the care of its facilities and grounds, which enhance the beauty of the campus and its harmony with the splendor of the institution's locale.

Eastern Oregon University is commended for elevating the performance of Institutional Research, which is producing enhanced data products and analyses and making them readily accessible to inform the process of improvement of programs and services.

Eastern Oregon University is commended for its commitment to quality online education, including the advising and other services provided to online students through regional centers, and for evidence of good completion rates and attainment of student learning outcomes for online students.

Recommendations

Standard 1.A.2 The evaluation committee recommends that Eastern Oregon University further refines its definition of mission fulfillment in the context of its purpose, characteristics, and expectations and better articulates institutional accomplishments or outcomes that represent an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment.

Standard 3.A.5 The evaluation committee recommends that Eastern Oregon University completes, widely disseminates, and fully implements the emergency preparedness and continuity and recovery of operations plans that it is in the process of developing.

Standard 4.A.2 The evaluation committee recommends that Eastern Oregon University fully implements and sustains an effective system of evaluation of all of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered, to evaluate achievement of clearly identified program goals or intended outcomes and evaluate the impacts of program and service changes.

Standard 4.B.1 The evaluation committee recommends that Eastern Oregon University improves core theme assessment and the utilization of assessment data, so that results of core theme assessments and results of assessments of programs and services are completed regularly throughout the accreditation cycle; consistently used for improvement by informing planning, decision making, and allocation of resources and capacity, for example, fundraising and budget planning; and made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner.