

A Regular Interim Report

Central Washington University
Ellensburg, Washington

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Prepared by

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And

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A confidential report prepared for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

CWU Accreditation History

Central Washington University's accreditation was reaffirmed in 1999 following a full-scale visit. The committee recommended that a focused interim visit occur in 2001. The purpose of this visit was the regular interim visit as required by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

CWU was originally established in 1890 as a normal school by the Washington state legislature. The institution was renamed Central Washington State College in 1961 and Central Washington University in 1977. The University has been regionally accredited since 1918.

In October 2001 Dr. Ernest E. Ettlich conducted a focused interim visit at CWU. In his commendations, Dr. Ettlich noted a commendation that the progress of CWU in addressing the 6 recommendations of the evaluation committee since the 1999 visit was substantial. This regular interim report notes a similar pattern of substantial progress toward achievement of the six original recommendations of 1999 and the continuing four recommendations in the 2001 Ettlich report.

Dr. Roderic Diman and Dr. Patricia Miltenberger conducted a regular interim visit to Central Washington University on October 18-19, 2004. They met with the following individuals during the day and one half visit:

- President McIntyre and the President's Cabinet including David Soltz, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs; Charlotte Tullos, Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management; Rich Corona, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs; Paul Baker, Vice President for University Relations; and Elizabeth Street, Executive Assistant to the President for Policy and Planning
- Ken Martin, Chair of the Board of Trustees
- David Soltz, Provost, Associate Vice-President Linda Beath, Associate Vice-President Wayne Quirk, Assistant to the Provost Margaret Badgley
- Representatives of the Faculty Senate and Faculty Union (6 members)
- Deans, Roy Savoian, Business; Liahna Armstrong, Arts & Humanities; Rebecca Bowers, Education and Professional Studies; Meghan Miller, Sciences; Tom Peischl, Library
- Associated Student President Lucas Westcoat and Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Chris Casey

- Representatives of the Exempt Employee Association, Employee Council and Civil Service Staff Union (11)
- Representatives of the General Education Committee and the University Assessment Committee (15 members)
- Representatives of the Graduate Council and Coordinators (8 members)
- Department Chairs (24 chairs attended)
- Vice-President for Student Services and Enrollment Management Charlotte Tullos
- An open forum for any interested parties

In addition to the interviews the following documents were reviewed:

- 1999 Full Scale Evaluation Committee Report
- 2001 Focused Interim Report
- 2004 Fifth Year CWU Interim Report
- CWU Faculty Code of Personnel Policy and Procedures
- CWU Strategic Plan 2001-2006
- CWU Institutional Research website
- CWU general catalog, class schedule, operating and capital budgets, and numerous exhibits related to the 1999 and 2001 recommendations.

The visitors are grateful for the efficient preparation for the visit. The Regular Interim Report, exhibits, and other requested materials were useful in describing the progress of CWU since the 1999 and 2001 report. Some institutional representatives interviewed described the report as optimistic but nonetheless the visitors found it helpful in framing the questions for the visit.

Part A. 1999 and 2001 Recommendations

Recommendation 1 (1999) Commendation 1 (2001) Standard 1.A., 1.B. Mission and Goals and Strategic Planning

No more important task confronts the University than completing the current discussions on role and mission, taking action to approve and implement a statement, coupling a strategic planning process to the statement with explicit goals and objectives, and crafting an assessment program to gauge overall achievement of institutional objectives. Mission and goals define the institution. It is important that the Board continue to solicit advice from faculty, staff, students, and administration on this task, but a shared commitment to closure is in order. Ultimately, everything flows from mission and we strongly recommend that this become a priority concern for the entire University community.

As noted in the focused interim report in 2001, CWU has made substantial progress in defining its mission and goals and in developing an active strategic plan. As the result of the 1999 Evaluation committee visit and a recommendation regarding the mission and goals, the CWU community engaged in a redefinition of the mission statement

accomplished in February 2000. Upon her arrival at CWU in July 2000, President Jerilyn McIntyre engaged the campus in a strategic planning process that incorporated the new institutional mission statement and related goals. The final product of the process was the 2001-2006 Strategic Plan. The Board of Trustees adopted the plan in 2001 that included a vision statement, statement of core values, strategic goals and related sub-goals. Subsequently divisions developed management objectives related to the goals and a budget and capital request and allocation process related to the goals. While the full alignment of the planning, budgeting, and evaluation process is evolving, there is clear evidence of progress, campus wide understanding of processes, and plans in place for the next generation of the strategic plan to incorporate performance based funding. The process appears to have the broad general support of faculty and staff and has been open to campus constituent group participation.

Recommendation 2 (1999) Commendation 2 (2001) Standards 6.A., 6.B., 6.C., 6D., 6.E.

Governance, Administration and Communication

We recommend that the Board administration, faculty, staff, and students undertake a major commitment to revitalize and strengthen governance and administration at Central. The troubles at Central should strengthen the resolve of all of the interested groups to learn individually and collectively from the recent breakdown. A successful search for a new chief executive is an immediate task. Reliable and open channels of communication must be constructed and faculty, students, and staff should be supported in their participatory role. At the same time, the governance system should enhance strong presidential leadership, a critical component in a healthy governance system.

The 2001 focused interim report stated a commendation for the open search process for the president. It further complimented the president and her administrative team for improved communications. The 2004 visitors found the same pattern of improved communications and open processes. Campus personnel noted the addition of focus groups, exit surveys, public addresses, use of web based discussion forums, and the establishment of an ombudsman office to assure campus wide engagement. However, some personnel interviewed expressed concern that the budget process needed to be more transparent and timely. Some felt their review more perfunctory than substantive. It is important to note that the CWU faculty has recently voted to unionize and as of the visit the bargaining process had not yet begun. Campus personnel were optimistic about the process, but much of the details are yet to be established, thus the role of faculty governance is evolving in the new climate of collective bargaining.

Recommendation 3 (1999) Recommendation 1 (2001) Standard 2.B., Policy 2.2. Assessment

The institution is recognized for its assessment work at the program level. However, as the Self-Study says, there is more work to do. Steps need to be taken to assure that there are quality outcomes measures in place in all programs, including general education. Also, the information from the assessment process should be used to influence decision-

making and planning to continuously improve individual programs and the total University's educational program. To fully meet the Commission on College's expectations regarding educational assessment, the University needs to place prime consideration on the achievement of institutional goals through assessment of programs. (1999)

The University needs to continue developing program assessment as an integral part of the coordinated planning and budgeting system (2001).

As identified in the 2001 report assessment at CWU continues to be a work in progress. Since 2001 the university has reinstated program review utilizing a five-year cycle. The review includes a self-study process, external reviewers, a dean's response, and executive summary. A follow up report is intended to provide feedback on improvements as a result of the process. At the time of this visit the review process was piloted and is in its second cycle. The continued refinement of the process to insure thoroughness and consistency as well as utilization of the review to improve and modify programs is essential. The Regular Interim Report prepared by the campus identifies the need for the specific course outcomes in the general education requirements to be better aligned with the goals of each of the breadth areas. The members of the General Education Committee indicated that their assessment efforts over the past three years has resulted in the conclusion they need to revisit the general education curriculum and its mission and goals. The assessment efforts of CWU campus personnel are yielding the intended outcome of the NWCCU Standard 2. Through assessment the campus is identifying how the curriculum may need to be modified to achieve the intended outcomes. Other assessment activities for specialized accreditation, in student services, and through institutional research were also specified.

**Recommendation 4 (1999) Standard 4.A.4.
Faculty Salaries**

The University continues to struggle with providing faculty salaries to attract and retain competent faculty. While policies on salaries and benefits are clearly stated and widely available, internal equity problems have evolved. The institution responded with a significant salary package comprised of both individual equity adjustments and an across the board increase. A process of equity review (to be conducted by faculty senate), and a target for average salaries have been established. Those are important steps. But the progress will only be made if additional steps are taken. The Committee recommends that the University and Faculty Senate pursue the procedures in the Faculty Code section 8.46, Correcting Salary Inequities, and resolve the salary equity matter.

Since the focused interim report in 2001, which noted that, though considerable progress had been made, faculty salaries were still an issue, the University has continued to develop and to implement a salary compensation plan with the broad participation of the university community. It is clear from discussions with faculty groups that the commitment of university funds to salary improvement is greatly appreciated and it is widely understood that the inability of the state to contribute salary enhancement funds

during a time of decreasing revenues did not permit the meeting of established salary goals. The board of trustees and the administration realize that the hiring and retention of excellent faculty are a high priority, and are intent upon emphasizing this as they prepare budgets and interact with legislators.

The procedures outlined in Section 8.46 *Correcting Salary Inequities* of the faculty code, a concern during the 1999 visit, but no longer a concern in 2001, are being followed. The participation in the process may be modified as the university proceeds with the negotiations that accompany collective bargaining. It is encouraging to see the cooperation thus far as the university and bargaining unit have agreed to maintain the present salary enhancement plans, pending the negotiation of a contract.

Recommendation 5 (1999) and Recommendation 2 (2001) Policy 4.1 Standard 4.A.5. Faculty Evaluation

The Committee recommends that the University take immediate action to fully implement the recently approved policy regarding faculty evaluation to insure campus-wide compliance with the requirements of Stand IV and Policy 4.1. Policy 4.1 requires that every faculty member at each institution be subject to some type of substantive performance evaluation at least every third year. The Committee urges the University to carefully monitor the implementation of the new faculty evaluation policy to insure that both tenured and non-tenured faculty are evaluated in accordance with Policy 4.1. (1999)

The University should continue to monitor and develop its policy of faculty evaluation to assure that it fully meets the expectations of Policy 4.1. (2001)

The full-scale visit to the university in 1999 recommended immediate action to insure campus-wide compliance with Policy 4.1 (Standard 4.A.5) A continuing recommendation was made during the 2001 focused interim visit that the university continue to monitor and develop policy to assure compliance with Policy 4.1. By 2002 the Faculty Code Section 8.80 *Tenured Faculty Review* clearly requires reviews for all tenured faculty once every three years and establishes a schedule for this review.

Considerable commendable progress has been made since the focused interim visit to develop plans, to survey the faculty for development needs, and to establish the programs and infrastructure, both financial and administrative, necessary for the faculty to take advantage of development opportunities. The dissemination of the varied development possibilities to the faculty is viewed by some as less than adequate, but the evaluators note that the electronic CWU Bulletin, published once or twice a month is available on the web and does a good job of providing information on developmental opportunities, as well as on other campus events and activities.

The final step, as the university points out in its interim report, to “formally align professional development with the evaluation process” remains to be accomplished. This will be something still to be addressed and reviewed during the next full-scale evaluation.

**Recommendation 6 (1999) Recommendation 3 (2001) Standard 2.D., 2.E., 2.F.
Graduate Programs**

The University is strongly urged to take the step necessary to determine a role and goals for the graduate program that are compatible with the institution's mission and goals (1999)

The University needs to continue the process of defining a clear role for the graduate program within the context of the university strategic plan developing a clear linkage between the planning and evaluation activities in the graduate program and the university strategic plan. (2001)

Several strengths in the graduate programs were noted in both the 1999 and 2001 evaluators' reports. Further commendable progress has been made in the development of vision, role and goals, and program review. The principal concern and resulting recommendation in 2001 was the lack of integration of graduate education into the strategic planning context.

In Spring 2004 the Office of Graduate Studies and members of the Graduate Council, after meeting with graduate coordinators, formulated role and goal statements for graduate education that are aligned with the university's strategic plan. The strategic plan itself, envisioned for the period 2001-2006, is ready to be reviewed and, where necessary, revised. The Academic Affairs Council has developed explicit language on graduate education for inclusion in the next iteration of the strategic plan which should resolve the recommendation regarding graduate education and its relationship to and integration into the mission and strategic plan of the university.

The university should be cautious as graduate programs and courses develop to adhere to Standard 2D, specifically 2.D.2, This is particularly important in the use of 'layered courses' (400/500 level) in graduate programs when they are open to both undergraduate and graduate students.

**Recommendation 4 (2001) Policy A-2
Substantive Change**

The University must immediately consult with the commission staff on all pending and implemented changes since the 1999 visit to determine the appropriate review process required to permit action by the Commission.

During the 2001 Focused Interim Visit the curriculum review process had not

incorporated a reporting process of changes to the institutional accreditation liaison officer for submission to NWCCU. The reporting process has now been established. The University has charged the Vice President for Undergraduate Studies with the responsibility of notifying the Commission of institutional changes and new programs and the preparation of required reports has been built into the curriculum review process.

Part B.

Standard One: Institutional Mission and Goals, Planning and Effectiveness

As noted in Part A of this report CWU has made substantial progress in defining its mission and goals and in developing a strategic plan. The planning, budgeting, and assessment processes are being brought together. A number of identified objectives in the planned have been achieved and there is progress in other initiatives. Performance indicators were piloted last year with full implementation planned for 2004-2005. Academic program review is underway as well as the development of an enrollment management plan. The president is moving toward a performance based budgeting model. A process for the next round of strategic planning is being defined and there is confidence in the process being inclusive of campus constituent groups. It is critical that the open channels of communication established in recent years remain a priority of the President and her administration.

Standard 2 Educational Programs and their effectiveness

The full-scale review in 1999 found much to commend in individual units accomplishments and policies, and only one recommendation resulted from the review of Educational Programs. This recommendation centered around assessment and the focused interim visit in 2001 recommended that the university continue developing assessment as an integral part of the coordinated planning and budgeting system. An evaluation of the university's progress since that time appears in Section A of this report.

During the last several years the university has devoted much time and effort to various aspects of the educational program: the development of a Bachelor of Applied Science degree option which is in the final approval stages; the review and possible extensive revision of the general education requirement to make it more coherent and challenging, as well as more easily assessed as to effectiveness and to desired student outcomes; and a review of graduate programs and how they fit into the mission and goals of the institution. On these last two initiatives substantial progress has been made. The CWU Regular Interim report provides a progress report on the four new bachelor's programs. The programs are too new for a comprehensive assessment, however, the campus reports progress in the implementation and evaluation of the degrees.

Standard Three: Students

Prior to the arrival of President McIntyre the interim president and the president-elect established a task force to review the administrative structure of the CWU. This review resulted in a restructuring of student services and the enrollment management programs. A new vice-president was hired in 2001 and further modified the student services reporting structure. The university has enjoyed steady enrollment growth (1184 FTE) since a slight downturn in fall 2000. This growth has enabled a number of improvements since the 1999 and 2001 visits. The services at the university centers have been strengthened including direct access to student financial services. The residence hall occupancy rate is improved, one hall has been renovated, and the campus has adopted a living and learning community philosophy and programs to further engage students in campus life. Additional personnel have been added to the career services department as well as on line access to e-recruiting. Disability resources has added an adaptive technology services coordinator and now serves the largest number of students with disabilities per capita of the four-year colleges and universities in Washington. The health center has received specialized accreditation and is now open on Saturdays. A new student union and recreation center is under construction and will be operational by spring 2006. The campus has new leadership in its Diversity Education Center and is active in sponsoring cultural events as well as providing support for underrepresented student groups.

CWU continues to offer a full array of cultural, civic, and recreational opportunities to its students. The student services division has come through a conversion for its student information system in a thoughtful and planned fashion. In 2002 the division hired a research analyst to oversee the student services assessment plan and conduct research related to enrollment and retention. Faculty and students expressed appreciation for the improvements in the division since the 2001 focused interim visit by NWCCU.

The athletic department has undergone major transition since 1999. CWU is a NCAA Division II school and participates in the Great Northwest Athletic Conference. The athletic director position now reports directly to the president and makes regular presentations to the Board regarding the program. An oversight committee comprised of faculty and athletic personnel guides the program. The university continues to take steps to comply with Title IX and is upgrading facilities. The college has added men's and women's indoor track and eliminated three teams: men and women's swimming and men's wrestling. While the decision to eliminate three sports was contentious, the decision was considered to be in the best interests of the overall program. The college has completed the NCAA self-study and program review (2001).

Standard Four Faculty

In total numerical terms the Central Washington tenured/tenure-track faculty has remained constant since the 1999 full-scale evaluation (299 in 1999 and 301 in 2003). The figures at different ranks show decrease at the professor level and concomitant increase at the associate and assistant professor ranks, so there are more faculty members

in early and mid-career.

An arena in which policy changes affecting the faculty may occur is the process of negotiation of the first collective bargaining contract. Since the last full-scale evaluation, the faculty, newly defined by the Washington State Public Employees Relation Commission, voted to be represented by the United Faculty of Central. The principal policy document governing the faculty at present is the Faculty Code. The university, as it begins the negotiation process, is well aware of the language in Policy 6.2 *Collective Bargaining*.

It is very encouraging to see the desire for cooperation between all constituents involved in the collective bargaining process, as they begin to sort out roles to be played by the faculty senate, the union and the administration.

Since 1999 faculty salaries have improved, due to the efforts by the institution to meet compensation goals set by the campus Salary Administration Board that included allocation of internal funds in tandem with expected legislative support. The latter did not materialize, but the institution even in the case of decreases in state funding has made commendable progress.

Faculty evaluation was considered deficient in 1999 and formed the basis for a recommendation in the full-scale report, and appeared as a further recommendation in the 2001 focused interim report. Review of progress in this area is found in Part A of this report.

All the faculty groups with whom the evaluators met were most complimentary and appreciative of the openness and willingness of the administration to communicate with all in the university community.

Standard Five Library and Information Resources

As noted in the 1999 full-scale evaluation, the library administration, though contending with the usual difficulties in trying to maintain traditional library materials, was able to provide high levels of library service to both the campus and distance sites. The technology was adequate for both the Ellensburg campus and the University Centers.

With the resignation of the dean of the library in 2001, the interim dean with library staff and department heads functioned as a group to keep the library services in step with student and faculty needs. When a new dean was appointed in late 2003 a more formal planning and needs assessment process was established to assure continued responsiveness to university community needs, despite difficult economic circumstances. The university is carefully and thoughtfully dealing with the challenges to information access for its students and faculty.

Standard Six: Governance and Administration

CWU is a public university of the State of Washington and there have been no major changes in governance structure since the 1999 and 2001 visit. The president has enlarged the membership of the President's Advisory Council, a group that now includes representatives from all employee groups and from students. Each of these groups also participates in presentations to the Board of Trustees. The Board has eight members including one student member and is appointed by the Governor. The board has established subcommittees in academic affairs, student affairs, and resource development. The subcommittees then report to the board as a whole for an action. The Board meetings are regularly scheduled and publicly advertised. The board conducts orientation for new members, evaluates the president, has a program review process, schedules an annual retreat, and has a self-evaluation process. Board authority for a Washington regional university is established in state statutes. There appears to be a clear delineation of the role of the Board in policy development and institutional accountability.

As noted earlier, President McIntrye assumed her post in 2000. She has restructured the administration and has replaced four new vice presidents through a national search process. She has established an open communication style that has allowed processes to be understood and encouraged participation of the campus community. Her President's Advisory Council includes representation of all major campus constituent groups. The strategic planning process has provided campus groups with a predictable framework in which to move forward as a university. While there were periodic comments suggesting greater transparency and timeliness in some institutional processes, in particular budgeting, the overall climate of communication was perceived as positive. In a limited resource environment and/or during budget cuts transparency is critical.

Recently the Washington state legislature approved enabling legislation for collective bargaining. The faculty senate and UFC are in the process of defining their respective roles in planning, budgeting, evaluation, and governance. Thus the role of faculty governance is evolving in the new climate of collective bargaining.

Standard Seven: Finance

CWU is a public university and thus derives its funds primarily from the state general fund, tuition and fees and auxiliary enterprises. Funding is student FTE driven with some designated funding for special purposes. The overall budget of the institution has increased by approximately 20% over the past four years. However, As a result of the poor economy in Washington State, the general fund revenues were cut in three successive years. Tuition and fee increases have been the primary means to make up for these cuts. The campus has increased revenues from grants and contracts and auxiliary services during this same period. Instructional and academic support expenses have remained constant during this period.

In keeping with the strategic plan, the college has used the new resources and reallocation of resources to ensure improvements to campus functions as well as provide more student financial aid.

Campus documents and reports indicated that appropriate fiscal controls are in place. The financial operations are well established with clear delineation of roles and responsibilities. The Board has an established debt management policy.

The university has an established Foundation and an organized fund raising capacity.

Standard Eight Physical Facilities

The university has been able to keep pace with its growth and outreach efforts. A new master plan is working its way through the approval process. The plan is linked with the strategic plan and budgeting cycle. Instructional and support facilities have been upgraded. The university receives funding from state bonds, higher education trust funds, and local funds and bonds. Appropriate safety and accommodation upgrades have been completed. A new music education building was recently completed and a new student union and recreational facility construction project is underway. The university has a capital request list in concert with the strategic plan.

Residence hall occupancy is up and one residence hall has been recently remodeled and another is underway. Parking capacity has also been expanded since 1999. Since 1999 the campus has also completed or substantially completed facilities at five of its six university centers. Major upgrades are underway for the sixth center. Twelve distance education classrooms have also been added at the university centers. Networking and data communications upgrades as well as student computing lab capacity have been expanded. The campus faces a challenge in replacing faculty desktop computers as well as instructional equipment.

Standard Nine

As noted in the 1999 full-scale report, Central Washington University sets forth the standards for ethical behavior for members of the university community in various official documents.

After a review of the Faculty Code (Section 1-5.2 thru 1-5.4) and the CWU Policies Manual there are concise written statements and policies on academic freedom and conflict of interest. As well, there are policies in place that guarantee the fair treatment of all members of the academic community. A student code of conduct, rights and responsibilities is in place and published. The institution clearly meets Standard Nine.

Commendations

The visitors found an upbeat and optimistic atmosphere throughout their conversations with faculty, staff, students, and administrators. The campus community is to be complimented for their positive engagement and commitment to CWU and their students.

1. The regular interim visit evaluators wish to echo the 2001 Focused Interim Report commendation to CWU regarding improvements in strategic planning, administrative changes, improvement in communications and linking planning to resource allocations. Continued diligence to assure openness, timeliness in seeking input and establishing visible processes are essential in building a campus community and sense of trust.

2. The University is to be applauded for efforts to improve faculty salaries and for the success that it has had in a time of budgetary constraints. . Continuing these efforts is a cornerstone to any future progress.

Recommendations

1. Faculty evaluation and methodology is becoming more consistent but has not been fully standardized. The campus needs to continue to monitor and assure compliance with NWCCU Policy 4.1. This will be essential as you enter the bargaining process. The use of merit/promotion review as a substitute for post tenure review may not be yielding as comprehensive a review as is desirable.

2. There is viable progress in defining a clear role for graduate programs and incorporating these goals in the evolving strategic plan. However the visitors noted that the use of layered classes (courses offered at both the upper division undergraduate level and master's level) is reviewed by the Graduate Council, but did not have an institution wide set of guidelines and criteria.

3. Assessment continues to be a work in progress. It is too early to evaluate the varying range of quality of data utilized in program review. The university will need to complete the cycle of review and continue to make modification based on that feedback. There is evidence of information being used to inform program decisions. Clearly we are observing improved approaches but not fully integrated and with varying levels of involvement and commitment and buy in from departments and faculty. The efforts at assessment of general education have resulted in an interest in revisiting the general education requirements. That initiative is a centerpiece for Central for future assessment efforts. We encourage the University to use the experience of other colleges and universities as you develop your review process and design assessment metrics.