Year Seven Peer-Evaluation Report

Washington State University

Pullman, Washington

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I.   Evaluators

Dr. Susan Henrichs (Chair)
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Mr. Ron C. Bramhall
Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
University of Oregon

Dr. Paula Gubrud-Howe
Special Assistant to the Dean & Associate Professor, School of Nursing
Oregon Health and Science University

Dr. Martha Bradley-Evans
Senior Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Undergraduate Studies
University of Utah

Dr. Daniel Bubb
Assistant Professor in Residence
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Mrs. Kate Peterson
Assistant Provost for Enrollment Management
Oregon State University

Dr. Lynn Baird
Dean, University of Idaho Libraries
University of Idaho

Ms. Debra Gerber
University Business Officer
Idaho State University

Dr. Mac Powell (NWCCU Liaison)
Senior Fellow
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

II.   Introduction and Recap of Recent Past Evaluations

Washington State University (WSU) is a Land Grant institution, founded in 1890, with a mission that includes outreach as well as education and research.   WSU is organized as "one university, geographically dispersed." It includes major instructional sites in Pullman, Spokane, Tri-Cities, Vancouver, and Everett; education, research, and outreach units in many other communities across the state of Washington; and the Global Campus, which delivers online programs. Altogether, WSU delivers more than 200 undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree programs to more than 30,000 students.

Since the Year Three report was completed, WSU has had a number of significant leadership transitions. In June, 2015 President Elson S. Floyd passed away. Provost Daniel J. Bernardo, who had been hired in 2014, became interim president and served in that role until June 2016, when Dr. Kirk Schulz became the 11th President of WSU. Since 2013 there are also three new Chancellors (Spokane, Tri-Cities, and Everett Campuses), seven new deans, and nine new vice presidents. In addition there have been some significant institutional changes, particularly the establishment of the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine, located in Spokane, which admitted its first class of students in fall 2017. In 2014 WSU North Puget Sound Everett (NPSE) assumed management of the Everett University Center and is offering an increasing number of programs at that campus.

> **Commendation:** The evaluation committee commends the Washington State University administration for rapidly building a reputation for transparency and inclusiveness in decision-making, and the administration, faculty, staff, and students for working together to maintain open communication.

WSU last received a comprehensive peer evaluation in 2009, and accreditation was reaffirmed in 2009 based on that report. WSU submitted a Year One *Mission and Core Themes* report in Spring, 2011, and a Year Three *Resources and Capacity* report in Spring 2013. In reaffirming WSU accreditation in July, 2013, the Commission requested that WSU address Recommendations 1 and 2 of the Year Three peer evaluation report in the Spring 2017 self-evaluation report. Subsequently the Commission rescheduled the Spring 2017 self-evaluation report and site visit to 2018.

Recommendations of the peer evaluators of the Spring 2013 report, which were addressed in the Spring 2017 comprehensive self-evaluation report, were:

1. The evaluation committee recommends that Washington State University's academic programs continue to strengthen collective faculty responsibility for fostering and assessing student achievement of learning outcomes and ensure that student learning outcome information from online programs and courses are consistently included in assessment processes (Standard 2.C.5.).

2. The evaluation committee recommends that the University incorporate student learning outcomes summary information into the evaluation of overall mission fulfillment (Standard 1.B.3.).

The Year Seven Report provided an extensive response to each of these recommendations.

Concerning Recommendation 1, WSU states that faculty are responsible for all aspects of student academic achievement, including identifying the desired student learning outcomes, curriculum design and approval, course delivery, and assessment of student learning at the course and program levels. In 2014 and 2016 the Faculty Senate updated the WSU executive policy on "Assessment of Student Learning in Degree Programs. Evaluator review of the revised policy confirms that it firmly places the responsibility for student learning outcomes assessment with the faculty of each academic program. Assessment reports, summarized in the Year Seven Report and reviewed by the evaluators, show that

these responsibilities are being fulfilled by faculty. As noted later in this evaluation, faculty participation is particularly robust in the assessment of the UCORE (general education) learning outcomes. Recommendation 1 included online programs. In 2014 the WSU Provost formed a task force, which reviewed assessment in online programs and developed or accessed resources and strategies for improving assessment. A summary in report Table 3, Recommendation1, shows that annual assessment reports are being collected from programs that offer online degrees, that several assessments related to general education are being done for online students, and that NSSE was administered to online as well as face-to-face students. Evaluator review of the WSU Summary of Annual Undergraduate Program Assessment Reports indicates that inclusion of online courses and students is still uneven, but improving. To quote from that report, "In 2017, some program-level assessment data about seniors was collected by all seven degrees offered fully online, including collecting data from a direct measure of student learning. While this shows improvement over 2016, continued attention is needed to ensure that online students and courses are included in meaningful assessment for all degrees offered online, in representative numbers, which will help resolve NWCCU recommendations. Pilot assessments will need to efficiently scale up; other degrees expanding online should build on effective assessment practices, with capacity to include online courses and students." The Year Seven report summarized several examples of robust assessment activities for online graduate programs. Review of the complete information on assessment available at the Graduate School website indicates that five of seven programs are conducting SLOA, one is a new program approved in 2016, and one was not conducting assessment when the 2017 summary was prepared. Overall it is clear that there has been considerable progress in learning outcomes assessment for both academic programs in general and for online programs, but that there is still room for additional improvement.

Concerning Recommendation 2, WSU includes two metrics related to student learning outcomes assessment for sub-goal 2.a., "Enhance student engagement and achievement in academics and co-curricular activities," under Core Theme 2: "16. Percent of undergraduate degrees with all six program assessments in place, including use of student learning assessment results in decision-making or planning," and "17. Percent of graduate degree programs using student learning assessment results in decision-making or planning." However, these are measures of process, not the student learning outcomes themselves. There is an outcome metric associated with sub-goal c., "Produce graduates who are highly sought by post-baccalaureate and post-graduate employers and graduate professional programs." That metric, "24. Alumni survey: percentage of graduates employed within one year in a job relevant to their degree," is likely somewhat related to student learning outcomes, but will also be affected by the student's major (and whether graduate or professional education is a likely next step), as well as the regional and national economy.   The evaluator does not see how the specific metrics chosen address Recommendation 2. On the other hand, the WSU response to Recommendation 2 does provide summary information on student learning outcomes based on UCORE CAPS (capstone course) reports, in addition to NSSE results and the process metric information. The UCORE CAPS figure is repeated in Chapter 5 in the discussion of mission fulfillment. That figure is a good example of what was intended by Recommendation 2, but addresses only UCORE learning outcomes. To fully address Recommendation 2, there should be additional summaries of student learning outcomes for degree programs. In addition, student learning outcomes (rather than the process of assessing student learning outcomes) should be included in the metrics under Core Theme 2.

III.   Assessment of the Self-Evaluation Report and Support Materials

The Washington State University Year Seven report was thorough and well-written, but very long, totaling nearly 400 pages. While it's expected that a large and complex institution like WSU will need many pages to summarize its self-study, nonetheless the document was daunting to the evaluators, as was the size and scope of the institution. While we have done our best, it was difficult for us to review all of

the material in the time frame available. For the future we suggest that NWCCU works with very large and geographically distributed institutions such as WSU to focus the self-study and site visit, e.g., on academic and student services programs, or to divide the work among the members of a larger evaluator committee, so that all of the larger campuses have site visitors and more in-depth attention than was possible for this evaluator committee.

The evaluator committee was not able to visit campuses other than Pullman due to time constraints. WSU brought the Chancellors of the other campuses to Pullman to meet with the evaluator committee, and several of the group meetings included individuals participating by videoconference from another campus. WSU made considerable efforts to engage the other campuses in the accreditation visit. WSU has a web site containing information about accreditation, including past reports and information about the site visit (accreditation.wsu.edu). Members of the WSU accreditation team also met with many groups, particularly during fall and spring semesters prior to the visit, including leadership at each campus; the regents; governance groups such as Faculty Senate, APAC (staff), AWSU (undergraduate) and GPSA (graduate); leadership groups such as president's cabinet, provost council, associate deans, chairs and directors, and others. A seminar was held for all sites in January via the human resources training series, and information also was shared through the Provost. Two additional system-wide presentations were held during the two weeks prior to the site visit. An invitation was sent to all faculty and staff for the open forums that were held during the site visit, with the sessions available via livestream on the experience.wsu.edu website. All of the information (including the livestream information) was posted on the accreditation.wsu.edu web site, and all faculty, staff and students were invited to attend the site visit events in person or virtually.

Like all institutions in this first accreditation cycle, WSU has needed to interpret the new accreditation standards and reporting requirements in light of its institutional mission and objectives. As has been the case with some other institutions, the WSU Year Seven report shows that it can be difficult to develop a practical definition of mission fulfillment (Standard 1.A.2.) and establish meaningful objectives and indicators of achievement (Standard 1.B.2.).   If these initial steps in the process are not entirely successful, then it is very challenging to write the Self-Study sections that address Standard 3, Standard 4 and Standard 5. WSU made a creditable effort, but as detailed in the following evaluation, the report did not solidly integrate planning, assessment, and improvement for all four core themes. There was not a specific definition of mission fulfillment in the Year 7 report, and that hampered assessment of mission fulfillment and related discussions of adaptation and sustainability.

The self-evaluation report content was verified and augmented by interviews with administrators, faculty, staff, students, and governing board members, by reviewing additional documents provided by WSU, and by examination of relevant institutional websites. All requests for meetings and additional information made by the NWCCU review team were promptly fulfilled. The evaluation team thanks WSU for facilitating our visit, and particularly thanks Dr. Erica Austin, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Accreditation Liaison Officer; Kristina Peterson-Wilson, Executive Assistant; and Angela Merrill, Principal Assistant. We also thank everyone who participated in preparing the documents that we were sent to review.

IV.   Eligibility Requirements

In its Year Seven Self-evaluation Report WSU provides sufficient evidence that it meets NWCCU eligibility requirements. The Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Title 28B.30 designates WSU as a state university in Pullman, WA, and RCW 28B.45.040, RCW 28B.30.050, and RCW 28B.45.030 authorize operation of its campuses. WSU is governed by a Board of Regents; Regents are appointed by the governor and approved by the Washington state senate. The WSU strategic plan was adopted by the

Board of Regents in 2014, and the WSU mission and core themes are included within that plan. WSU's programs and services are tightly focused on higher education, research, and community outreach and engagement, as is typical of Land Grant universities.

The Board of Regents appoints the WSU President. Article IV of the Board of Regents bylaws states that "The University President shall be the chief executive officer of the University and shall be responsible directly to the Board for the management and conduct of all the affairs of the University except those which by law, these Bylaws, or other policies or orders of the Board are the specific responsibility of other persons or bodies."

WSU has established policies and procedures that comply with state and federal nondiscrimination statutes, and publishes this nondiscrimination statement on its website: "Washington State University (WSU) is an equal opportunity employer committed to providing equal opportunity in education, employment, membership and contracts without regard to race, ethnicity, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, age, marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, use of a trained guide dog or service animal by a person with a disability, and/or status as a veteran. WSU is committed to creating and maintaining environments in which students, faculty, staff and visitors can work, study and recreate free from all forms of prohibited discrimination and discriminatory harassment."

As discussed in this evaluation report under **Standard 2.A.22.** through **2.A.26.**, WSU has established an array of policies and procedures to assure that its operations and relationships meet high ethical standards.

The WSU Board of Regents consists of ten members, nine of whom are appointed to six-year terms by the governor. One of the ten regents is a WSU student, also appointed by the governor, who serves a one-year term. RCW 28B.30.140 provides that no employee or member of the university board of regents shall be interested pecuniarily, either directly or indirectly, in any contract for any building or improvement at said university, or for the furnishing of supplies for the same, and RCW 42.52, Ethics in Public Service, regulates other conflicts of interest.

The WSU President serves as its full-time CEO. The President is not a member of the Board. In addition to the President, WSU employs the usual complement of qualified administrators, who have authority and responsibility in the areas specified by their titles, as further described under **Standard 2.A.9.**

As discussed under **Standard 2.B.4.** in this evaluation, WSU employs nearly 1900 well-qualified faculty; 79% of all instructional faculty hold a terminal degree. Faculty are evaluated annually (**Standard 2.B.6.).** WSU offers 95 baccalaureate majors, 65 master's programs, 42 doctoral programs, and three professional doctorates. Student learning outcomes and curricula for programs are developed by faculty teaching in the relevant subject area(s). WSU requires completion of a general education curriculum (UCORE, or university common requirements) for baccalaureate degrees, which has the following learning outcomes: critical and creative thinking, quantitative reasoning, scientific literacy, information literacy, communication, diversity, and depth, breadth, and integration of learning (**Standard 2.C.10.).** As discussed under **Standard 2.E.** in this evaluation, WSU Libraries support all campuses through funding of WSU Pullman for central collections and strategic partnerships which is supplemented by local core collections at each non-Pullman campus. Instruction is provided by library faculty at each campus.

In its Self-evaluation Report and other materials available to evaluators, WSU demonstrates that it plans, designs and constructs physical facilities and technological infrastructure to serve functions that facilitate the accomplishment of core themes where required, and to meet the institution's central mission. As financial resources are secured, planning and execution of building renovations, updates, and capital renewal of existing facilities as well as new construction is largely keeping pace with institutional goals

and objectives, except that O&M funding has not fully met needs, as explained under **Standard 2.G.**

WSU publishes its policies on academic freedom in its "Faculty Manual." As indicated therein, WSU subscribes to the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, with 1970 Interpretive Comments of the American Association of University Professors with the 1987-1990 revisions. Student rights to free speech and assembly and the responsibilities associated with those rights are published in the "Student Standards and Accountability Handbook."

WSU publishes its admission standards and application procedures in its academic catalog and on websites implementing the application process. The evaluator verified that the online catalog includes grading policy; information on academic programs and courses; and the academic calendar. Each department listing in the catalog includes names of faculty, but not their academic credentials; in many cases those can be found at department websites. Tuition, fees, and other program costs for all campuses are published on a student financial services website, as are links to opportunities and requirements for financial aid. The refund policy ("tuition adjustment policy") is linked from the Registrar website, and can be found by searching "tuition refund." The rules and regulations for student conduct and rights and responsibilities of students are addressed to some extent in the catalog, particularly in an Appendix, "Academic Regulations", but in more detail at the website of the Office of Student Conduct. Many rules are enumerated under the Washington Administrative Code, Chapter 504-26 WAC, Standards of Conduct for Students.

As described in more detail under **Standard 2.F.** in this report, WSU provided evidence that it is financially stable. The Washington State Auditor's Office performs an annual accountability audit of WSU, and there have been no findings for the past fifteen years. As far as it is possible for the evaluation committee to ascertain, WSU has disclosed to the NWCCU all information required to carry out its evaluation and accreditation functions. Based on the observations of the evaluation committee, the institution accepts the standards and related policies of the Commission and is devoting appropriate effort to comply with these standards and policies.

As discussed under **Standard 2.C.** in this report, WSU clearly communicates student learning outcomes for degree and certificate programs and the UCORE via websites and via syllabi for courses. WSU has applied evaluation and planning procedures, assessed the extent to which it achieves its mission and core themes, and used the results of assessment to effect institutional improvement, although this remains an area for further development, as noted under **Standard 4.A.3.** As discussed in the section of this report addressing **Standard 5**, WSU provides evidence that it is monitoring its internal and external environments for changing circumstances that may impact the institution and its ability to ensure its sustainability. Through its Self-evaluation Report and other information and materials provided to the evaluation committee, WSU provided evidence that its enrollment, human and financial resources and institutional infrastructure are sufficient to fulfill its mission and achieve its core themes in the present and will be sufficient to do so in the foreseeable future.

V.   Responses to Questions Concerning Student Achievement Data

The evaluator committee notes that, relative to national averages, WSU graduation rates are fairly high, about 66% at six years for first-time full-time baccalaureate-seeking freshmen, and student loan cohort default rates are quite low, less than 4% in post-recession years. However, as WSU is striving to increase access for less advantaged students, the strong institutional focus on student success is appropriate.

1. *What are the key challenges of the institution related to the institution's graduation rate and other data provided?*
   - High financial need has been identified as a top indicator of students not progressing. Students who have $7000 and above in unmet need are most at risk. Also at risk are first generation students who are not Pell-grant eligible and may be loan averse.
   - WSU has a high number of first generation students enrolled.
   - Many WSU students are employed while attending.
   - Different WSU campuses have different student populations, which mean that student success efforts need to be tailored to each campus. Vancouver serves mostly transfer students, who often work full time. The Global Campus (online) serves more part-time, non-traditional students. Tri-Cities campus serves a non-traditional student population, 40% of its student body is persons of color, and many are employed.
   - There have been some issues with course availability, which slows student progress, at campuses other than Pullman.
   - There are high and uneven advising loads. Advising is via a decentralized model, with both professional staff and faculty advisors. There are loads of 200-500 students per advisor, with professional staff in centralized locations having higher loads.
   - Student mental health issues are on the rise without an increase in resources to address these.

2. *What is the institution doing to improve graduation rates?*
   - WSU established a transfer clearinghouse; having a one-stop shop for transfer students has improved communications and facilitated processes for students, parents, and advisors; 80% of WSU students have some credits to transfer.
   - WSU is providing targeted financial support, with award criteria based on need, with the objective of keeping students below the threshold of $7000 of unmet need.
   - Emergency loan funds and food (Food Pantry, "Cougs feeding Cougs" meals though Dining Services) are available.
   - Having multiple campuses allows conversations about fit for students. They are building awareness of the WSU system and recruit for students at different locations based on the student profile.
   - Midterm grades are posted and there are alerting systems to activate student support earlier in the term.
   - A predictive advisory system triggers advisor support for students who are likely to struggle.
   - WSU is providing norming communications. These state that "successful students" go to career fairs, use tutoring services when needed, attend class, etc.
   - New students are enrolled early in first year core courses to improve progression, and are enrolled for two semesters to decrease bottlenecks and course capacity problems
   - WSU provides a variety of specialized student support services, by demographic and subject matter.
   - Intercession short-courses are offered in order to improve credit accumulation.

3. *What initiatives appear to be effective in improving graduation rates?*
   - Some initiatives are relatively new, and impact on graduation rates can't yet be assessed, but there are data showing the following positive effects:
     - Two-semester enrollment increased fall to spring retention rates.
     - Students who take intercession courses more likely to graduate.
     - Grants for students with unmet need increased retention by 18%.
     - Preliminary data show that attendance increased and students were more satisfied in classes that used Open Education Resources (OERs). OERs are free and openly licensed educational materials that can be used for teaching, learning, research, and other purposes.

4. *What might accreditors do to assist institutions to improve graduation rates?*
   - There could be more focused requests from NWCCU for information. Accreditation reviews are extremely time-consuming. Information gathering and reporting for areas that are not critical or problematic diverts attention from important issues.
   - Evaluative measures that better measure success. The national data do not measure success, and don't fairly compare institutions with differing student profiles. For example, there are many students who are successful by their own definition, e.g., transferring to another institution to complete a degree not offered at their WSU campus, transferring to WSU from a community college, or completing in seven years rather than six, who are not captured by the commonly used graduation rate data. WSU would appreciate efforts to create comparative data that do not currently exist.
   - When an institution submits documentation for curricular changes, improve the speed of processing at the NWCCU level. Such changes have gone through long, bureaucratic processes at the local level and the pace inhibits the ability of institutions to be responsive to students and stakeholder needs. Nimbleness is important to demonstrate to industry partners that WSU is willing and committed to improvement
   - Expand the definition of credit hour, taking into consideration different instructional modalities.
   - NWCCU could serve as a clearinghouse for best practices and showcases.

   Commendation. The evaluation committee commends Washington State University for effective initiatives to improve student access and success, particularly that of underrepresented groups, through coordinated and collaborative efforts of Enrollment Management and Student Financial Services, Student Affairs, the Office of the Provost and the Academic Success and Career Center, and other units across the University. The Student Success Council is recognized for facilitating this work.

VI. Distance Education

The Self-evaluation Report contained limited information addressing the NWCCU Distance Education Policy, so that information was augmented using institutional websites and by information gathered during the site visit.

WSU manages online programs through its Global Campus, but in common with other WSU campuses, the Global Campus offers programs that are housed within WSU colleges and that are often delivered in face-to-face formats as well as online. Online baccalaureate degrees include Business Administration, Criminal Justice, Data Analytics, Economics, Hospitality Business Management, Human Development, Humanities, Integrated Strategic Communication, Psychology, and Social Sciences. Master's programs include Agriculture, Electric Power Engineering PSM, Engineering & Technology Management METM, MBA, Molecular Biosciences PSM, Software Engineering, Special Education, and Strategic Communication. These programs are all well within the mission of the institution. If they are not also offered as face-to-face programs (as many of them are), they are an adaptation of a face-to-face program for online delivery. Courses are usually taught by full-time faculty who also teach at a campus. Because of this integration with on-campus programs, the online programs are included in the planning and resource allocation processes of the institution, and indeed are emphasized in Core Theme 3, sub-goal 3. Colleges and departments exercise oversight of the distance education programs, and on-campus faculty usually design and implement the distance education programs. As discussed above in Section II of this report, in response to a Recommendation stemming from the WSU Spring 2013 Report, the university is incorporating distance students into student learning outcomes assessment for all programs that are

offered online, to assure that academic standards are maintained. However, assessment reports available to evaluators did not provide disaggregated information for online students, if the program was also available face-to-face. Recognizing that distinguishing distance students may be difficult, especially because some students may take online courses while also enrolling at a physical campus, evaluators encourage WSU to maintain records that will allow the information to be disaggregated.

The only distance education-related publication reviewed by the evaluator was the Global Campus website, but it was comprehensive and as far as the evaluator could tell, accurate. There is information on program goals and requirements for all programs, and links to the WSU catalog for additional information. There is also a link to the academic calendar. There is no listing of faculty, but faculty are listed by name (only) in the catalog. For additional faculty information, such as academic qualifications, students or prospective students would need to visit department websites.

Distance students have access to library services, as described in more detail under **Standard 2.E.** Student Services information is easily found on the Global Campus website. Every Global Campus undergraduate degree-seeking student is assigned a personal academic advisor, and the Global Campus also employs a career counselor. The WSU Financial Aid Office serves distance students.   If a laboratory is required for a class, students are sent lab kits.

The Carson College of Business contracts with Pearson to support delivery of online programs through the Global College. The contractor provides marketing, student support, market research and course design, but WSU provides academic content.

WSU uses LDAP or Lightweight Directory Access Protocol, which is an industry standard authentication program. To obtain the network ID and password that are necessary for access, students must agree to the WSU appropriate use policy, which among other provisions stipulates that passwords may not be shared and that the network may not be used to commit or facilitate academic dishonesty.   While a dishonest student might violate that policy, that could also occur in a face-to-face class. Many courses include proctored exams, and those require students to provide additional identification to a live proctor or online proctoring service. Students are provided with information about their privacy rights under FERPA.

VII.   Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations

Standard 1.A. Mission

1.A.1. The WSU mission statement is similar to those of many Land Grant institutions, encompassing research and scholarship, education, and engagement. It is widely published, for example, in the WSU Catalog, at a website presenting the institution's strategic plan, and at a web page linked from the "About" page. WSU strategic plan was adopted by the Board of Regents in 2014, and the WSU mission and core themes are included within that plan. Faculty, staff, and administrators were generally familiar with the 2014 Strategic Plan and the included vision, mission, and values statements.

1.A.2. The Year Seven Self-evaluation makes the following statement about mission fulfillment: "WSU distinguishes between strategic indicators for improvement in fulfilling its mission — those associated with the strategic plan — and a threshold below which it could be said that the institution is a risk of not fulfilling its mission. WSU operates, and has long operated, in an arena of performance improvement significantly above the bar for mission failure. The institution would be at risk of not fulfilling its mission if it were no longer defined as a research university, if graduation rates slipped below the national average, if evidence showed that the majority of students are not substantially achieving intended learning and outcomes, or if it were no longer able to serve the state of Washington."

The evaluator committee agrees that it is useful for institutions to distinguish between strategic goals and a sufficient level of mission fulfillment, but in our view this definition of mission fulfillment sets the bar too low, given that the standard is to define mission fulfillment in the context of the institution's "purpose, characteristics, and expectations." In particular, many students choose WSU not just because it is an accredited university that offers the degree program that they want to pursue, but because it is a major research university with the quality of faculty and academic programs that this status entails. Similarly, donors and corporate and agency funders of research have quite high expectations for their investments in WSU or certain specific academic and research programs. Finally, the state of Washington clearly has high expectations for institutional performance, and a significant decline in performance could jeopardize continuation of funding at the current level. So, a definition of mission fulfillment needs to be realistic in terms of external conditions and revenue trends, but also needs to be sufficiently ambitious to meet the expectations of the institution's various constituencies.

> **Concern, Standard 1.A.2.** For the next accreditation cycle WSU should define mission fulfillment in the context of the institution's purpose, characteristics, and expectations.

Standard 1.B. Core Themes

1.B.1. The WSU Core Themes derive directly from its mission statement and from the fact that it is a Land Grant institution and a public university. Collectively, these themes encompass the broad mission of WSU:

> Core Theme One: Exceptional Research, Innovation, and Creativity
> Core Theme Two: Transformative Student Experience
> Core Theme Three: Outreach and Engagement
> Core Theme Four: Institutional Effectiveness — Diversity, Integrity, and Openness

1.B.2. Each of the core themes has several associated goals, and a series of sub-goals (or objectives) that are specifically assessed with the selected metrics. The process of developing these was inclusive and systematic. Goals and sub-goals for each Core Theme were recommended and developed by the subcommittee on the Core Theme and sent to the Institutional Effectiveness Council steering committee. The goals were taken directly from the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan. The reliability and validity of the measures and their usefulness for peer comparisons was reviewed by members of Institutional Research. Annual reports on these assessments are sent to the Institutional Effectiveness Council for review.

The university has identified 57 metrics to assess the sub-goals. For the most part, the metrics align well with the sub-goals, which are quite specific (e.g., 1.a. Grow and diversify research funding or 2.b. Increase the size, diversity, and academic preparedness of the undergraduate and graduate student populations at all campuses.) However, it is less easy to see how the metrics could be used to assess achievement of the Goals, which are more general. Examples will be discussed under each Core Theme, below.

The focus of WSU assessment efforts is clearly on the sub-goals and the indicators of achievement chosen are assessable and verifiable. However, they are not all equally meaningful. The evaluator committee suggests that there are too many metrics, and they often measure inputs rather than outputs or achievements. For example, research expenditures, capital expenditures, enrollments, average freshman SAT score, and the like are not the ultimate objectives. Metrics like publications, citations, faculty awards, and graduates by demographic category are better indicators of achievement. It is often important for institutions to monitor the input measures, because they can give early indications of whether strategies are likely to be effective; e.g., freshman retention is often well-correlated with the

graduation rate of that cohort years later. However, for the summative Year 7 evaluation, a much smaller set of metrics focused on outcomes would be better.

> **Concern, Standard 1.B.2.** The sub-goals (or objectives) and the metrics (or indicators) chosen by WSU often concern resources or process rather than outcomes or achievements. Hence many of the indicators are not as meaningful as they might be.

Because there is not a definition of mission fulfillment that is clearly and directly related to the metrics, it is challenging to determine whether the metrics or indicators are meaningful with regard to mission fulfillment.

Drive to 25 (or D25), launched in 2017, is Washington State University's goal of becoming one of the nation's top 25 public research universities by 2030. D25 has only 11 metrics, which include a higher proportion of output or achievement metrics than the full set of 57:

- Federal research and development expenditures
- Faculty awards
- National Academy membership
- Citations to publications
- Total research and development expenditures
- Doctorates awarded
- Annual giving
- 6-year graduation rate
- Percentage of undergraduates involved in research, scholarship, and creative discovery
- Placement rate of graduates
- Percentage of diverse faculty, staff, and students

However, the 11 metrics mostly relate to Core Theme 1(six out of the eleven) and don't address Core Themes Three or Four to a substantial extent.

Core Theme One – Exceptional Research, Innovation, and Creativity

Core Theme One has three Goals, 1. Increase productivity in research, innovation, and creativity to address the Grand Challenges and opportunities of the future. 2. Further develop WSU's unique strengths and opportunities for research, innovation, and creativity based on its locations and land grant mandate to be responsive to the needs of Washington state. 3. Advance WSU's reach both nationally and internationally in existing and emerging areas of achievement. The Grand Challenges identified by WSU include Sustaining Health, Sustainable Resources, Opportunity and Equity, Smart Systems, and National Security. The stated goals are broad, and so it would be difficult to measure progress toward them. Recognizing that, WSU identified five sub-goals, which are more specific. Stated briefly, they are to increase extramural research funding, hire and retain high-quality research faculty, develop and sustain infrastructure, increase research in certain areas of excellence, and increase engagement of students and postdocs in research. WSU has chosen up to five indicators of achievement or metrics for each of the sub-goals. All of the metrics are assessable and verifiable.

However, the sub-goals and metrics are mostly not well suited to assessing whether the goals or the Core Theme are being achieved. Most of the sub-goals and many of the measures concern the starting point or the process of research, rather than its achievements. Grant awards, research expenditures, expenditures on academic infrastructure, square footage allocated to research per faculty member are examples of that. Measures of achievements in the metrics include numbers of publications, numbers of citations to publications, and faculty awards. The evaluator committee suggests that the objectives and indicators (or

sub-goals and metrics) focus on such outcomes. That will greatly reduce the number of metrics that need to appear in accreditation reports, as well as appropriately emphasizing achievements.

Core Theme Two – Transformative Student Experience

The Goals of Core Theme Two are: 1. Provide an excellent teaching and learning opportunity to a larger and more diverse student population. 2. Provide a university experience centered on student engagement, development and success, which prepares graduates to lead and excel in a diverse United States and global society. 3. Improve curricular and student support infrastructure to enhance access, educational quality and student success in a growing institution. Again WSU identified four, more specific sub-goals, with one to seven metrics for each.   The metrics are assessable and verifiable.

In this case the sub-goals are more clearly parts of the goals, and so are less about resources and process. However, many of the metrics still indicate resources and process rather than outcomes. For example, for sub-goal 2.a. Enhance student engagement and achievement in academics and co-curricular activities, process or resource oriented metrics include 16. Percent of undergraduate degrees with all six program assessments in place… 17. Percent of graduate degree programs using student learning assessment results in decision-making or planning. 20. Number of internship or practicum experiences. 21. Percentage of classrooms meeting benchmark quality standards. It is good for an institution to monitor all of these things, but it's not necessary to include all of them in accreditation reporting. Degree awards (metrics 18. and 19.) are more holistic indicators of achievement (especially if normed to program enrollments, with an appropriate time lag). The evaluation committee reiterates the point made in Recommendation 2 for the 2013 Report: "The evaluation committee recommends that the University incorporate student learning outcomes summary information into the evaluation of overall mission fulfillment." Student learning outcomes information is an indicator of achievement, whereas measures of whether the process of assessment is being carried out are not.

Core Theme Three – Outreach and Engagement

Core Theme Three has three goals: 1. Increase access to and breadth of WSU's research, scholarship, creative, academic, and extension programs throughout Washington and the world. 2. Expand and enhance WSU's engagement with institutions, communities, governments, and the private sector. 3. Increase WSU faculty, staff, and students' contributions to economic vitality educational outcomes, and quality of life at the local, state, and international levels. For many years, WSU has expanded its impact to 39 counties in Washington via Cooperative Extension and other outreach, through agricultural development in Africa and central Asia, and through a broad concept of student learning that values community based opportunities.

The sub-goals and a number of the metrics for 3.a. are appropriate to the broad range of ways research, scholarship, creative, and outreach activities at WSU impact the state and region and align with its mission.   The metrics include several that assess outcomes or impacts, for example, 30. Estimated annual economic impact of WSU activities. and 31. Number of start-up businesses from WSU research and outreach. However, there are also some that measure only inputs or process, like R&D expenditures from industry, or total annual expenditures in Extension.

Sub-goal 3.b. aligns with WSU's commitment to access by emphasizing the engagement and education of place-based, non-traditional, first-generation students. The broad concept of the Global Campus includes a commitment to enhancing the diversity of the student body in addition to an enhanced list of programmatic options. The metrics are mostly student enrollments by category and location. The evaluator team suggests that graduates and diversity of graduates, normed to enrollment, might be better measures of achievement than enrollments.

For sub-goal 3.c, contribute to economic security, stability, social justice and public policy, the metrics mainly concern inputs and process, for example, tracking involvement in advisory boards, total annual university operating capital and expenditures, and participation in service learning, courses, and total hours through the Center for Civic Engagement. A complement to evidence of student engagement would be the involvement of faculty in community based scholarship or pathway or pipeline programs throughout the region.

Sub-goal 3.d. is to increase WSU's global presence and impact worldwide include international student enrollment, and reflects the institutional investment in international recruiting systems to increase the number of international students. By the end of the next accreditation cycle it should be possible to measure international graduates.

Sub-goal 3.e is to improve WSU's reputation and the measures are key national and international rankings. Most of those are based in research performance and student characteristics and achievement, so this sub-goal does not really seem to fit within Theme 3.

Core Theme Four – Institutional Effectiveness – Diversity, Integrity, and Openness

Core Theme Four has three goals, 1. Create and sustain a university community that is diverse, inclusive, and equitable. 2. Cultivate a system-wide culture of organizational integrity, effectiveness, and openness that facilitates pursuit of the institution's academic aspirations. 3. Steward and diversify resources invested by students, the public, and private stakeholders in a responsible way to ensure economic viability of the institution.

There are six sub-goals for Core Theme Four, and these are mostly parts of the goals and so are clearly related to them. 4.e., concerning alignment of investments of resources with institutional priorities, seems unnecessary because the institution should address this under Standards 3 and 4. Metrics associated with sub-goal 4.f. concerning private revenue and endowment assets are again about resources rather than institutional achievements.

VIII. Resources and Capacity

Standard 2.A. Governance

2.A.1. The institutional response to this standard focused on administrative structure and the various councils of administrators. From that discussion it is clear that there are a number of ways in which administrators can have input on matters in which they have an interest. The report includes a description of the Faculty Senate, which has the usual roles of making recommendations on curricular and educational policies and other academic matters to the president. WSU has staff (Administrative Professional Advisory Council) and student governance groups that were not described in the report, except as a category ("Constituency Groups"). The evaluation committee had a scheduled meeting with ASWSU representatives but none attended. A meeting with the APAC leadership was reasonably well attended and included representatives at other campuses. The self-evaluation report describes faculty, staff, and student participation on ad hoc committees and task forces, and also describes a President's Student Advisory Board which is appointed by the President. The evaluation committee heard predominantly favorable input about the openness of the current administration to input from faculty and staff. A few concerns were expressed about the shift in focus of "Drive to 25" and the process by which that was decided, which was perceived as less inclusive than the strategic planning process that concluded in 2014. The evaluation team also received a communication from a group (the numbers represented are unknown) of off-campus faculty who felt that their input, although provided, was not being heeded.

2.A.2. WSU terms itself a system in this response, but it of course differs from systems like those in Montana or Alaska, where there is a statewide administration that governs all of the public universities. During the site visit, university officers emphasized to evaluation team members that WSU is a single university with a number of campuses rather than a system, pointing out for example that faculty from all campuses are usually organized into single departments, based on discipline, and degree programs are often delivered at several campuses. Regardless, the governance of WSU including all of its campuses appears to be clear enough. There is a single Board of Regents and president that have overall authority, and chancellors at each of the campuses except Pullman, where the President is the CEO. The Chancellors are appointed by and report directly to the President. Most policies, including academic policies, are common to all campuses, and some services are centralized for efficiency, including libraries, institutional research, legal services, and others. Executive Policy #29, most recently revised December 15, 2015, describes "Policies, Responsibilities, and Authorities for the Operation of Multi-Campus Academic Programs." In its response to this standard WSU acknowledges that the relationships among the campuses must evolve as they grow and change to better serve their regional communities and students.

2.A.3. The evaluation team found that WSU administrators were generally very familiar with accreditation standards and process. Dr. Erica Austin serves as Accreditation Liaison Officer and is described in the Self-evaluation Report as a "resource for the university to ensure compliance with Commission standards." There is a standing committee on Accreditation, Assessment, and Academic Program Review that meets every one to two weeks to coordinate these efforts. Its membership consists of WSU administrators whose responsibilities focus on accreditation and assessment: the Accreditation Liaison Officer and Vice Provost; the Assistant Vice Provost and Accreditation Project Manager; the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education; the Director of Assessment of Teaching and Learning; the Associate Dean, Graduate School Assessment; and the Executive Director of Institutional Research. WSU employs a government relations staff that monitors pending legislative actions for impacts to the university, including its accreditation, and confers as necessary with legislators, the governor's office, and state agency leadership.

2.A.4. The WSU board of regents consists of ten members, nine of whom are appointed to six-year terms by the governor. The tenth regent is a WSU student, also appointed by the governor, who serves a one-year term. State law (RCW 28B.30.140) provides that no employee or member of the university board of regents shall be interested pecuniarily, either directly or indirectly, in any contract for any building or improvement at said university, or for the furnishing of supplies for the same, and RCW 42.52, Ethics in Public Service, regulates other conflicts of interest. In addition, the Board adopted its own Conflict of Interest Policy in 2016, which is aligned with RCW 42.52. The authority and responsibilities of the Board are established in statute (RCW 28B.30).

2.A.5. The Board of Regents takes action as a committee of the whole, and only at regular or special meetings where a quorum of at least six members is present. In addition to the governing statues, the Board has established bylaws and has developed a Board of Regents Policy Manual. The Board has several subcommittees, but these are not authorized to act for the Board with one exception. The Executive and Governance Committee has delegated authority, via the Bylaws, to act for the Board only in emergency situations.

2.A.6. As noted above, in addition to the governing statues, the Board has established bylaws and has developed a Board of Regents Policy Manual. An evaluator committee member reviewed the Policy Manual, which describes the responsibilities of each of the Board subcommittees. Those include making recommendations (to the full Board) and providing governance oversight on specified categories of

policies. For example, the Research and Academic Affairs Committee is responsible for Academic Policy, and the Student Affairs and Student Life Committee is responsible for student policies.

2.A.7. As provided by Article IV of the Board of Regents' Bylaws, the Board appoints the WSU President, who is "the chief executive officer of the University and … responsible directly to the Board for the management and conduct of all the affairs of the University except those which by law, these Bylaws, or other policies or orders of the Board are the specific responsibility of other persons or bodies." The Board as a whole evaluates the President annually. Board members who met with evaluator committee representatives provided considerable detail on the process and were clearly engaged with it.

2.A.8. According to the Self-evaluation Report, the Board conducted a review of its effectiveness in 2016, but had not done so previously since 2011. Board members who met with evaluation committee representatives stated that the Board followed AGB recommendations for self-evaluation, and that the Board considered its own performance, among other matters, at its annual retreat.

2.A.9. WSU is led by a President and nine Vice Presidents, who are responsible for particular areas, as is typical of universities, including academic affairs (provost), international programs, academic outreach and innovation, student affairs, research, external affairs and government relations, business and finance, development, information technology, and marketing and communication. The provost is also executive vice president. In addition, the chief budget officer, the director of intercollegiate athletics, the director of internal audit, and the director of legal affairs and special counsel report to the President. The President and Vice Presidents are responsible for the entire university, comprising six campuses. In addition, each of the WSU campuses except Pullman and the Global Campus has a Chancellor, who is responsible for many aspects of local operations as well as community relations and development.   In evaluator committee discussions with WSU administrators, they described the system of leadership as effective, but not without some challenges. The 2016 revision of Executive Policy #29, which defines the roles of university administrators and specifies the responsibilities of Pullman-based and other administrators in local planning, faculty personnel issues, program management, and facilities management, is viewed as a significant improvement.

2.A.10. The full-time CEO of WSU is its president, Dr. Kirk H. Schulz. He has substantial experience as a university administrator, most recently as the President of Kansas State University. He is not a member of the Board of Regents.

2.A.11. WSU, as described above under **2.A.9.**, employs a substantial number of qualified senior administrators appropriate to the institution's size and scope. The evaluator committee met with nearly all of them in individual or group meetings. In addition, each of the eleven colleges is led by a dean, who reports to the provost, and the Libraries, Graduate School, and Honors College are also led by deans. At campuses headed by chancellors, there are vice chancellors for academic affairs and other campus administrators, which vary among the campuses. Academic departments are headed by chairs, who often have responsibilities across several of the campuses. Chairs are usually located at the Pullman campus, but not always. Academic, research, outreach, service, administrative, and other units are headed by directors. The Self-evaluation Report addresses coordination of administration under **Standards 2.A.1.** and **2.A.2.**   The University Council includes the vice presidents, chancellors and other presidential appointees, and the Provost Council includes the deans, vice chancellors, and other administrators reporting to the provost. The Chancellors each work with a Campus Council that includes the campus administrators who report to them. Deans typically also have councils of college administrators, including department chairs. Deans are responsible for working together with campus chancellors to promote the success of the parts of departments, programs, or schools that may be located at campuses other than Pullman. Although

this seems quite complicated, the evaluator committee heard few concerns from administrators about coordination of effort.

2.A.12. Evaluator committee members verified that the institution clearly communicates academic policies to students, faculty, staff and administrators via the WSU Catalog, policies on the Registrar's website, the faculty manual, the graduate school website, and through various orientations and workshops for those groups.

2.A.13. The libraries are both centralized and decentralized. WSU Pullman has a link to their library policies; WSU Tri-Cities provides some policy information; WSU Vancouver provides a link to policies; WSU Everett does not have an independent library and shares resources with the community college, while WSU Spokane partners with Eastern Washington University to offer students access to the Spokane Academic Library. These programs differ in their approach to address the distinct and different library needs of each campus.

2.A.14. Evaluator review of the Registrar's website found that the institution has a clearly stated transfer-of-credit policy that maintains institutional standards while facilitating student mobility between institutions. The institution is complimented for its innovative web-based tool, the "Transfer Clearinghouse" as a means of helping students articulate transfer courses.

2.A.15. The policies and procedures regarding student rights and responsibilities are readily available on the WSU website. Policies on discrimination, affirmative action, and disability services are published in the University's Executive Policy Manual, issued annually. The Standards of Conduct for Students is reviewed every three years. Broad involvement in the review and revision of the policies protects students as well as faculty and staff.

2.A.16. The admissions criteria and application process are clearly explained on the website, with the exception of the criteria for adults 25 years of age and older. The application process is explained, but the admissions decisions are subjective. Very few students apply through this process.

2.A.17. A detailed list of student organizations, fraternities and sororities, student media, and graduate/professional student co-curricular organizations is available on line. Detailed policies and procedures for the organizations and for use of university controlled facilities, as well as student conduct rules, are also available online and citations to state statutes are given when applicable.

2.A.18. Personnel policies are reviewed by the Office of Human Resources and the Office of Procedures, Records and Forms on a continuous basis. Revisions to position descriptions are requested and completed by the department head as job duties and requirements evolve. Several university departments track state and federal legislative, regulatory changes allowing HR and OEO to anticipate and plan for implementation of changes in advance of the effective dates. Key issues and reactions to policy changes are monitored and proactive measures may be taken to educate, facilitate and manage campus reactions. Campus climate surveys provide insights into areas for improvement in the equitable treatment of all members of the community. Diversity and inclusivity of the student body, faculty and staff is a top priority for WSU.

2.A.19. All staff are provided a position description which includes performance expectations, work conditions, and their rights. Faculty are given this information via their offer letters, including terms for promotion. The Faculty Manual and Provost's Guidelines cover these policies, as well as outlining termination proceedings, and is available online. All employees (except students) are given an annual performance evaluation. The current HR system does not provide a method for tracking compliance to

the required annual performance review. However, there is a new system scheduled for implementation that will provide this functionality.

2.A.20. The institution ensures the security and appropriate confidentiality of human resources records. The Business Policies and Procedures Manual (BPPM) has good documentation of each type of document, the responsible party for record keeping, and timelines to retain or to destroy, with applicable citations noted. HR records are stored in a "secure environment". All paper records are kept in locked cabinets in a locked room. Entry to the area is monitored at all times, and access is limited to HR personnel trained on confidentiality and safekeeping of HR records. Each HR employee signs a statement regarding appropriate use prior to being given access. Electronic records are on a restricted access shared drive on a dedicated server.

2.A.21. The WSU catalog is reviewed and revised at least annually to assure that it is accurate and up-to-date. The catalog includes "Schedules of Study" for each degree program that illustrate to students that degrees can be completed in a timely fashion. University Communications' marketing unit is responsible for ensuring that all areas of WSU represent themselves and their programs and services clearly, accurately, and consistently in accordance with WSU's mission. The evaluator committee did not find any significant inaccuracies as it reviewed WSU websites and other materials.

2.A.22. The Ethics in Public Service Act (RCW 42.52) extensively regulates the external dealings of the institution, as well as internal activities and individual conduct. WSU has additional policies, published in policy and procedure manuals, including the Business Policies and Procedures Manual (BPPM), Executive Policy Manual (EPM), and Faculty Manual, which further guide the management and operations of the institution. The evaluator committee did not hear of any concerns about institutional integrity during the site visit.

A search using the word "complaint" yielded an Office of the Provost website, "WSU Grievance Procedures" for undergraduate students, and a link to procedures for graduate students as well. The Office of Equal Opportunity was the third return. The Provost's Office Faculty Complaints and Recourse page was near the bottom of the second page of returns. "Grievance" returned the Provost's web pages for student and faculty complaints as the first and second links.   In all cases, those pages had clear and extensive information on where students and faculty could bring complaints of various kinds. Last year WSU assigned the Dean of Students office to maintain a record of student complaints.

It was less easy to find a staff grievance process using the search engine, except the process to file an OEO or Title IX complaint. The Office of the University Ombudsman was returned by a search for "staff grievance" and probably would be helpful. There was a very comprehensive table linked through the Human Resource Services home page, "Quick Reference Guide for Personnel and Student Concerns" and a document "Workplace Concern Resolution Process." However both of these were two clicks away from the home page under a link labeled "Policies and Resources," and so were not very easy to find. The Workplace Concern Resolution Process is clear and typical of that followed by many universities.

2.A.23. The Ethics in Public Service Act (RCW 42.52) regulates conflict of interest for both WSU Regents and employees. The Faculty Manual includes a Faculty Code of Professional Ethics, and the Executive Policy Manual includes several ethics policies.

2.A.24. An evaluator verified that policies concerning intellectual property are included in the Business Policies and Procedures Manual (BPPM, Section 35.00), Executive Policy Manual (EPM, EP27), Faculty Manual (Section IV, F. through I.), and Graduate [student] Policies and Procedures Manual (Chapter Eleven, C.).

2.A.25. A search of the WSU website for "accreditation" returned the Office of the Provost accreditation website, which includes an accreditation statement that complies with the standard. The WSU catalog also includes this statement.

2.A.26. The Business Policies and Procedures Manual regulates contractual agreements in general. These rules strictly limit the WSU employees who have contracting authority. WSU does not contract with external organizations to provide credit bearing courses or programs. The Carson College of Business contracts with Pearson to support delivery of online programs; the contractor provides marketing, student support, market research and course design, but WSU provides academic content.

2.A.27. The institution publishes and adheres to policies, approved by its governing board, regarding academic freedom. WSU publishes its policies on academic freedom in its "Faculty Manual." Student rights to free speech and assembly and the responsibilities associated with those rights are published in the "Student Standards and Accountability Handbook." The evaluator committee did not hear of any concerns about academic freedom at WSU.

2.A.28. The standards and requirements around the production of research, scholarship and creative activity are published in the Faculty Manual and have been adopted by the WSU Board of Regents. The Faculty Manual upholds academic freedom and is regularly reviewed by the Faculty Senate and the Board of Regents. The institution stands by the "Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure" of the AAUP. Graduate Student policy ensures an open environment for the presentation of research, and graduate student research reports, theses, and dissertations are made available through the WSU library or Proquest.

2.A.29. Objectivity of scholarship is perpetuated in the following ways that are fitting to both this standard and the mission of WSU, as articulated in the Self-evaluation Report. The Faculty Manual presents the expectation of objectivity in scholarship. The standard of performance is established in code, Section II, p.16. In addition, the Office of the Vice President for Research publishes policies related to research and ethics to promote integrity and objectivity.

2.A.30. The financial policies are well developed and are documented in state statute (RCW), the Business Policies and Procedures Manual (BPPM), and the Executive Policy Manual (EPM) and are easily accessible to all constituents. WSU has collected all of its important manuals on a single website linked to the Provost's Office site (https://provost.wsu.edu/manuals-and-forms/).

Standard 2.B. Human Resources

> **Commendation:** The evaluation committee commends Washington State University for fostering a strong esprit de corps among its students, alumni, faculty, and staff.

2.B.1. Although spending reductions have been implemented, faculty and staff are finding ways to work more efficiently. The general impression is that there are adequate levels of qualified staff with appropriate backgrounds to fulfill the university mission. It was noted that additional innovation could be accomplished with additional positions. Decisions regarding investments in faculty are based on a prioritization and reallocation process that was put into place by senior leadership.

> **Concern, Standard 2.B.1**. With the university's strategic reallocation of resources, a number of tenure-track faculty lines have not been filled, which will make it more difficult for the university to meet its ambitious goals, i.e., Drive to 25.

2.B.2. Human Resources Services (HRS) provides training on performance reviews and writing position descriptions. Annual performance evaluations are required, except for the approximately 200 employees subject to a collective bargaining agreement. See **2.A.19.** for more information.

2.B.3. Every two years WSU conducts an employee satisfaction survey used to identify areas for additional training or professional development offerings. The campus is very collaborative in providing professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, drawing from talents and expertise of current employees, hosting guest speakers, and facilitating conversations across campus units. Career development training is offered to staff who aspire to higher level positions. A formal faculty mentor program was established, with informal mentors available to staff. Members of the President's Cabinet may opt to work with an executive coach, paid by the President's Office. During the site visit evaluators heard some concerns that professional development opportunities may not be equally available to faculty and staff located outside of Pullman.

2.B.4. Although WSU's number of faculty is lower than some peer institutions, administrators report they are successful in attracting well qualified, excellent faculty. Overall, the number and quality of faculty supports fulfillment of the teaching and research mission. A campus-wide process for prioritizing reinvestments was begun recently. Hiring plans to balance enrollment created demands for instruction and staffing levels is in the public comments phase of development.

2.B.5. Distribution of workload between various duties is outlined in the tenured and tenure track faculty employee letter of offer. The development of the workload document is the responsibility of the college. Non-tenure track faculty workload is up to the employing department, and there is variation in duties and the number of courses taught. The Faculty Senate reviews workload issues and makes recommendations to university leadership on guidelines for workload.

2.B.6. WSU adopted a new comprehensive review process for faculty in 2017, with newly defined ratings for past performance. The change was completed through a joint process between the Office of the Provost and the Faculty Senate.

Standard 2.C. Education Resources

2.C.1. As asserted in the self-study, it was verified that WSU provides programs with appropriate content and rigor consistent with its mission. To maintain appropriate content and rigor, programs are peer-reviewed through an institutional program review process and through specialized accreditation processes where appropriate.

2.C.2. As asserted in the self-study, it was verified that expected course, program and degree learning outcomes are published in the WSU Catalog and on program websites. Course learning outcomes are required during course approval process and on every syllabus. This is supported by an annual reminder to faculty from Provost, an institutional policy on syllabi, and during review of courses by curriculum committees. Undergraduate and Graduate Degree Program Assessment Reports state that 100% of graduate and undergraduate programs have established learning outcomes. A review of an internal website verified that WSU has a robust system for collecting and archiving program learning outcomes.

2.C.3. An evaluator verified that WSU offers credit and degrees consistent with institutional policies and norms in higher education. These are reflected in the definition of the credit hour, course approval processes, general degree requirements and the WSU catalog. A credit definition is published in the Academic Regulations Appendix to the WSU catalog.

2.C.4. An evaluator verified through review of a subsampling of programs in the WSU Catalog that degree programs generally demonstrate coherent design with appropriate breadth, depth and sequencing of courses, and synthesis of learning. Coherence, breadth, depth, sequencing and synthesis of learning are ensured through robust faculty peer review and approval processes for programs.

2.C.5. It was verified through review of policies and procedures related to the curriculum that faculty play a major role in all aspects of curriculum design, approval, implementation, revision and assessment, as well as in the selection of new faculty.

Washington State University's programs align with their mission, and contain the appropriate content and rigor to ensure that the student learning outcomes are met. The university offers credit and degrees when students have achieved the required outcomes that are consistent with the institution's policies and degree requirements. The degree programs demonstrate coherent design with the appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing of courses, and synthesis of learning whose descriptions appear in the course catalog. The student learning outcomes in each department also appear on the department's website as required by university and accreditation policy. Faculty play a crucial role in the structure and processes, with clearly defined authority and responsibilities to ensure that students meet the expected learning outcomes at the course and program levels.

> **Commendation.** The evaluation committee commends Washington State University for assessment of student learning outcomes, especially the assessment of the learning outcomes of the UCORE general education requirements. The Office of Assessment of Teaching and Learning is recognized for its leadership in this work.

> **Concern, Standard 2.C.5.** It is unclear how programs and more broadly, the university, use student learning outcomes results for planning, decision-making, and allocation of resources and capacity, especially as they pertain to the core themes. There is considerable description of how programs assess student learning, but not enough analysis to clearly show that students are indeed attaining the learning outcomes.

2.C.6. Teaching faculty partner with the libraries to ensure that library and information resources are integrated into the learning process. From the inception of a course proposal (when the department certifies whether or not the library resources exist to support a new program and that is verified by the Senate Library Committee) to the introduction of information literacy as a learning goal of the UCORE foundation, faculty clearly demonstrate that library use and instruction are key elements of a student's education. Finally, the Graduate School has a policy that speaks directly to the need for research collections to support the learning process.

Individual interviews provided additional supporting evidence. A faculty member at WSU Vancouver offered that the teaching faculty are served by the library faculty but also voiced concerns that the budget situation might require reductions that would impact teaching. A faculty member at WSU Tri-Cities indicated satisfaction with library resources. Faculty members at WSU Pullman reported that they found the services and resources of the library supported their research and instruction needs. WSU Spokane offers library services through Spokane Academic Library and the website indicates librarian support for teaching is offered. As WSU Everett is served by a separate library, the Everett Community College Library, and this is a newer site, less evidence was available. The services to students from this library facility are more limited and WSU Pullman fulfills the library resource needs for this program. Because many of the programs are offered through the Global Campus, library programs have been developed to address distance library instruction and services.

2.C.7. It was verified through review of policies on the Registrar's website that credit for prior learning is granted only at the undergraduate level and limited to a maximum of 25% of credits needed for the

degree. Credit is granted upon recommendation of the faculty and requires appropriate testing. No assurances are made as to the number of credits to be awarded and credits are identified on the transcript.

2.C.8. It was verified through review of policies in the WSU Catalog and in graduate school policy that transfer credit is responsibility of the receiving institution, and that it is accepted according to the criteria set forth in the standard.

2.C.9. Washington State University's general education component of undergraduate programs (the University Common Requirements or UCORE) demonstrates an integrated course of study that helps students develop the breadth and depth of intellect to become more effective learners and to prepare them for a productive life of work, citizenship and personal fulfillment.

> **Compliment:** WSU is complimented for the clear articulation of learning goals for undergraduate education and a structure in UCORE, which reinforces those goals with a clear developmental pathway through General Education with a well-defined beginning and end. This conceptual and actual framework is strengthened and supported throughout descriptions, learning outcomes, review and approval processes, and issues at the center of each category of courses (i.e., Roots of Contemporary Issues).

2.C.10. The institution demonstrates that the general education components of its baccalaureate degree programs have identifiable and assessable learning outcomes that are stated in relation to the institution's mission and learning outcomes for those programs.

> **Compliment:** Washington State University is complimented for its clear structure of vision, assessment, and integration of General Education. The combination of the UCORE Handbook, the various websites related to General Education and its specific components, and assessment plans reiterate this consistent message, set of goals and vision. Assessment plans for learning outcomes are tied to approval processes, reviews and to the stated learning goals of the institution.

2.C.11. WSU does not offer applied associate degree or certificate programs of 30 semester units or more.

2.C.12. through 2.C.15. The graduate school section of the 2017 Washington State University Catalog and the Graduate School Website indicates graduate programs incorporate appropriate rigor and extend and enhance students' attainment of a higher level of competency. The Carnegie Research University -- Highest Research Activity (formerly known as Research I) status has a positive influence on contributing to the rigor and stature of graduate courses and programs. The focus on increasing the number of tenure track faculty with dedicated time committed for research and scholarship supports the delivery of high quality graduate programs. Graduate students indicate there is robust departmental support for graduate study and research. The Graduate School is well organized and supports Colleges and Department offering graduate degrees. Resources, process and procedure for graduate school requirements are clearly described in the 2017 Washington State University Catalog and Graduate School Website. The university offers many opportunities for assistantships and internships that provide financial assistance to graduate students.

2.C.16. Continuing Education and Noncredit Programs are consistent with the institution's stated goals around "access, engagement, leadership, and service," and extending knowledge, education and scholarship to non-traditional, place based and other students of the state, region, nation and world. They are organized under the expansive concept of the Global Campus, which seeks to engage students from where they are. These programs fall under the organizational framework of Academic Outreach and

Innovation, which expresses a core commitment of the institution. Online and other Global Campus programs align with institutional goals around access, public impact, and community engagement.

2.C.17. Academic Outreach and Innovation is described as the umbrella or "clearinghouse" organization for all online certificates, non-degree programs, and teaching endorsements, which are implemented through the Global Campus office. According to the Self-evaluation Report the content, delivery and rigor of these programs are overseen by their respective units to ensure they enhance the mission and goals of the institution through regular reporting structures.

2.C.18. The Office of Academic Outreach and Learning Outcomes oversees the granting of all CEU credit and assesses whether these courses fulfill the mission of the institution and subject the courses to regular review and learning outcomes assessment.

2.C.19. Records for courses which have been approved for CEUs are maintained by Professional Education including lists of students who have applied for and received CEUs through Professional Education. Subject, goals, objectives, and learning assessment for each course are included in these records and are regularly reviewed and used for improvement.

Standard 2.D. Student Support Resources

2.D.1. WSU has a comprehensive array of learning spaces and support services. A compelling student learning experience is central to the campus' work and the focus on student success is apparent in the design and execution of space, services, and assessments. This focus on the student experience applies to all the campus locations. However, the branch campuses continue to assess which services their specific student populations most need, which may not be as comprehensive as the main campus in Pullman. As the enrollment grows at each of these sites, attention is paid to prioritization of investments to ensure effective learning and student success.

2.D.2. The Pullman campus has a comprehensive safety plan, provides ongoing training and collaborates with local city and county police, fire and emergency response agencies. Extensive training and emergency response drills are conducted throughout the year. The branch campuses emergency plans are in various stages of development. Given the current climate and recent acts of violence in schools, it is prudent to develop comprehensive emergency response programs in collaboration with local public safety agencies in the communities of the branch campuses. Plans for continuity of operations are critical as well. WSU publishes an *Annual Security and Fire Report* on an institutional website (https://police.wsu.edu/documents/2017/10/2017- security-and-fire-report.pdf/ that addresses the requirements of the Clery Act.

2.D.3. In keeping with their Land Grant missions, WSU admits students that meet the state admissions requirements, as well as their institutional admissions criteria. Students who do not meet all the requirements may submit additional documentation regarding "special talents", which are considered in a holistic manner by a committee. The number of admits using the "special talents" process is minimal.
    Student academic and social preparedness are reviewed, with referrals made to student support services to provide early interventions and connections with academic and/or social services to ensure retention and completion. Engagement is done early and often. New student orientation has undergone revisions, based on student feedback, which contributed to a reduction in summer melt, increased yield. The average entering high school GPA has increased in recent years simultaneously with increased enrollment of under-represented populations, first generation students, domestic minorities, and low income students.

2.D.4. Policies regarding program elimination or significant change in degree requirements are clearly stated on the university catalog webpage and the Graduate School policies and procedures website.

2.D.5. WSU's website provides easy access to comprehensive information, including federally required consumer information. Content review is done on an ongoing basis to ensure it is current and accurate. The online catalog contains all of the information specified by this standard, except that only faculty names are listed in the catalog. Titles, degrees held, and conferring institutions for administrators and full-time faculty are not published in the catalog. Most of this information is available at department websites, but some units did not provide information on faculty degrees that the evaluator could find. WSU states that the last time degree information was collected and published centrally was 2010. They attempted to collect the information before the site visit but were not able to, due to incomplete faculty response. They do expect to have a complete set of information available by next academic year.

2.D.6. The information on licensure requirements is listed in the university catalog, the graduate school website as well as the individual department websites.

2.D.7. Current practices for securing and destroying records is thorough and prudent. Recent establishment of a data governance council to review appropriate data access and develop data analytics practices will allow for consistency across campus.

2.D.8. Financial aid information, application procedures and a list of the available programs is listed on the website. Hardcopies of the Consumer Information Handbook are also made available to prospective and current students. In addition to information made available to the public, there is collaboration across departments in the development and presentation of financial information that is targeted to specific student populations. Numerous workshops and online tutorials are provided by trained staff throughout the recruitment and enrollment cycles. A clear focus on student success is demonstrated by the many activities aimed at bridging the achievement gap for low income, first generation and at-risk populations by proactively identifying students and offering support services. WSU also has an impressive collaborative effort to retain students through combining financial aid offers with other support services such as the "Invest in Success" initiative and the "Financial Wellness Fair" event on the Spokane and Pullman campuses. Online estimators for cost of attendance by student level and campus, financial aid and scholarships assist families in planning for paying for college. The webpage is designed to make the process of applying for assistance welcoming, an important service given the rapid increase in first generation students. There are other programs to assist students throughout their academic career, for example, the Cougs Feeding Cougs program and the on campus food pantry are exemplary.

2.D.9. Repayment information is readily available to students, families and the campus community. In person loan counseling is provided, online tutorials and workshops. Data on levels of debt is provided to key stakeholders across campus and used in planning and execution of student interventions, and the distribution of scholarships in an effort to lower individual student's debt upon graduation. Student indebtedness is tied into the institutional effectiveness plan.

2.D.10. New students are required to attend orientation, at which they meet with an academic advisor and student services staff. Students are pre-registered for a series of UCORE classes, given their area of interest and test scores. The effectiveness of advising is evaluated annually, which has resulted in revisions to content and scheduling. After the first year, students are assigned an advisor based on their declared major. Overall satisfaction of academic advising is good, and the average number of advisees per advisor is at or below national standards in the majority of programs. Nursing in Spokane and Pullman appears to have the highest per advisor load and that may warrant investment to improve. Use of SSC Campus and myWSU is supportive of a more holistic approach to advising, and allows for early referrals and interventions.

2.D.11. WSU's classification as an "Engaged University" is indicative of the broad offerings of curricular and co-curricular opportunities. The majority of student organizations have self-governing boards to ensure the activities meet with WSU's policies and support the mission. A primary goal of the student success focus is to increase the level of student engagement. Discussions are underway to determine metrics and efficient methods of tracking student involvement.

2.D.12. The auxiliaries at WSU support the mission by fostering a "safe and rewarding student environment". Academic support services are provided in the 21 residence halls to include tutoring, guest speakers, and academic advising. Programs promoting personal growth and wellness are also provided. Sports competitions, cultural events and transportation services are held, enriching the student experience.

2.D.13. Admission criteria are applied to all students equally. Academic standards, degree requirements, and financial aid awards for athletes are held to NCAA and university standards. The university developed an educational program for students, staff/faculty, boosters, coaches and family members to establish expectations for working with and supporting student athletes. A student athlete handbook is online, along with power point presentations, social media, and email messages. A learning specialist is on the athletic department staff. A compliance group meets monthly to look at best practices across the PAC12 and perform ongoing assessment of WSU's education programming.

2.D.14. Industry best practices are used to verify the identity of online students. Exams are proctored and require students to provide additional identification. Students and instructors are required to sign WSU's appropriate use policy, and are provided with copy of the academic regulations.

Standard 2.E. Library and Information Resources

2.E.1. Washington State University is a premier research university. It has solid infrastructure to support its continuance in this role and the WSU Libraries are one of the select few research libraries to be invited to join the Association for Research Libraries. That said, the institution has dropped in its comparative rankings within ARL libraries, the result of declining or flat investments in library resources that are further reduced by high periodical price inflation. WSU Libraries has joined strategic cooperative programs with the Orbis Cascade Alliance, the Greater Western Library Alliance, and the Washington State Cooperative Library Project in order to complement WSU Libraries holdings. Satisfaction with library holdings was evidenced by comments from the faculty, students, administrators, and researchers in various meetings with the commission. There is speculation among faculty and librarians that the new medical school will require significant resources to be added in order to achieve accreditation.

Library services for each of the WSU campuses varies. Those with the longest history have more developed local library services. The Orbis Cascade Alliance, a consortium of 39 academic libraries in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, provides courier services to all but the most recent campus, WSU Everett. The creation of a drop site in Everett will be a decision made by the chancellor of that campus. Library services for WSU Vancouver, the oldest in the system, has the most robust in terms of staffing and collections. WSU Tri Cities has a single librarian and collections are acquired for local collections on demand. WSU Spokane is served by the Spokane Academic Library, a cooperative between WSU and Eastern Washington University libraries; this is the library that also serves the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine and the health services programs. The underpinning of extensive collections and electronic resources supports the intellectual resources demanded by these various programs.

> **Concern, Standard 2.E.1.** Washington State University is encouraged to explore avenues that would provide a consistent experience that ensures that all students, faculty, and staff have uniform access to library and information resources.

2.E.2. Library planning processes have been informed by the use of nationally standardized survey tools and local focus groups. WSU Libraries have demonstrated their ongoing commitment for seeking feedback from students and faculty in the development of their plans.

2.E.3. The WSU Pullman libraries have a well-developed program of instruction, informed by ongoing assessment, that provides scaffolded learning of research skills to improve the students' abilities to be efficient and effective in conducting research in their educational programs. This program is not being developed across all WSU campuses. WSU Vancouver has its own programs for library instruction and has a for-credit introduction to college course that includes library orientation. WSU Tri-Cities has a single librarian while WSU Spokane has a shared facility with librarians from WSU and Eastern Washington University. WSU Everett has the least access to library resources and services as the students and faculty use the Everett Community College Library and online access to WSU Pullman for library services. The Everett Community College is not an Orbis Cascade Alliance member; this means that there is no access to the augmented (over 12 million title) collections nor delivery services offered by this agreement.

> **Concern, Standard 2.E.3.** WSU Pullman libraries have been developing an instruction program based on research, implementation, assessment, and improvement that leads to a multi-tiered model of library instruction. The university is encouraged to explore how similar programs can be delivered to all WSU campuses.

2.E.4. The Libraries systematically review the use and costs of the resources they acquire and have a well-designed process for evaluating their serials and databases. Their systems team regularly and systematically evaluates security issues related to promoting access to resources anytime, anywhere.

Standard 2.F. Financial Resources

2.F.1. Of concern to the evaluator committee, and clearly of concern to the WSU administration as well, is the bond rating downgrade. On April 20, 2016, WSU's Moody's bond rating was reaffirmed as Aa2 with a negative outlook due to a decline in financial flexibility with debt and expense growth outpacing revenue and resource growth. On April 6, 2018, the Moody's bond rating was downgraded again to Aa3 with a stable outlook. While the downgrade exists, the investment is still considered to be Prime.

Several units were identified as having spending deficits, even though each unit is allowed to keep their respective reserves each year. Currently, WSU has developed specific unit plans to reduce the individual unit's deficit. In addition, WSU has implemented a decreased spending exercise to reserve 2.5% of the budget each year over the course of the next 3 years. This is referred to by many campus constituents as a three-year budget cut. This action is being taken to stabilize the institution's financial outlook and reverse the downgrade of the bond rating. Whether it is a budget cut or a reserve exercise, the financial stability of WSU is the goal.

2.F.2. The University is in transition in this area, which was ascertained by reviewing the policies and procedures utilized for resource planning, as well as the implementation of the Drive to 25 initiative. While the current process is well defined, of concern to the accreditation team, is the institution's correlation of budgetary "reward" or "reduction" for each unit's measured success, budgetary adjustments for changes in enrollment, and the funding needed for Drive to 25. The resource planning should support the strategic plans, not only of the University, but of the individual units.

2.F.3. The budget process was described as a top down and bottom up approach, with the top down being issuing of the budget to the units. The bottom up was the unit requesting funding each year by submission of a written request. This standard was addressed during interviews. The process was

described as being transparent and opportunities for participation were extended to faculty, staff, and students.

2.F.4. The University has recognized the need for timely financial information and has undertaken a purchase of a $30 million upgrade from a legacy to a modern enterprise system for Finance and Human Resources.

2. F.5. The capital planning process and timeline is well documented in the Board of Regents policy manual; a 10 year plan is approved by the Board of Regents on a regular schedule.

2.F.6. Each of the seven larger auxiliaries, Housing and Dining, Intercollegiate Athletics, Murrow Public Media, Washington State University Alumni Association, University Recreation, Transportation Services, and the Wilson Compton Union Building, have independent audits which detail use and support of general operation funds.

2. F.7. The institution has seven auxiliaries which have independent audits which are combined into the audit conducted by the Washington State Auditor's office. In addition, the Internal Audit team conducts compliance audits.

2. F.8. The Washington State University Foundation has a new Vice-President, who has been in the process of assessing the structure, activities, and plans of the Foundation to determine a strategic plan that aligns with the new University initiative of Drive to 25. The Foundation operates under a Memorandum of Understanding with WSU and complies with the WSUF Code of Ethics. An update to the MOU is under consideration.

Standard 2.G. Physical and Technological Infrastructure

2. G.1. The state support for operations and maintenance for buildings for has decreased, resulting in reduced staffing, increased workloads, and reduced frequency of support services such as cleaning frequency. In response, the institution developed a structured approach to assessing the maintenance, accessibility, safety, security, and sufficiency of the learning and working environments with respect to the physical facilities. The model is being used to identify and prioritize maintenance requirements.

2.G.2. The policies regarding hazardous and toxic materials are published on the website and in the Safety Policies and Procedures Manual (SPPM).

2.G.3. The institution's master plan for physical development on the Pullman campus is comprehensive and has been regularly updated. Each of the other campuses also have a master plan.

> **Commendation:** The evaluation committee commends Washington State University for planning to revitalize classrooms to serve today's learners. A notable result is The Spark, a state-of-the-art facility, which enables faculty to use innovative technology to help motivate students to engage deeply in learning.

2.G.4. Each campus has a procedure for the identification, planning, and allocation of funds for the purchase and replacement of equipment. In addition, each unit plans for and reserves funds for the purchase and replacement of equipment.

2.G.5. The institution has developed and implemented a comprehensive IT Governance and IT Strategic Roadmap which is consistent with the institution's mission. The Roadmap supports all campuses.

2.G.6. Training is coordinated by Human Resources Services, Academic Media Services and the Enterprise Systems team. The CougTech Help Desk provides support for all technology systems by a variety of delivery methods.

2.G.7. Several standing committees collaborate to develop the technological infrastructure. This is evidenced by the IT Strategic Roadmap.

2.G.8. The Information Technology Leadership Team meets to plan and update the technology infrastructure as evidenced by the IT Strategic Roadmap.

IX.   Planning and Implementation

Standard 3.A. Institutional Planning

3.A.1. and 3.A.2. The 2014-2019 Strategic Plan, which is the source of the Core Themes and Goals around which the Year 7 Self-evaluation Report was constructed, was the product of a process begun in 2012. Faculty interviewed by the evaluators stated that they are familiar with the goals and metrics of the plan, and they were able to describe an inclusive process used to develop them. A 29-member Strategic Planning Committee, which included faculty, staff, and administrators, reviewed the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan, identified areas that needed to be updated, and prepared a draft that was reviewed by numerous constituencies. A second draft was prepared and reviewed, and after further revision the final version was approved by the WSU Board of Regents. The Institutional Effectiveness Council originally identified 57 metrics, intended to yield better quality data to inform progress on the core themes and to ensure that program goals, university goals, and state needs were better aligned.

WSU publicly launched Drive to 25 (or D25) in 2017. This is Washington State University's goal of becoming one of the nation's top 25 public research universities by 2030 and is the University's highest strategic priority. The D25 website indicates that its objectives guide decisions about institutional goals, priorities, and financial investments affecting WSU's teaching, research, and service mission. Hence, this is an important driver for the allocation of resources and capacity, in addition to the Core Themes, goals, and sub-goals that were derived from the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan. D25 has only 11 metrics, which mostly relate to Core Theme 1(six out of the eleven) and don't address Core Themes Three or Four to a substantial extent:

- Federal research and development expenditures
- Faculty awards
- National Academy membership
- Citations to publications
- Total research and development expenditures
- Doctorates awarded
- Annual giving
- 6-year graduation rate
- Percentage of undergraduates involved in research, scholarship, and creative discovery
- Placement rate of graduates
- Percentage of diverse faculty, staff, and students

It is not entirely clear from the Self-evaluation Report what process or criteria were used to select those metrics, other than the statement that D25 was developed by senior executive leadership, and the relationship of the metrics to AAU selection criteria and to other data that are widely used for comparing institutions, e.g., by the Center for Measuring University Performance, Arizona State University.

Senior WSU leadership told evaluators that D25 arose out of a need to focus WSU efforts and resource allocation to a greater degree than the Strategic Plan does. D25 is intended to direct new investments in research and academic programs, toward two of the goals of the Strategic Plan: WSU will offer a transformative educational experience to undergraduate and graduate students, and WSU will accelerate the development of a preeminent research portfolio. According to WSU administrators, D25does not mean that activities in other areas will be curtailed, only that they will not be areas of new, major investments. According to WSU administration, the D25 refocusing of the Strategic Plan was not data informed in the sense of relying on detailed analysis of either the 57 metrics or the subset of 11. The eleven metrics selected for focus include eight that affect national rankings, where WSU currently lags the topmost tier of U.S. research universities, and the eliminating the difference between WSU performance and that of elite universities is the essence of D25.

In their meetings with various campus groups, evaluators heard substantial support for D25, but also concerns that the process of developing this plan was not very inclusive, since it mainly involved senior leadership; that D25 did not give enough attention to the Land Grant mission of WSU, and particularly the outreach and engagement aspects of that mission; and that the end goal is not realistic, since although WSU can improve its performance, the top-tier research universities are likely to do so as well, moving the bar upwards.

> **Concern, Standard 3.A.2. and 3.A.3.** It is unclear whether the development of D25 and the selection of the eleven associated metrics was carried out via a broad-based process that offered sufficient opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies. The "120-day study" had considerable input from researchers and appears to have influenced D25. It is unclear whether a systematic interpretation and analysis of assessment results from the original large group of metrics influenced the identification of the 11 priority metrics.

According to Self-evaluation Report Figure 3.A.1., University Planning System, the Vice Presidents, Chancellors, and Deans are expected to develop plans for their area or responsibility or campus, and deans are expected to develop plans for their colleges. These should address strategic plan goals, but may include others that are specific to the area or campus. The Self-evaluation Report included one example of such a plan, the ultimately successful effort to establish a College of Medicine. This was informed by data, e.g., on the availability of primary care in the state and the potential enrollments from pre-med students who were not admitted to the University of Washington Medical School, and included input from many stakeholder groups. However, it's not clear that this plan was spurred by the institutional strategic plan.

This section of the Self-evaluation Report did not discuss other planning efforts, but WSU websites provided information on strategic plans of campuses and academic units. In particular the Provost's Accreditation website discusses campus plans in the context of WSU Strategic Plan. As far as the evaluator could discern, only Vancouver and Everett have engaged in a formal, comprehensive strategic planning process. Vancouver's plan has five major goals, Research, Student Success, Growth, Equity and Diversity, and Community. These are related to the overarching WSU Strategic Plan, but differ in specifics that better align the Vancouver plan with its community and students. This is also true of the Everett plan, which was new in 2017. Tri-Cities has an Academic Master Plan, approved by the Board of Regents in 2016 following a planning process over the 2014-2015 period. It includes plans from enrollment management, student affairs, advancement and community engagement, and research units, and it likewise focuses on leveraging the Tri-Cities location while contributing to WSU goals. Individual colleges of the Spokane campus, e.g., Nursing, Medicine, Pharmacy, have also engaged in strategic planning.

Some colleges and other units, such as the Library, also have strategic plans which the evaluator found by a search of the WSU website. These cover different time periods, some of which precede the overall WSU plan, e.g., the 2013 College of Arts and Sciences plan. Few of these plans have a clear relationship to the current WSU strategic plan. This impression was reinforced by the response of some unit leaders to the question, "How is the unit's strategic plan aligned with the University's strategic plan?" They answered that they are "working on it."

Campus master planning has been carried out at each campus, except for the new Everett Campus. The most recent Vancouver campus Master Plan posted at the website is dated 2007. The 2012 Pullman campus master planning effort was broadly inclusive, as was the 2014 Spokane campus and the 2007 Vancouver campus planning. Based on timing none of these are related to the current WSU Strategic Plan, but the Pullman and Spokane plans were developed in the context of the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan.

3.A.3. The Self-evaluation Report gives a number of examples of new data collection, access, and analysis efforts. Further, there is considerable description of data and information related to progress toward attaining the sub-goals, which were provided during the site visit. However, there was minimal evidence of interpretation and analysis of the data has been used for continued planning and improvement. The Institutional Effectiveness Council and the steering committee of the IEC play key roles in guiding, monitoring, measuring and reporting on progress informed by the plan and the accomplishment of key institutional goals. In addition, the IEC approves recommendations from the university's Accreditation, Assessment, and Academic Program Review Committee (AAAC) and from IEC subcommittees for strategic planning implementation and institution-level accountability metrics, ensuring that data collection and reporting align. The Self-evaluation Report includes an illustration of the intended planning process (Figure 3.A.1.) that includes examples of data that are used in planning generally, and states that "WSU expects its plans to be evidence-based, and to anticipate or respond to University, state, and national trends." So, there are elements in place that should lead to data-informed planning, but there is not much evidence that this is occurring. There are just a few examples in the Report.

In **Section 3.A.3.**, the example of using data to make improvements to the faculty evaluation and development processes in certainly a good one, and relates to Core Theme One, sub-goal 1.b., but the example does not fully address the standard, "The institution's *comprehensive planning process* is informed by the collection of appropriately defined data…"

In Section **5.A.1.** of the Self-evaluation Report, it's noted that at the conclusion of the period covered by the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan, the provost issued a report summarizing the University's progress. That report was at a fairly high level, including about a dozen figures presenting data on research expenditures, enrollment, faculty numbers by rank, publications per faculty member, annual giving, and other metrics. Otherwise the Self-evaluation Report does not discuss how data informed the development of the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan. It states that the four Core Themes are a revision of four themes that had been part of a previous strategic plan (2008-2013), intended to make them broader and more reflective of what the university really is trying to accomplish with its students and other constituents.

> **Recommendation, Standard 3.A.3.** The evaluation committee recommends that Washington State University's comprehensive planning process is informed by the collection of appropriately defined data, which can be disaggregated to identify differences among campuses, learning modalities, and other subdivisions of this large and complex institution.

3.A.4. The Self-evaluation Report gives three categories of examples. First, there are expansions of program offerings at campuses or locations other than the Pullman campus, namely the Everett campus, satellite locations at Olympic College in Bremerton and Heritage College in Yakima, and almost

anywhere, via expansion of online programs through the Global Campus. These decisions connect to Core Theme Three, sub-goal 3.b., "Increase access to the WSU system for place-bound, nontraditional, first-generation, and other underserved and underrepresented students." Second, the consolidation of the Pharmacy program in Spokane and construction of a new facility there was described. The closest connection to the institution's plan is Theme One, sub-goal 1.d., "Build upon WSU's current and emerging areas of research excellence and international reputation," for which Spokane campus expansion was listed as a strategy. Third, the Self-evaluation Report discusses program eliminations and reorganizations. The first, the formation of the College of Arts and Sciences, occurred in 2012 and was related to a goal to foster interdisciplinary research in the 2009-2013 strategic plan. The elimination of the Counseling Psychology program and the merger of the Political Science and Philosophy departments were described as being implementations of unit-level plans.

The evidence cited in this section is somewhat fragmentary. The standard is, "The institution's comprehensive plan articulates priorities and *guides decisions on resource allocation and application of institutional capacity*." The campus expansions are a fairly good example of this, but the other changes are small in scope and not as clearly tied to the WSU Strategic Plan.

3.A.5. WSU has an emergency messaging capacity for all locations, which sends notifications by any or all of e-mail, text message, or recorded phone message. There is a website (Office of Emergency Management) that provides emergency procedures, accessible to the campus community, for a variety of events, such as severe weather. There is also a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, available to evaluators via the Sharepoint site. Per the Business Policies and Procedures Manual 50.39 and Executive Policy #25, Washington State University requires all units within the institution, statewide, to prepare Continuance of Operations Plans. There is ongoing continuity of operations planning at the unit level, with central management and oversight, via a software package. WSU is in the process of refreshing a 2008 Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). Overall WSU Pullman Campus emergency planning and preparedness appears to be in line with the requirements of this standard. However, there was much less evidence of a robust Emergency Management Plan for other campuses.

> **Recommendation, Standard 3.A.5.** The evaluation committee recommends that Washington State University's planning includes fully comprehensive emergency preparedness and contingency planning for continuity and recovery of operations at all campuses.

X.   Core Theme Planning, Effectiveness, and Improvement

Standard 3.B. Core Theme Planning

3.B.1. The evaluator committee did not find much evidence in the Self-evaluation Report that coordinated planning for achieving the Core Theme Goals and sub-goals has occurred, except during the institutional Strategic Planning process and at the campus level**.** In particular, **Section 3.B.1.** in the Self-evaluation Report mainly discusses the institutional strategic planning process and the relationship between the 2008-2013 plan and the 2014-2019 plan, which largely reiterates information already reported under Section 3.A.

Section 3.B.1. does describe additional planning around Core Theme One, "Exceptional Research, Innovation, and Creativity," which commenced as the strategic planning process was concluding. The WSU Strategic Plan tasked the vice president for research to "identify areas of research excellence and emerging areas requiring additional investment to achieve national and international prominence." The resulting report, developed from the 2014 120-day study, made specific recommendations for strengthening research support and creative activity. The report defined the University's "Grand

Challenges," research priorities that focus on urgent problems of the state, nation, and world. The Grand Challenges align with WSU's current and emerging research strengths. There has been slow but consistent growth over the last three years, with strategic hiring of tenure-line faculty equipped to address the five foci: Sustaining Health, Sustainable Resources, Opportunity and Equity; Smart Systems and National Security.

> **Commendation:** The evaluation committee commends Washington State University for focusing research on the Grand Challenges of sustaining health, sustainable resources, opportunity and equity, smart systems, and national security, using interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches to serve society.

Section 3.B.1. also describes how the university developed a new College of Medicine and launched the curriculum for the first class in 2017. The program was designed through extensive planning using a statewide approach, which improves access to medical education across the state. The innovative distributed education model addresses workforce needs throughout Washington, provides opportunity to develop initiatives that address the *Sustaining Health* research foci and meets health care needs in rural communities.

> **Compliment:** The university has engaged in extensive planning processes to develop a new School of Medicine that will serve Washington State and the surrounding region during a time of rapid population growth.

Looking elsewhere for additional evidence of Core Theme planning beyond the Strategic Plan itself, the 2015 and 2016 progress reports on the Strategic Plan website each include the same "potential initiatives and tactics," which could be products of the original strategic planning process or the implementation committee (which now appears to be the Institutional Effectiveness Committee). In addition, the university has been planning and building its infrastructure in accordance with the new strategic plan, with an emphasis on building resources required to support its status as a Carnegie Highest Research Activity (formerly termed Research I) university.

The current fiscal initiative has required the university to prioritize spending as it seeks to rebuild financial reserves across all units. University leadership recognizes that it needs to invest more money in its infrastructure to become a "top twenty-five" research university. For example, a number of Chancellors and Deans indicated that the university needs more core labs, for which there currently is insufficient funding. Also, with the reallocation of funding, a number of tenure-track faculty lines remain unfilled, which will make it increasingly difficult for the university to achieve improved performance and its overarching goal of becoming a top twenty-five research university.

3.B.2. The idea behind this standard, as well as **3.B.1.**, is that the components of the university that need to contribute to the achievement of the Core Theme objectives (termed sub-goals by WSU) will engage in coordinated planning efforts concerning how to achieve the goals. There is some evidence of that occurring, as noted above, in alignment of facility planning with the ambitious research agenda of the institution. In other areas of the Self-evaluation Report, and also in discussions with administrators during the site visit, there is evidence of planning and implementation of a variety of student success initiatives. These are generally responding to data (e.g., information on the impact of unmet financial need on retention; data that show that first-generation students have lower graduation rates), and sometimes are collaborative or complementary. However, there does not appear to be a larger-scale plan on student success that integrates most of these worthwhile component activities.

As is common, especially at larger institutions, planning and the setting of priorities for allocation of resources and capacity toward the goals of the strategic plan is mostly documented at the top level of the

institution. However, even with annual, centrally driven funding reallocations, most of the resources and capacity of the institution are controlled by chancellors, deans, and administrators below them in the hierarchy. Hence, institutions can achieve more if the resources at unit levels are brought to bear on priorities in a more coordinated and intentional way.

3.B.3. The Self-evaluation Report (in the **Sections 4.A.1.** for each core theme rather than in this section) describes a wide variety of data collection and reporting efforts. The standard is "The *institution's comprehensive planning process is informed by* the collection of appropriately defined data that are analyzed and used to evaluate fulfillment of its mission." So, WSU is clearly meeting the collecting standard, but examples of the analysis of data are fewer and examples of the application of the data, fewer still. WSU has identified 57 metrics to measure progress on sub-goals related to its Core Themes. The data are analyzed, at least to the extent that summarizing charts and graphs are prepared, and disseminated to the appropriate constituents. Continued progress toward achieving most Core Theme 1 goals was evident in the self-study report and through additional data sources requested at the time of the site visit. Extramural funding for research has increased since 2013 and successes are used to inform the future grant development efforts. Resources for new tenure-eligible faculty hires and investment in development of laboratories used for established and emerging research are influenced by data related to Core Theme 1 metrics.

> **Compliment:** The university has ensured that information concerning progress toward the sub-goals of the core themes results are disseminated to the appropriate constituents. The increase in service learning hours, the development of a revitalized and coherent General Education program (UCORE), the increase in research productivity, and the effort to embed a commitment to diversity and inclusiveness in all core themes are notable achievements.

Even though Core Theme One is the best example of using data to inform resource allocation, the processes to measure and use data to measure some Core Theme 1 metrics are not fully developed. For example the electronic system to capture all faculty and student publications was launched very recently. It is unclear if student publications will be included in the new system. Research publications can be identified through international databases, but information on other publications, which are included in one of the Core Theme 1 metrics, must be collected and reported by the university, and because the system to do this has not been fully implemented, the progress toward meeting the sub-goal is not known.

The impact of WSU Extension Education is regularly reported through a system that looks at participation rates, contribution, and content. This is an important indicator of Core Theme Three, Goal 1: "Increase access to and breadth of WSU's research, scholarship, creative, academic, and extension programs throughout Washington and the world." WSU has made a comprehensive effort to update, redesign and expand its delivery platforms to improve access to research-based information through a variety of digital and integrated format tools, improving access and creating a more learner centered approach. Serving students and the communities where they live which is consistent with the plan to increase access. Impact is also measured by number of educational programs offered and number of participants, which is appropriate. Growth in annual expenditures indicates an on-going and systematic commitment on the part of the institution to Extension activity.

> **Compliment.** The Center for Civic Engagement is complimented for the scope of its work, the fulfillment of learning objectives, the assessment of these objectives and the data informed decision-making process. Alignment with larger institutional mission, core themes, goals and objectives is reflected in action, program focus and participation.

WSU administrators told evaluators that disaggregating employee and financial data by campus, or by some other characteristics, is difficult using the antiquated enterprise system that WSU currently has.

Student data can be disaggregated by campus. The ability to do disaggregation is obviously important for effectively utilizing data to inform planning. The enterprise system is slated for replacement, and although that will be costly and arduous, it is likely essential for effective use of data going forward.

> **Concern, Standard 2.B.3.** Although WSU is one university, understanding trends, challenges, and opportunities within this large and complex set of campuses requires the ability to disaggregate data based on many criteria.

> **Recommendation, Standards 3.B.3. and 4.B.1.** The evaluation committee recommends that results of core theme assessments and results of assessments of programs and services are more consistently used for improvement, by informing planning, decision making, and allocation of resources and capacity.

Standard 4.A. Core Theme Assessment

4.A.1. While the institution engages in a robust collection of data related to core theme indicators, this section of the Self-evaluation Report contained little analysis of that data as the basis for evaluating accomplishment of core theme objectives. This section described how metrics are defined and data are collected and reported, but usually not how data are analyzed and used to inform decisions. As noted earlier in this report, the evaluator committee thinks that not all of the data being collected are meaningful as indicators of *achievement.* They may well be useful for a variety of other purposes, but the evaluators encourage the institution to reduce the number of indicators that measure inputs and processes, and focus measures of outputs and accomplishments for accreditation reporting.

> **Concern, Standard 4.A.1.** Many of the metrics included in the Self-evaluation Report are measures of inputs or process, for example incoming freshman SAT scores, percent of student body from under-represented groups, number of grants awarded, and so on. Accreditation reports should focus on indicators of achievement.

4.A.2. This section of the Self-evaluation Report provided little information regarding how programs and services are *systematically* evaluated to achieve goals and outcomes. It is clear from other documentation that faculty have a primary role in evaluation of educational programs and services. The Self-evaluation Report does include descriptions of councils or other groups that are charged with examining data, including the Student Success Council, which is using student retention data to develop new initiatives. However, beyond the Student Success Council, there are only a few examples of data driven decisions and actions.

4.A.3. The implementation of student learning outcomes assessment at WSU has clearly advanced considerably since the last comprehensive evaluation. The vast majority of programs now regularly collect assessment information and many of them have used the information for program improvement. The assessment of learning outcomes achievement in for-credit courses offered through the Global Campus is conducted in the same way as courses offered on main campus sites. A remaining weakness in the metrics and reporting is that, with the exception of UCORE assessment, there is no summary information on whether (or not) students in academic programs are meeting the intended learning outcomes.

4.A.4. **and 4.A.5.** Because analysis of data was mostly lacking in **Section 4.A.1**., it is difficult to determine how effectively the institution holistically evaluates alignment of programs and services, and their integration with respect to core theme objectives. This is complicated by the fact that the original 57 metrics are apparently being reduced to 11. There is clearly much activity happening in terms of

evaluation of programs and services. It's less clear how that activity is coordinated and integrated with key priorities.

4.A.6. There are some good examples of assessment of assessment given in this section of the report. While assessment of assessment does not appear to be widespread as yet, several key types of assessment are being systematically reviewed.

Washington State University requires all academic units to have student learning outcomes posted on their websites, and mandates that they submit annual assessment reports and plans that are reviewed through a specific hierarchy that provides feedback to the individual departments.

Graduate programs are required to annually submit assessment plans and reports to the Graduate School for review, and then the programs receive critical feedback. The Office of Assessment and Teaching and Learning reviews all undergraduate assessment plans and reports and provides feedback. The university has had increasing compliance by academic units where the assessment plan and report submission rate for both graduate and undergraduate has exceeded 90%.

Standard 4.B. Core Theme Improvement

4.B.1. As described in the Self-evaluation Report and for the purposes of its Year Seven Peer-evaluation, Washington State University developed a plan for assessment which includes 57 metrics indicating progress toward meeting goals organized within four Core Themes. Many of these metrics are fully developed, with multi-year data, but other data have been collected only once or not at all. There is some lack of clarity in the institution's definition of mission fulfillment and little analysis of most of the data. It was difficult for the evaluator committee to find evidence that clearly demonstrated how results of core theme assessment**s** are informing planning and decision-making. For instance, as stated elsewhere, it is unclear what data and processes drove the selection of 11 indicators from the original 57 indicators of achievement, but nonetheless it appears that D25 and the 11 indicators will be very important to the allocation of resources in the future.

A structure around Core Theme Three includes regular reporting, learning outcomes assessment for academic programs, and multi-year planning at least at the institutional level. The institutional planning process is most evident in the structure of committees and councils, in some reports or on websites, but indicates an overall institutional focus on core themes. Outreach and Engagement runs deep through WSU's structure and commitment to access exemplified with Global Campus, with a strong vibrant Center for Civic Engagement and Extension teaching, training and community engagement, and the demonstration of scholarly impact on the state and the region's economic development. WSU's plan for improvement includes metrics which both measure progress and align with institutional goals.

4.B.2. WSU provided evidence that it has implemented a robust student learning outcomes assessment process throughout the institution. Assessment results are disseminated in a timely manner to the appropriate constituents so that they can use the data for improvement. There is evidence that academic programs have used the learning outcomes information to improve curriculum, advising, and other aspects of the student learning experience.

XI.   Mission Fulfillment, Adaptation, and Sustainability

Standard 5.A. Mission Fulfillment

The university's Institutional Effectiveness Council (established in 2014) reports annually on strategic plan progress and accomplishments to the Faculty Senate, Board of Regents, community, and town halls at each college and campus. Reports for 2015 and 2016, which include data for a large majority of the 57

metrics as well as a narrative report on major institutional achievements, are posted on a public website. The Self-evaluation Report essentially constitutes a progress report for 2017.

As noted earlier in this evaluator report, WSU did not provide a specific definition of mission fulfillment, other than stating that its current performance is well above that necessary to fulfill its mission. The evaluator committee thinks that WSU should more precisely define an acceptable threshold of mission fulfillment that addresses the expectations of students, research funding sources, donors, community partners, and others. Nonetheless, the progress reports Self-evaluation Report support the assertion that WSU is fulfilling its mission, in that they compare WSU performance to peers when that information is available, and WSU generally performs near the peer average, which is very good performance since their peers include many of nation's leading research universities. WSU performs somewhat below the peer average for freshman retention and baccalaureate graduation rates, but that is largely explained by their placing a greater emphasis on access and having less selective admissions than many other research universities in their classification. Similarly, recent small decreases in some student success measures is traced to an increase in admissions of first generation and minority students. WSU is placing a strong emphasis on student success and has instituted or expanded a number of programs to assist struggling students.

As also noted earlier in the report, many of the 57 metrics measure inputs or process rather than outcomes. Standard 5.A. states that institutions should use "assessment results to make determinations of quality, effectiveness, and mission fulfillment…" The evaluator committee suggests that a greater focus on outcomes measures would enable a more concise and robust presentation of the case for mission fulfillment.

Standard 5.B. Adaptation and Sustainability

5.B.1. Following reports on progress toward meeting the goals of the Strategic Plan, the Institutional Effectiveness Council solicits feedback from colleges, campuses, and other areas of the university concerning unit strategies for achieving the goals or sub-goals set out in the Strategic Plan and accreditation framework; status of implementation of those strategies; and notable achievements. These reports, in addition to documenting progress, would flag any areas where progress is lacking due to any cause.

The institution has a well-developed process for evaluating resources and operations based upon the biennial budget requests, carry over of unit funding, bond and debt service, technology plans, and facility plans. WSU had an opportunity to demonstrate its ability to adapt in this accreditation cycle. A 29% reduction in State general fund support occurred from FY09 through FY14, and WSU needed to make substantial adjustments, both to increase revenue and decrease costs. On the revenue side, tuition was increased, more students were admitted, and more non-residents were admitted. On the expenditure side, an enrollment based budgeting model gave priority for resources to units impacted by enrollment increases and to other units whose strong performance was essential to address WSU priorities, resulting in some cases to relatively less funding for other units. Capital planning encompasses all WSU locations and functions to ensure that the needs that are essential to mission fulfillment and to progress in achieving the Strategic Plan goals are met. Since President Schulz arrived, an incremental budget process has been replaced by a deliberative and transparent process, under which each campus, college, and vice president develops and justifies an annual budget request; these are reviewed by the group of senior administrators, and allocations decided by the President and Board of Regents. For FY17 and FY18, there have been across-the-board reductions to units to create a pool of funds, used in the first year for faculty and staff salary increases and research and student success initiatives, and in the second year, for building a budget reserve to improve the WSU bond rating.

5.B.2. As discussed in the preceding sections of this report the Institutional Effectiveness Council was formed to coordinate strategic planning, reduce redundancy, increase efficiency, transparency, and accountability, and to optimize the use of data and reports. Since the IEC is a relatively recent development (2014), its evaluation of the complete cycle of planning, practices, resource allocation, application of institutional capacity, and assessment of results is at a fairly early stage. The IEC reports are submitted to senior administrators and so are available to inform changes in these processes. It's clear that some substantial changes in process have occurred, particularly in the area of resource allocation and in the focusing of the Strategic Plan that yielded "Drive to 25". The Self-evaluation Report does not clearly relate those changes to the IEC's formal assessments.

In addition this section of the Self-evaluation Report described a variety of councils, committees, and initiatives that are focused in particular areas, such as the Student Success Council, the Information Technology Strategic Advisory Committee, and the Customer Service Initiative. These coordinate data informed institutional improvement efforts, but do not appear to have a role in evaluating the institutional cycle of planning, practices, resource allocation, application of institutional capacity, and assessment of results. This information seems more relevant to **Standard 4.**

5.B.3. The annual Strategic Plan 2014-2019 Progress Reports and the background information developed for the "Drive to 25" plan illustrate that WSU is acutely aware of the performance of other top 100 research universities that are its major competitors for students, research funding, and philanthropy. The WSU Government Relations Office monitors changes occurring in the legislative and executive branches at federal, state, and regional levels. At the state level WSU participates in the Council of Presidents (COP), an association of Washington's six public baccalaureate degree granting college and universities, which among other functions identifies and responds to state issues and develops public policy proposals.

WSU is monitoring advances in technology and has identified personalized education, micro credentialing, and development of a high-speed WSU intranet as ways to improve access and affordability of higher education. These areas of focus, as well as a variety of other initiatives discussed in earlier sections of the Self-evaluation Report, indicate that WSU is considering how to expand its student body beyond the shrinking traditional-age population to encompass adult learners. Likewise, in earlier sections of the Self-evaluation Report, the importance of attracting, retaining and graduating a fully diverse student body was discussed in detail. As mentioned in Section **5.B.3.** this is fundamental to the Land Grant mission, but in addition, it is important to the future success of all public institutions of higher education as the U.S. population diversifies.

Commendations and Recommendations

Year Seven Comprehensive Evaluation, Washington State University, April 9-11, 2018

<u>Commendations</u>

1. The evaluation committee commends the Washington State University administration for rapidly building a reputation for transparency and inclusiveness in decision-making, and the administration, faculty, staff, and students for working together to maintain open communication.
2. The evaluation committee commends Washington State University for fostering a strong esprit de corps among its students, alumni, faculty, and staff.
3. The evaluation committee commends Washington State University for effective initiatives to improve student access and success, particularly that of underrepresented groups, through coordinated and collaborative efforts of Enrollment Management and Student Financial Services, Student Affairs, the Office of the Provost and the Academic Success and Career Center, and other units across the University. The Student Success Council is recognized for facilitating this work.
4. The evaluation committee commends Washington State University for assessment of student learning outcomes, especially the assessment of the learning outcomes of the UCORE general education requirements. The Office of Assessment of Teaching and Learning is recognized for its leadership in this work.
5. The evaluation committee commends Washington State University for planning to revitalize classrooms to serve today's learners. A notable result is The Spark, a state-of-the-art facility, which enables faculty to use innovative technology to help motivate students to engage deeply in learning.
6. The evaluation committee commends Washington State University for focusing research on the Grand Challenges of sustaining health, sustainable resources, opportunity and equity, smart systems, and national security, using interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches to serve society.

<u>Recommendations</u>

Standard 3.A.3. The evaluation committee recommends that Washington State University's comprehensive planning process is informed by the collection of appropriately defined data, which can be disaggregated to identify differences among campuses, learning modalities, and other subdivisions of this large and complex institution.

Standard 3.A.5. The evaluation committee recommends that Washington State University's planning includes fully comprehensive emergency preparedness and contingency planning for continuity and recovery of operations at all campuses.

Standards 3.B.3. and 4.B.1. The evaluation committee recommends that results of core theme assessments and results of assessments of programs and services are more consistently used for improvement, by informing planning, decision making, and allocation of resources and capacity.