Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation Report

Prepared for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Central Washington University

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Preface

Institutional Overview

The residential campus of Central Washington University is located in the city of Ellensburg, in Kittitas county, in the center of Washington state. The campus is located within walking distance of Ellensburg's historic downtown. Located at the junction of Interstate 82 and Interstate 90, the primary vehicle route between western and eastern Washington, Ellensburg, a city of about 20,000, is the largest city in Kittitas County and the county seat. The Ellensburg campus has 94 facilities totaling 3.2 million gross square feet (GSF). Fifty-nine buildings are non-residential facilities (2.1 million GSF), and 35 are residential facilities (1.1 million GSF).

In addition to the Ellensburg residential campus, CWU offers programs at eight University Centers and instructional sites throughout the state of Washington. The six University Centers are co-located with Washington community and technical colleges: CWU-Des Moines, CWU Lynnwood, and CWU-Pierce County on the west side of the Cascades, and CWU-Moses Lake, CWU-Wenatchee, and CWU-Yakima on the east side. The two instructional sites are CWU-Joint Base Lewis McChord and CWU-Sammamish.

CWU offers seven graduate degree designations: Education Specialist (EdS), Master of Arts (MA), Master of Education (Med), Master of Fine Arts (MFA), Master of Music (MM), Master of Public Health (MPH), and Master of Science (MS)—and six undergraduate degree designations: Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS), Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Arts in Education (BAEd), Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), Bachelor of Music (BM), and Bachelor of Science (BS). Graduate students can select from 35 graduate degree programs, seven specializations, and 9 graduate certificates. Undergraduate students can select from 27 undergraduate programs, 135 majors, 63 specializations, 117 minors, and 35 certificates.

Based on Fall 2021 IPEDS submissions, CWU's FTE enrollment was 9,977 undergraduate students and 656 graduate students. CWU employed 343 full-time faculty. In terms of CWU's total enrollment for in Fall 2021, 5,294 students had started at CWU as first-time students, and 3,582 students had transferred to CWU from another institution. There were a total of 1,723 first-time, full-time first-year students and 954 new transfer students.

Colleges

CWU is primarily made up of four colleges:
- College of Arts and Humanities
- College of Business
- College of Education and Professional Studies
- College of the Sciences

In addition to these four colleges, CWU has the Douglas Honors College, reviewed in more detail later in this report, a Continuing Education operation, and the School of Graduate Studies and Research that oversees all of the institution's graduate offerings.

Update on Institutional Changes

Leadership Changes

Since the last visit in the fall of 2018, the university has had several changes to its senior-level staff, including:

In June of 2021, Dr. James Wohlpart assumed the role of university President. Dr. Wohlpart came to CWU from the University of Northern Iowa where he served as Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs. President Gaudino completes his term as President Emeritus in June 2022.

In May of 2020, Dr. Michelle DenBeste assumed the role of Provost. Dr. DenBeste came to CWU from California State University, Fresno where she served as the Dean of the College of Social Sciences.

In May of 2021, the office of the Associate Provost was eliminated. Dr. Gail Mackin took the role of Associate Vice Provost under the office of the Provost. Dr. Bernadette Jungblut left the position of Associate Provost for Accreditation, Academic Planning and Assessment and returned to the faculty. Dr. Ediz Kaykayoglu moved from Interim Associate Provost of Extended Learning and Outreach to Dean of Extended and Global Education.

In August of 2019, Dr. Jill Hernandez became the Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities. Dr. Hernandez came to CWU from the University of Texas San Antonio where she served as an Associate Dean and a professor of philosophy.

In May of 2020, Dr. Heidi Henschel-Pellett became the Interim Dean of the College of Education and Professional Studies. She replaced Dr. Paul Ballard who returned to the faculty. Dr. Henschel-Pellett is no longer with the university and her duties have shifted to Dr. Gail Mackin on an interim basis. The search for a permanent Dean is underway and the selected candidate will begin their duties in July.

At the end of 2021, Dr. Kevin Archer stepped down as Dean of Graduate Studies. Rebecca Lubas, Dean of CWU's library, is serving as the interim Dean of Graduate Studies.

Significant Events Impacting the University

Below is a sample of significant events that have occurred since the last NWCCU visit. For a full list, see appendix A.

CWU earned the prestigious Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from *INSIGHT Into Diversity Magazine* for the seventh time in the last eight years—more than any other institution in Washington state.

Four CWU degree programs are ranked #1 Best Values in the state of Washington (Theater Arts, Nutrition Science, the Health & Physical Education master's degree, and the Nutrition Science master's degree), according to Grad Degree Search, an online ranking service.

A number of CWU academic programs have been ranked as the best among universities and colleges in the state of Washington in 2021, according to TeachingDegreeSearch.com, on online college ranking service, including:

- #1 Best Value Teacher Education Grade Specific Bachelor's Degree Schools in Washington
- #1 Best Value General Education Bachelor's Degree Schools in Washington
- #1 Best Value Special Education Bachelor's Degree Schools in Washington

CWU ranked one of the top 10 Best Value Colleges in the state of Washington in 2021, according to SmartAsset, an online technology company that provides personal financial advice on the web.

U.S. News and World Report ranked CWU as one of the nation's best online bachelor's degree programs in 2021. The ranking reflects factors such as CWU's commitment to online learning, the cost of the program, and breadth of course offerings. U.S. News also ranked CWU as one of the Best Online Bachelor's Programs for Veterans and as offering one of the best online master's programs in Criminal Justice.

CWU ranks #8 nationwide for graduation rates of both LatinX and underrepresented minority students, according to College Results Online. CWU was ranked alongside 50 similar universities across the U.S.

Part I: Mission Fulfillment

Teaching and Learning

Central Washington University is a public comprehensive university that serves students throughout the state including central Washington. At the same time, CWU has several unique relationships with community college partners in both central and western Washington where our substantial presence includes both faculty and administration that oversee several programs. This contributes to the high number of transfer students that CWU receives each year and allows closer access to many school districts where we offer college-level courses in the high schools.

The mission of Central Washington University is to prepare students for enlightened, responsible, and productive lives; to produce research, scholarship, and creative expression in the public interest; and to serve as a resource to the region and the state through effective stewardship of university resources.

Despite the challenges of the past few years, the university's primary focus has remained the development and delivery of high-quality programs designed to prepare students for their chosen fields. Initially, the pandemic forced nearly all instruction online and, like other universities, faculty members adopted delivery methods that were unfamiliar. The university's Multimodal Education Center was integral in helping over 400 faculty with online tools and

providing professional development opportunities to become certified online instructors. The university also benefitted from several faculty who were already skilled in online delivery and were willing to share their knowledge.

Now that we have largely returned to the classroom, we do so as a transformed university. Our ability to deliver in multiple modalities has been greatly expanded. We have taught, advised and supported our students remotely which collectively has refined our abilities to collaborate with those "not in the room". This is an important skill for a university with multiple remote locations.

In the fall of 2021, the university opened back up to live instruction and implemented proper pandemic protocols to keep our students and faculty safe. Of the courses on our fall schedule, 63% had some form of face-to-face delivery with 50% being fully in person. A good amount of effort has been spent ensuring that our courses are offered in a manner that meet students' needs and expectations. Especially important is support for first-year students who are new to the college experience and are mostly enrolling in general education courses. Our general education program is currently in its third year and is being assessed to ensure that it helps our students build their academic foundations and prepares them for their majors.

Through connections to industry, advisory boards, and key partners across the state, our programs are aligned with the needs of the disciplines that they represent and many hold specialized accreditations ensuring their curriculum remains current and relevant. The university has also invested in facilities and professional development to expand online programs that allow it to reach even more students regardless of location. Additionally, multiple student resources have been made available remotely, including Telehealth, library services, and on-line advising.

Like many other institutions, the pandemic has impacted our enrollment numbers. Also impacted were our retention rates and time to graduation. In the coming year and beyond, a significant focus for CWU will be to return these metrics to their pre-pandemic levels and continue to focus on improving them. Work is already underway to implement more high-impact practices, to ensure access to tutoring, and to continue work with faculty to facilitate ongoing pedagogical improvements.

CWU Students

CWU has a history of attracting a diverse collection of students. In winter of 2022, 41% of undergraduate students identified as black, indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC). In many ways, the diversity of the students represents the communities that CWU serves. Other than white students, the largest group of students coming to CWU are Hispanic/Latino and they represent 20% of undergraduates which is largely a factor of the location of the university's home campus. Asian, African American and multiracial students make up the next largest groups at 4.8%, 4.7% and 9.0% respectively.

32.2% of our undergraduates are Pell Eligible. Among the current undergraduate population, 56% of African American students, 35% of Asian students, 51% of Hispanic/Latino students, and 25% of white students are Pell Eligible. Among undergraduates, 47% indicated that they were first generation college students.

In 2020, our overall undergraduate retention rate was 68.5%. That breaks down to 66.3% for African American students, 75.4% for Asian students, 65.8% for Hispanic/Latino students, 69.6% for white students and 67.2% for multiracial students. The 2020 retention rates were typically 2-4 points lower than the previous year which is likely an artifact of the pandemic.

Primarily through innovative and authentic teaching, CWU connects students from many different backgrounds to the skills they can use to lead productive lives in their chosen fields. Attracting and supporting such a diverse student body requires intentional collaboration among multiple departments throughout the university. To this end, several long-standing practices have been implemented. The university dropped its requirement for entrance exams. Our student services group is switching their approach from one that focuses on addressing student deficits to one that is more equity-minded and focuses on serving students where they are at. And our campus has engaged in an Equity Scorecard project to uncover the root cause of why a disproportionate share of students of color do not prosper on our campus, although we know they have the ability and interest in succeeding. CWU remains a resource for a diverse collection of students and is committed to ensuring that all can succeed.

Research and High Impact Practices

In addition to a number of graduate programs, each of which has a research or capstone component, CWU places a high level of importance on undergraduate research and high impact practices. The Office of Undergraduate Research runs several programs to support and promote undergraduate research, scholarly work, and creative activities by students at Central Washington University. The university ensures support for research and creative expression through presentation and research grants, end-of-quarter poster sessions, and an annual symposium of university research and creative expression (SOURCE). Held during the third week in May and spanning several days, SOURCE is an opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students to share their creative expression or research with the CWU community. Each submission is judged by a committee and awards are given for excellent submissions. In the past academic year, 207 students participated in SOURCE sharing their independent and faculty-supported research with the CWU community.

The university also includes, as part of the undergraduate curriculum, high impact practices which are ways for students to learn through action providing richer, more lasting, and more personal connections to the subject matter. Examples of these activities include capstone courses and projects, study abroad, internships, community-based learning/service learning, undergraduate research, writing-intensive coursework, common intellectual experiences, first year seminars, ePortfolios, and collaborative assignments and projects.

The university provides an excellent array of such opportunities and has decided to expand these opportunities to more students. Thus, the Board of Trustees has directed university leadership to organize and provide a more intentional approach to these activities for better student outcomes and to increase retention and graduation rates. Additionally, a group of CWU administrators and faculty are applying to AAC&U's High Impact Practices summer seminar in order to work together on conceptualizing how we can scale up our HIP experiences and how we can create a more intentional instructional program.

CWU is connected to and has a significant impact on its community. The main campus is in a growing agricultural county whose population increases when the CWU students arrive each fall. Students fill many jobs in the community and the university employs approximately 1,700 residents of Ellensburg and neighboring cities. In addition to its academic programs and continuing education offerings, the university provides social and economic contributions and delivers entertainment, recreation, and museum options for residents of the area. The presence of the university brings young, educated people to the region whose research, publications, and creative expressions are a source of nationwide notoriety. Many graduates remain in the area working in professions that support economic growth or teach in the county's schools. There are also several community-based organizations, founded through the university, that serve the varying needs of the county's residents. These include Student Leadership, Involvement, & Community Engagement (SLICE), that is focused on coordinating student involvement in the community and the Allied People Offering Year-Round Outreach (APOYO) food bank that provides ethnically sensitive food and support to members of the community.

As a public institution, the university understands its obligation for financial stewardship. We strive to use our resources effectively while providing a personalized and unique college experience. Our diverse students, experienced faculty, and our connections to the community broaden the impact that the institution has.

CWU remains committed to its mission to be a regional provider of high-quality educational programs that have direct relevance to students' chosen fields. The institution's work in the coming years will remain grounded in its mission and strategic plan.

Part II: Student Achievement

Student achievement at CWU is primarily measured by tracking admissions, enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. These data are reported through the Common Data Set, IPEDS, and the Public Centralized Education Enrollment System (PCHEES). The university's education programs report data annually to the Professional Educators Standards Board (PESB) for Washington state.

Data collection and reporting is managed by the CWU Office of Institutional Effectiveness. More details on their processes and sample reports can be accessed here.

Admissions and Enrollment

The university's admissions efforts focus on key groups of students including first year students, transfer students, online students, returning students, and graduate students. Given the demographics of the population served by the Ellensburg campus, along with the priorities of the university, CWU admissions has recently taken the following steps to attract an increasingly diverse population of students:

- We created an Associate Director of Admissions-Diversity and Inclusivity position
- We've developed a Diversity Recruitment Council that is comprised of university stakeholders
- We've sought out diversity focused recruitment events throughout the PNW
- We offer programming for recruitment in both English and Spanish and have Spanish sessions at our Wildcat Preview Days
- We have increased our recruitment presence in Yakima and tri-cities areas, which are both socioeconomically and ethnically diverse areas with a large percentage of students who are first generation college students
- Our admissions publications show ethnic and gender diversity, and showcase our awards for being LGBTQIA+ friendly

The priorities of the Office of Admissions are:
- Increase CWUs total undergraduate enrollment
- Increase the enrolled percentage of traditionally under-represented student groups (TUSG)
- Increase the full-time first-year retention rate; increase first year persistence of new transfer students; decrease the average time-to-degree for first-time full-time students

In the fall of 2021, the university admitted 1,723 new first year students, 954 new transfer students, and 200 new graduate students. The total number of enrolled students for this past fall was 10,322. Of those students, 41.2% came from traditionally underserved student groups (TUSG). This number has increased by more than 6 points in the past five years.

The race and ethnicity breakdown of CWU's 2021-22 student population is:

Race & Ethnicity	N	%
African American / Black	482	4.7%
Alaska/Native American	70	0.7%
Asian	505	4.9%
European/Middle Eastern/White	5,610	54.3%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	100	1.0%
Latino/Hispanic	1,870	18.1%
Multiracial	949	9.2%
Nonresident Alien	277	2.7%
Not Reported	459	4.4%
Total	**10,322**	**100%**

Retention of First Year Students

Once students are admitted, the university puts a good deal of effort into retaining them. The university has a Retention Task Force that focuses on issues that impact the retention of first year and transfer students including our early alert system and an analysis of student performance on 100- and 200-level classes. The pandemic and state-mandated vaccination requirements have had an impact on recent retention rates but prior to that, the university's retention efforts did appear to be making progress.

Retention of first year full-time students over the past four years has been:

Entry Year	Fall to Fall Retention
2017	69.4%
2018	71.0%
2019	70.7%
2020	68.5%

Fall 2020 to Fall 2021 retention rates for first year full-time students, by race and ethnicity, were:

Race and Ethnicity	Fall to Fall Retention
African American / Black	66.3%
Alaskan/Native American	57.1%
Asian	75.4%
European/Middle Eastern/White	69.6%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	45.8%
Latino/Hispanic	65.8%
Multiracial	67.2%
Nonresident Alien	75.0%
Not Reported	69.8%

Retention of Transfer Students

Typically, full-time transfer students are retained at a higher rate. These rates for the past four year have been:

Entry Year	Fall to Fall Retention
2017	82.92%
2018	81.52%
2019	80.81%
2020	78.34%

The university tracks admission and retention for two classes of transfer students. The first are those who come to the institution with a direct transfer agreement (DTA) Associate's degree and do not need to participate in the university's general education program. The second group

includes those transfer students who have either a non-DTA Associate's degree or have some college but no degree.

The fall 2020 to Fall 2021 retention rates for DTA transfer students, by race and ethnicity, were:

Race and Ethnicity	Fall to Fall Retention
African American / Black	92.86%
Alaskan/Native American	80.00%
Asian	82.14%
European/Middle Eastern/White	84.79%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	100.0%
Latino/Hispanic	80.53%
Multiracial	85.29%
Nonresident Alien	83.78%
Not Reported	100.00%

The Fall 2020 to Fall 2021 retention rates for non-DTA transfer students, by race and ethnicity, were:

Race and Ethnicity	Fall to Fall Retention
African American / Black	75.00%
Alaskan/Native American	100.00%
Asian	67.74%
European/Middle Eastern/White	67.67%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	75.00%
Latino/Hispanic	68.06%
Multiracial	86.84%
Nonresident Alien	78.57%
Not Reported	68.42%

Graduation

As an institution that focuses primarily on excellent teaching and learning, CWU tracks graduation rates as a measure of mission fulfillment and student achievement. Helping students reach graduation requires tight collaboration between Academics and Student Support. Tracking graduation rates allows the institution to have the knowledge it needs to make well-informed improvements to increase those rates. Using typical six-year cycles, the most recent first year full-time first-year (FTFTF) cohort's graduation rate was 54%. Previous rates are:

Cohort	Graduation Rate
2012	55%
2013	58%
2014	58%
2015	54%
Average over 4 years	56%

The 2015 graduation rate for women was 57%, for men, it was 50%. The 2015 FTFTF cohort breaks down by race and ethnicity as follows:

Race and Ethnicity	6-Yr Graduation Rates
African American / Black	28%
Alaskan/Native American	29%
Asian	58%
European/Middle Eastern/White	58%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	33%
Latino/Hispanic	49%
Multiracial	49%
Nonresident Alien	50%
Not Reported	53%

Of those who received financial support, the 2015 graduation rates were 45.8% for Pell recipients, 58.4% for Direct Subsidized Loan recipients, and 58.4% for those students who received neither.

Comparison to Similar Institutions
CWU has selected six similar institutions to compare itself against in terms of acceptance, retention, and graduation. Two of those institutions are similar public comprehensive Washington state institutions. The others are similar institutions, with a mix of graduate and undergraduate programs, from Oregon. Acceptance and retention rates are similar, but graduation rates are an area of focus that CWU can dedicate attention to in the coming years.

Institution	Cost of Attendance	Acceptance Rate	Retention Rate	Graduation Rate (6 year)	# of U/G students
Eastern Washington University	$12K	85%	74%	64.1%	10,379
Western Washington University	$16K	90%	81%	69.0%	18,071
Western Oregon University	$16K	85%	69%	42.9%	4,552
Eastern Oregon University	$15K	98%	68%	56.4%	2,587
Portland State University	$14K	96%	76%	57.9%	18,541
Southern Oregon University	$10K	96%	69%	37.2%	4,449
Central Washington University	$15K	85%	68.5%	53.5%	10,327

Part III: Programmatic Assessment

To illustrate some of the university's assessment efforts and results, two examples are described below. The first is from our Geography department and the second is from our Douglas Honors College.

Example 1: Energy Management 301

Initially developed and offered in 2016, Energy Management 301 was one of the core courses that make up the Integrated Energy Management program.

The course objectives are:

> This course does not attempt to cover a comprehensive survey of the energy management literature. Instead, the overall goal is to explore some of the theories around energy resources, energy-society relationships, energy consumption and demand, sustainability, and energy conservation. The course explores seven inter-related themes: (1) energy policy; (2) environmental regulations; (3) energy standards; (4) energy price volatility; (5) energy audit; and (6) energy management system. The course is organized to allow students to work on sound, well organized, and compelling communication, both written and spoken.

The course-level outcomes are:

> This course is intended to improve both your analytical and critical thinking skills as well as your environmental and energy literacy regarding energy management and energy systems. After completing this course, students should be able to:
>
> - Understand energy management principles
> - Identify and understand energy and environment standards
> - Understand the importance of improving energy efficiency

- Introduce energy management and why there is a need for a common standard
- Explain the role of the energy manager
- Identify the basic concept of energy management and how it works to improve the industrial facility
- Analyze the economic and environmental impact of each energy management decision
- Plan, organize, implement, maintain an energy strategy for short and long terms

To achieve these learner outcomes, students had to read a collection of materials and complete several assignments including:

- Two exams
- Take-home writing assignment
- Student presentation
- Final research paper

After the initial two times this course was run, it was apparent that students were struggling with the take-home writing assignment. The scores on this assessment were not meeting the expectations of the instructor (and course designer), Dr. Elvin Delgado. The assignment's initial description was:

Take-home Writing Assignment (7% of grade)

Students will choose a company to complete a small research project to analyze the company's energy profile. In particular, students will study the company's energy consumption, energy demand, emissions, environmental stewardship, energy management system, energy systems and technologies implemented to meet environmental and energy standards, and achievements. Additional requirements and expectations will be discussed in class. The paper will be five pages long. Submit your work online in Canvas. Go to Assignments and find the assignment titled 'Take-home Assignment'. Submit your file in Word (.doc or .docx).

Upon examination, it appeared that the lower scores were mostly attributed to the following circumstances:

- Lack of understanding of the expectations of the assignment despite the written instructions provided in the course for this assignment.
- Difficulty collecting and analyzing data to develop the company's profile.
- Difficulty identifying reputable sources to support their statements.
- Inability to use the correct citation format, include sources to give credit for the data used from other authors, and include references correctly.
- Basic writing issues such as grammatical errors, syntax problems, and lack of clarity in the constructions of the sentences.

When the course was run again in 2019, several steps were taken to address these lower scores.

The syllabus included a brief description of the assignment similar to the one used in previous years. The instructor discussed the instructions and expectations for the assignment the first day of classes. In addition, the instructor provided additional detailed written instructions for the assignment in Canvas including information about citation and bibliographic references, how to structure and write the assignment, and a detailed rubric showing the different components of the assignment and the points for each one.

The instructor scheduled one-on-one meetings with each student to discuss the company they chose to complete the assignment. During the meetings, the instructor answered questions and clarified any misunderstanding about the expectations for the course. Additionally, the instructor provided ideas about how to approach the project and helped the student find reputable sources of information to complete the assignment.

The instructor also included small lectures in class with additional information that would help students complete the assignment. These lectures reminded students of the assignment throughout the quarter, kept them focused on completing the different components of the assignment, and allowed them to ask questions in class. Some of the topics discussed in the lectures included:

- How to access CWU's library online resources,
- Citation formats, how to use sources, and how to paraphrase information effectively,
- How to include bibliographic references, and
- How to insert tables and figures in Word, including captions and figure numbers.

Finally, the instructor set up calendar reminders in Canvas throughout the quarter reminding students to complete smaller portions of the assignment. For instance, some of the reminders included: choosing the company on week 2, scheduling a meeting with the instructor on week 3, collecting information about the company on week 4, writing an outline to structure the paper on week 6. The goal was to break the assignment into smaller pieces that students could focus their attention on without feeling overwhelmed by the final project. The instructor combined these reminders with the smaller lectures in class about the assignment.

As a result of these steps, the students' scores on this assignment increased significantly as students were better prepared to meet the course outcomes. The first time this course was run, the scores ranged from the 70s to the 90s. The most recent run of this course had no scores lower than 80. Because of these improvements in student performance, these curricular changes are now a permanent part of the course.

Example 2: The Douglas Honors College
The William O. Douglas Honors College (DHC) is characterized by its motto, sapere aude - "Dare to be Wise" - which students and faculty demonstrate through a healthy blend of curiosity,

service, academic rigor, introspection, community, and creative pedagogies. Honors College students are encouraged to consider issues of self and civic identity, to analyze and seek to understand the historical and cultural contexts within which they are imbricated and to reflect on ways they can leverage their strengths to serve their goals, their communities and to contribute to a better world. The DHC program is structured upon four "pillars" of coordinated intellectual engagement:

- Critical Inquiry – In gathering information, evaluating assumptions and biases, while incorporating multiple methods, students are best equipped to produce robust analysis, develop thought, ask meaningful questions, and apply knowledge.
- Leadership - Through the understanding of distinct methods when organizing people, resources, and time, students can become capable directors and effective stewards of collaboration.
- Civic Engagement - Utilizing their growing knowledge, students can identify needs in their communities. With inherent skills, personal values, and political awareness, students can then make effective changes to promote quality of life.
- Undergraduate Research - We provide opportunities to publish and present original work in conference settings. Developing existing scholarship and constructing new ideas as young learners encourages the pursuit of knowledge and understanding.

Once students are admitted to the DHC, they enroll in interdisciplinary courses that are participatory, requiring them to engage with materials, be involved in class discussions, present their ideas both formally and informally, write across the curriculum, engage in active and problem-based learning and take their learning beyond the classroom.

During their time in the DHC students share common intellectual experiences both in the classroom with a flexible core curriculum, and through advising and programming such as speaker series, book clubs, and shared cultural events. DHC coursework is also specifically designed to leverage high impact practices (HIPs) such as the writing across the curriculum focus and the incorporation of project-based pedagogies that promote collaboration amongst students and experiential, community/place-based learning. Through the upper division sequence students develop a proposal for a faculty mentored capstone project and work to complete the project during their final year. The capstone projects are 15–24-month endeavors during which students bring together their major course of study and their Honors education and provide the foundation for moving forward into the next stages of their graduate studies and careers.

Curricular Modifications in the DHC
The Honors College leadership team recently engaged in a curricular change motivated by the need to better prepare our students for success in college and post-graduation and to align its core curriculum with the learning outcomes of the new general education requirements at CWU. This effort led to the following curricular changes:

- Mapped the modified core curriculum to the new general education outcomes allowing students to continue to complete the DHC curriculum as a means of fulfilling their general education requirements. This was intended to address an alignment issue that resulted from changes made to the university's general education program and rendered it out of alignment with the DHC courses. Once back in alignment, DHC students were prepared to meet the program-level outcomes of the general education curriculum.
- Modified the credit requirements to allow a wider range of students to successfully complete the DHC curriculum even if they are taking large plan majors. Too many students were completing only the lower division core but not moving onto the upper division courses and through emails and conversations with students, it became apparent that was because the DHC credit requirement was too high. Since being modified, the new requirements have already resulted in significantly greater retention of students into Upper Division Honors allowing them to fully complete the full four-year Honors curriculum.
- Implemented a "writing across the curriculum" approach to improving student learning outcomes. Students intensively study academic writing, and writing outcomes are integrated into all DHC courses. Yet DHC students in the Core Curriculum did not take a dedicated writing course such as ENG 101/102 or AWI/AWII. Feedback from DHC faculty, the capstone committee members, and the DHC admissions committee indicated the need for additional writing instruction.
- Added the "10 series" (110, 210, 310, and 410) to provide an appropriate seminar for each student in each of their years with the DHC, supporting a cohort-based learning model. A review of transcripts revealed students entering in the same academic year did not have many common experiences across their four years at CWU despite being in the Honors College. Studies of the cohort model have shown it to increase retention especially with women and minoritized student populations. It was important to give students the common experience that the "10 series" provides.
- Included strengths-based development outcomes in the cohort-based yearly seminars to integrate the advising curriculum with the academic curriculum. The Honors College retention and persistence to graduation rates were already strong. However, research has shown that strengths-based development has proven to further increase student retention and persistence to graduation. Additionally, including strengths-based outcomes demonstrates DHC's commitment to holistic student development and academic/career readiness.

Assessment of The Curricular Changes

Beginning in Fall of 2021, the DHC began implementing a revised assessment model to complement the revised curriculum, student success and program initiatives that are underway. The assessment model will collect artifacts from each incoming cohort throughout their academic career. This cohort panel design will allow the DHC to assess the achievement of

program objectives, including the four pillars of the DHC. This will provide a more comprehensive perspective on how well the DHC is meeting its objectives at the program, course, and student levels. An additional possibility for achieving a more complete assessment that is under consideration is the reinstituting of exit interviews/focus groups to allow for a more nuanced qualitative perspective provided directly by students in the program.

Part IV: Update on Recommendations

Following the Fall 2018 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Evaluation, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities provided three recommendations to Central Washington University (CWU) in their letter of 17 January 2019. The 2020 standards that relate to these recommendations are:

1. **Advising** – 2020 Standard 2.G.6 – The institution designs, maintains, and evaluates a systematic and effective program of academic advisement to support student development and success. Personnel responsible for advising students are knowledgeable of the curriculum, program and graduation requirements, and are adequately prepared to successfully fulfill their responsibilities. Advising requirements and responsibilities of advisors are defined, published, and made available to students.
2. **Strategic Planning** – 2020 Standard 1.B.3 – The institution provides evidence that its planning process is inclusive and offers opportunities for comment by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.
3. **Assessment** – 2020 Standard 1.C.7 – The institution uses the results of its assessment efforts to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices to continuously improve student learning outcomes.

The status of each of these recommendations is provided below.

Advising
2018 Recommendation – Evaluate the structure and effectiveness of academic advisement to support student development and success.

Since the most recent NWCCU visit, CWU has made several changes to academic advising. The most notable has been to decentralize this process and embed advisors into the four colleges. This action was taken to provide a higher level of specificity and expertise for students who often need guidance that is specific to their major. Another benefit of this decentralized model is a stronger relationship with faculty mentors with a clear distinction of duties between them and the college-based staff advisors.

Moving the advisors to the four colleges has also allowed the colleges to customize their approach to advising. While there remains a core set of expectations for all advisors, overseen by the Academic Advising Council, embedded advisors can better focus on the specific needs of students in their colleges. The Academic Advising Council is also ensuring that adequate plans

are in place for assessment, communication, professional development, registration, and technical advancement as they relate to advising.

The distribution of the advisors to the colleges is a change that has been in place for a little more than a year. We have seen some clear advantages including:

- Increased clarity around advising roles and responsibilities
- Better tracking to ensure that students meet registration and course completion benchmarks
- Customized advising to better meet the specific need of the students
- Stronger relationships with faculty mentors
- Stronger college identity for the staff advisors

To provide better support, the Advising Directors have created an FAQ page for students can be found [here](.).

There is also a clear charter and strategic direction for academic advising that is overseen by the Academic Advising council and its subcommittees.

This new advising model will continue to be refined over the coming academic year. We will also begin assessing the quality of this decentralized approach as reported by the students who are being served. By the end of the academic year, we will be prepared to share evidence of the effectiveness of this new model using our advising assessment plan found in appendix C.

Strategic Planning
2018 Recommendation – Integrate the division plans into a comprehensive institutional plan that is tied to the core themes and assessment data.

Over the past two years, the university adopted a new process for strategic planning. Each of the individual units was asked to prepare a divisional strategic plan and submit it to a strategic planning system that was developed internally to track progress on the plans centrally. The divisional plans were developed using the contributions from many individuals at different levels in each division. Progress on strategic initiatives is tracked by the individual divisions and reported centrally on a regular basis. CWU's project management office assisted in ensuring that each division's list of strategic initiatives was followed and updated.

Over the course of this academic year, the strategic plan, mission, and vision are all being revised. CWU's new President, Dr. Wohlpart, has selected and convened a mission and vision revision committee that consists of:

- Elvin Delgado, Former Faculty Senate Chair
- Jonathon Henderson, Exempt Employees
- Missy Davis, Classified Employees
- Madeline Koval, Associated Students of CWU
- Jessica Murillo-Rosales, Alumni representing Graduate Students

- Jeff Stinson, Provost's Council
- Jennifer Dechaine, Academic Department Chair Council
- John Vasquez, Student Success
- Lauren Hibbs, University Centers
- Laura Dahlby Nicolai, Athletics
- Sigrid Davison, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Wendy Iwaszuk, Foundation Board, Alum

This team has conducted surveys; held listening sessions with faculty, staff and students; widely circulated ideas for feedback; ensured that stakeholders understood the purpose of the mission and vision; and is now getting ready to share the new mission and vision for open feedback. From the survey, three central themes have emerged, and they will form the framework of the new vision, mission and strategy. These themes are:

- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Belonging (to move away from a deficit model and towards a culturally-sustaining/cultural wealth model)
- Sustainability (broadly considered to include people, planet, profit – or social, environmental, financial – also known as the triple bottom line)
- Engaged Learning (broadly considered to include high impact practices, leadership, active learning, academic rigor and support, critical thinking/communication/collaboration/etc. skills, student success, etc.)

Additional details can be found on the committee updates page. The committee will present the new vision and mission this spring.

Assessment
2018 Recommendation – Collect and use assessment data to document that students have achieved learning outcomes, and the Commission further recommends that the institution use the results of the assessment of student learning outcomes to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices that lead to enhancement of student learning achievements.

At the time of the most recent visit, CWU had a decentralized process for outcomes assessment. There were varied approaches to assessment and how the data were being used. Programs with specialized accreditation tended to follow the requirements of their accreditors which were also varied. The university decided to develop a standardized approach to assessment, one that would be sustainable and structured to provide benefit to programs without undue burden being placed on the faculty.

To centralize and standardize its approach to assessment, CWU has made some significant changes. These changes began with the formation of a university-wide assessment team. Overseen by the Office of the Provost, this team will consist of a University Assessment Director, the Accreditation Liaison Officer, and a representative from each of the four colleges

and the general education program that will serve as Assessment Liaisons. This team will be advised by the University Accreditation Advisory committee that is made up of senior leadership members from Academic and Student Life.

Faculty are firmly responsible for conducting assessments, but the assessment team members will help build the processes, advise faculty about the standardized assessment process, provide professional development and workshops on academic assessment, and will ensure that faculty see the benefits of assessment and are able to use what has been learned to improve curriculum.

To date, the assessment team has created a standardized process for programmatic assessment. This process can be found in appendix B. The first step was to gather and examine the program-level outcomes for all majors and grad programs. A document was drafted that described the proper way to develop program-level outcomes and this was adopted by the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee who now applies these standards to any programs that want to update their outcomes. As of this past December, all program outcomes for every program at CWU were gathered and reviewed to determine which ones needed to be updated. This gave us sufficient times to pass new program outcomes through the Curriculum Council for approval.

Once the outcomes were updated, the next step was to map each outcome to the curriculum to link them to sources of evidence regarding student competence. This process is to be completed by March 31, 2022. The next step in the process will be for the programs to identify standards of performance that will be established for each outcome. This is key to the assessment process as it allows program leads to identify areas where there may be a gap. Then action can be taken to improve the curriculum.

The plan is to select and assess a subset of program outcomes each year. This makes the process less onerous for the faculty as they don't need to assess all outcomes every year. The data generated from the outcomes assessment process will also be used to create yearly program reports that will be retained and used to support program improvement and accreditation efforts.

Assessment of General Education
When the general education courses were built, each one had a list of outcomes, activities, and assessments. These were aligned with the general education outcomes for the area of the program where they reside. This year, we have selected a sampling of general education courses for evaluation. In each case, the course originator has been asked to identify how the course is meeting the general education outcomes by looking at specific aspects of the course and examining sample assignments. The assessment efforts will be documented and aggregated to provide a larger understanding about how students are performing in this program.

Part V: Looking Forward

In the coming months, CWU will be focusing on several initiatives that are designed to take the university to the next level, with a special focus on increasing our enrollment leading to a solid future. We have new leadership in key positions who are helping guide the university into the future with a new vision, mission and strategic plan that will be rolled out toward the end of this academic year. We will use the new strategic plan to establish a clear direction for serving our diverse population of students and we will strengthen our relationships with our community and other key stakeholders.

We expect that the time and effort that has been invested in the development of our new vision, mission, and strategic plan will provide us with a clear definition of mission fulfillment along with metrics to help us improve our performance. Clear priorities will drive our decisions as we work to make progress relative to the three themes that make up the framework for the new strategic plan.

Additionally, in the coming years before the next NWCCU year seven comprehensive evaluation, the university will focus on the following list of priorities:

Enrollments and Retention – The university will focus on outreach and recruitment efforts to expand the number of students it serves at all of its locations and online with the goal being to restore enrollment numbers to pre-pandemic levels.

Academic Planning – In order to be the university of choice and to prepare students for enlightened, responsible, and productive lives our program offerings must be relevant, current, and aligned with the needs of the disciplines our students choose to work in.

Equity – The university will continue its work on the equity scorecard project to identify actions it can take to address equity gaps. It will be important to address the equity issues with retention and graduation rates that are evident in the Student Achievement section of this report. In support of this, the Retention Steering Committee has examined equity gaps in 100- and 200-level courses and the information learned from this effort can be useful in providing professional development for faculty.

Diversity – The university will continue to build on this strength by attracting more students from different backgrounds. We will work to ensure that these students are retained at a higher rate and that the university's infrastructure is able to provide sufficient support for diverse students starting with Orientation and extending all the way through graduation. For a list of current orientation-related diversity initiatives, see appendix D.

Values-Based Budgeting – This year, the university has implemented a new budgeting model where the highest priorities are funded first. One of the impacts of this budgeting model is to provide funding to the academic colleges to offer coursework that meets student scheduling needs so that they can progress through their programs in a timely fashion. This change is

intended to create more collaboration between faculty, departments, and colleges who no longer need to compete for resources.

Creating a Culture of Assessment – Development of the new assessment process is underway, but it will be a multi-year process. We will use technology to implement a sustainable and useful assessment process leading to continuous quality improvement in all programs and support departments.

College-based Advising – There have been a number of positive outcomes to the new college-based advising model, but the work continues to ensure that the new model meets its initial outcomes. The Advising Committee will continue to guide and assess this new model to make improvements and adjustments as needed.

Intentional Stewardship of Public Resources – As a public institution, CWU has always had an obligation to use public money and student tuition responsibly. With the changes coming to higher education overall, it will be even more important utilize the university's resources as efficiently as possible. The university will approach this with an eye toward sensible staffing models, better resource utilization, and well-aligned academic offerings.

Appendix A
Full list of Significant Events Since the Last NWCCU Visit

2022

CWU's undergraduate Psychology and Business programs were ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as a 2022 "Best" Online Program.

CWU researcher and geophysicist Paul Winberry will be joining the Sensitivity of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet 2C project, an internationally-supported effort to determine how the planet will respond to a two-degree Celsius increase in temperature. The project is partially funded by a $2.9 million National Science Foundation grant.

CWU was listed as one of America's Best Online Learning Colleges in 2022 by *Newsweek* magazine, ranking #65 on the list of 150.

2021

CWU's English and Language Arts Education undergraduate program is ranked #1 in the Far Western region by College Factual, an online college ranking service.

Four CWU degree programs are ranked #1 Best Values in the state of Washington (Drama & Theater Arts, Nutrition Science, the Health & Physical Education master's degree, and the Nutrition Science master's degree), according to Grad Degree Search, an online ranking service.

CWU's Natural Resources & Conservation program is ranked #1 best value in the Far Western U.S. region, according to Grad Degree Search, an online ranking service.

A number of CWU academic programs have been ranked as the best among universities and colleges in the state of Washington in 2021, according to TeachingDegreeSearch.com, on online college ranking service, including:

#1 Best Value Teacher Education Grade Specific Bachelor's Degree Schools in Washington

#1 Best Value General Education Bachelor's Degree Schools in Washington

#1 Best Value Special Education Bachelor's Degree Schools in Washington

CWU is ranked one of the top 10 Best Value Colleges in the state of Washington in 2021, according to SmartAsset, an online technology company that provides personal financial advice on the web.

U.S. News and World Report has ranked CWU as one of the nation's best online bachelor's degree programs in 2021. The ranking reflects factors such as CWU's commitment to online learning, the cost of the program, and breadth of course offerings. U.S. News also ranked CWU as one of the Best Online Bachelor's Programs for Veterans and as offering one of the best online master's programs in Criminal Justice.

CWU has made Sierra Magazine's 2020 list of "Cool Schools." The publication, which is the national magazine of the Sierra Club, ranks four-year universities and two-year community colleges on factors such as research, curriculum, campus and public engagement, air and climate, diversity, energy efficiency, and innovation.

Money Magazine has ranked CWU on its 2020-21 Best Colleges list. Central ranked fourth in the state of Washington.

CWU is ranked #1 in the nation for best online master's degree in higher education program by Intelligent.com, a Seattle-based online publication that focuses on higher education.

CWU is ranked #2 as best online college in Washington state, according to Valuecolleges.com, a national college ranking website.

CWU became the first higher education institution in the state to invest in a hybrid police vehicle -- leading the way with regard to sustainability. The CWU Police Department is helping the institution meet its sustainability goals by adding an energy-efficient Tesla to its fleet of patrol cars.

CWU Business Student Team "No Chain, No Gain" took home first place at the 2021 Boeing Northwest Case Competition, making CWU the winningest university in the contest's history.

CWU's Online Bachelor's in Professional and Creative Writing was ranked #9 nationally on the list for Best Online Bachelor's in English Degrees by bestdegreeprograms.org.

CWU Science Department hosted a virtual launch party to unveil the new NASA [National Aeronautics and Space Administration] James Webb Telescope on December 4, 2021.

CWU earned the prestigious Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from *INSIGHT Into Diversity Magazine* for the seventh time in the last eight years—more than any other institution in Washington state.

CWU joined a new statewide admissions program to make the college application process easier and more accessible for prospective students. The Guaranteed Admissions Pilot (GAP), introduced in November 2021 by the Washington State Council of Presidents, gives high school students who meet certain criteria a direct pathway to higher education at CWU and four other public institutions in the state. At CWU, graduating high school seniors who earn at least a 3.0 cumulative grade-point average and complete the College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs) are guaranteed a place for the next academic year. Students still must complete the application process, but GAP provides incentive for those who may not realize they have access to a college education. Twenty-five school districts signed MOUs with CWU in 2021.

CWU ranks #8 nationwide for graduation rates of both LatinX and underrepresented minority students, according to College Results Online. CWU was ranked alongside 50 similar universities across the U.S.

CWU is listed top of class for Diverse Organizational Impact and Transformation by *Diverse: Issues In Higher Education magazine* in their July and September issues. Central was showcased as a leader and example of best practices in Institutional Representation/Composition and Cultivating Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Institutional Climates with Intentionality.

NASA - National Aeronautics and Space Administration announced that it will deliver $8.5 million over the next four years to Central Washington University to help recruit and inspire the next generation of scientists and science teachers in underrepresented communities.

CWU was awarded its second Inspiring Programs in STEM Award (2019 and 2021) from *INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine*. CWU-sponsored Círculo de Matemáticas en Español — also known as Kittitas Valley Spanish Language Math Circles received this year's honor.

Two student media outlets rose to the top of their respective fields this spring, earning top honors in the annual Society of Professional Journalists Mark of Excellence Awards contests. CWU's student newspaper *The Observer* and *PULSE magazine* both took home the Best All-Around awards in their categories in the region. In addition, *PULSE* was a national finalist in the Best Magazine category. CWU-Des Moines has announced that it will be launching a new undergraduate Bachelor of Science Computer Science Program in January 2022. Designed to address the strong demand for computer science professionals in the greater Seattle area, the new program seeks to prepare more CWU students for careers in the Northwest technology industry.

CWU is introducing the state's first Master of Education specialization in STEM Leadership this fall for elementary through 12th grade teachers who want to improve science, technology, engineering and math offerings in their districts. The program is geared toward the needs of teachers, allowing them to attend classes in the summer, instead of during the school year.

In fall 2021, a new Fashion Marketing specialization was launched as part of the Apparel, Textiles and Marketing program. CWU is the only school in Washington offering this unique degree within a growing field.

Faculty members from CWU and Yakima Valley College came together this spring to publish a Council for Undergraduate Research journal article that examined the insights gleaned from a five-year observation of YVC's ongoing Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE). The research highlighted the important role community colleges play in developing university-level researchers.

National Science Foundation (NSF) has appointed Central Washington University Professor of Environmental and Analytical Chemistry Anne Johansen as section head of atmospheric sciences. Johansen has been working with the NSF as acting section head since November 2020, but with this appointment, she steps into the role in a more official, long-term capacity.

Central Washington University won two Emmy Awards. The Northwest chapter of NATAS recognized "Nick on the Rocks" episodes in categories of Environmental Science and Informational/Instructional.

A record 17 CWU Psychology graduate students will be assisting school districts across the state next fall when they complete the new School Psychology Educational Specialist program this summer. "We've been very encouraged to see our grads going to local school districts because there is such a need right now," Graduate program director Heath Marrs said. "We're glad we can help ease the shortage this year, and it's also nice that they will be spread out around the state."

CWU McNair Scholars Kahmina Ford and Leni Halaapiapi were awarded the prestigious National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship Grant. This award is providing them with three years of graduate research funding and five years of access to career resources like internships and mentorships.

CWU student broadcasters earned top honors at the 81st annual Intercollegiate Broadcasting System (IBS) conference. A record 14 CWU students were named finalists for 22 awards at this year's IBS conference.

The Washington State Legislature passed a pair of resolutions honoring outgoing CWU President James L. Gaudino for his more than 12 years of service.

Appendix B
Assessing Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Program Assessment Plans require:

1. **Identify Courses to Assess (Who and When Assessed)**: Identify courses where specific PLOs are likely to be achieved and that can include an assignment or activity that can be used as a method of assessment.

2. **Method of Assessment**: What methods will be used to determine if students have met the standards and performance criteria established?
   - **Using Rubrics for Assessment of PLOs in Class Assignments or Essays**

3. **Standard of Mastery/Criterion of Achievement**: What benchmarks or indicators of success are you using to determine if the outcome(s) has been satisfactorily met by the students?

4. **Discussion and Evaluation of the Findings**: What do the data that result from your assessment method(s) show about student learning relative to your PLOs?

5. **Use of Results (Closing the Loop)**: How will findings be used to improve teaching and learning or be used to modify future assessment methods or standards?

Identify Courses to Assess (Who and When Assessed)

A **curriculum map** is a graphic that illustrates how courses in your program contribute to PLOs. It can visually indicate where specific learning takes place and at what level of engagement.

Examination of a curriculum map can provide the following information:

- Identify courses where specific PLOs are likely to be achieved.
- Identify courses that include an assignment or activity that might be used for assessment of PLOs.
- Identify courses in which the course learning outcomes are not related to any PLOs.
- Identify gaps in the curriculum. An example of a gap would be identifying a PLO that does not appear to be addressed as well as might be desired (e.g., a program might identify writing as a PLO but only one or two courses include SLOs related to the quality of writing, and none of these do more than introduce writing skill).

- Suggest questions about the need for sequencing courses within the curriculum or modifying existing sequences of courses

Capstone courses are typically points in the curriculum where PLOs can be integrated into assignments. Curriculum maps may also identify points to collect assessment data either early in the curriculum in order to evaluate pre-to-post gains within the program or as the student progresses through to curriculum in order to assess the success of scaffolding within a course sequence.

Method of Assessment

Question: *Why can't you just use average course grades to assess achievement of PLOs?*

> **Answer:** Accreditors do not recommend using course grades to assess learning outcomes. They argue that course grades, especially at the undergraduate level, often include class participation, attendance, and other behavior not directly related to PLOs. Further, average final grades provide no insights into relative strengths and weaknesses of students across the various components of the outcome so cannot be used to effectively "close-the-loop" in evaluating how to improve teaching or learning.

Generally speaking, there are two types of assessment methods. **Direct assessment methods** are measures of learning that require students to display their actual knowledge and skills (rather than report what they think their knowledge and skills are). Because direct assessment taps into students' actual learning (rather than perceptions or learning) it is often seen as the preferred type of assessment. Types of direct assessment methods can include:

- Embedded questions in assignments: Questions related to program learning outcomes are embedded within course exams or assignments.
- Exams with objective questions: An objective exam aligned with program learning outcomes can be developed locally or standardized tests may be used. Pre- and post-measures can be utilized.
- Observations: Can be of any social phenomenon, such as student presentations, students working in the library, or volunteering in the community.
- Collective portfolios: Faculty assemble samples of student work from various classes.

Indirect assessment methods ask students to reflect on their learning rather than to actually demonstrate it.

- Reflective essays: Students are asked to reflect on a selected issue related to learning outcomes. Content analysis or rubrics can be used to analyze results.

- Exit interviews or surveys: Students leaving the program are interviewed or surveyed to obtain feedback on strengths and weaknesses of the program and/or assess relevant concepts, theories or skills.
- Focus groups: A series of carefully planned discussions among students who are asked a pre-set series of open-ended questions about their beliefs, attitudes, and experiences in the program. The session is recorded for analysis of reoccurring themes and representative comments.

A combination of direct and indirect assessment methods can be utilized. In measuring the success or failure of SLOs, it is best to use multiple methods of measurement as this allows for the evaluation of student learning in a more comprehensive and effective manner.

For assessment techniques that require subjective evaluation, **a smaller representative sample** of the whole can be selected for evaluation **using rubrics to assess student learning outcomes.** Generally, a good sample size is at least 20 percent of student enrollment in a program, with a minimum of five students.

Using Rubrics for Assessment of PLOs in Class Assignments or Essays

Once you have mapped PLOs to assignments in specific courses, develop rubrics for assignments that involve subjective ratings of performance. The rubric should be structured with your learning outcomes in mind.

Establish the criteria. What are the performance dimensions associated with the learning outcome? What are the critical components of the student performance that you need to capture as evidence of learning when assessing the work?

Identify the rating scale for your rubric. What is the appropriate scale for measuring each student's performance on these dimensions?

- Holistic scales – provide an overall evaluation; appropriate for assessment that does not require specific feedback;
- Checklist – appropriate for assessment criteria that can be addressed using a dichotomous scale (e.g., Yes/No);
- Rating scales – provide feedback on the performance level; appropriate for assessment that does not require specific description of each performance level;
- Analytic scales – provides detailed description of each performance level.

Examples of these scale types are provided in an appendix at the end of this document.

Pilot the rubric. Is the rubric valid and reliable? Share the rubric with colleagues. Test the rubric on samples of student work. If you are using multiple raters, hold a session to discuss common definitions, standards, and expectations for quality. Practice using the rubric on the same pieces of work and comparing ratings to determine the consistency in judgments across raters.

Develop a sampling plan for selecting work to be assessed with the rubric.

Compare the results to the program's target or benchmark for performance on that PLO. The next section provides an overview on benchmark setting or establishing a Standard of Mastery. The **Standard of Mastery** is the average performance or percentage of students who achieved a certain target that the program aspires to or considers to be a minimum threshold for success in achieving the PLO.

Standard of Mastery/Criterion of Achievement

The next decision to be made is to set benchmarks. What score on the assignment or set of multiple-choice questions indicates that a student has "met" the objective? Would you be satisfied with an individual student score of 75% or would you expect a 90%?

The benchmark depends on the objective. In some cases, 75% might be enough. In other cases, for example, nurses learning to do injections, you probably want your benchmark closer to 100%.

The next question to address is the level of overall performance you will accept as evidence that your students, collectively, have "met the objective." That is, what performance level will you accept as evidence of success for all the students in your program and what level will lead you to want to make changes?

Typically, rubric criteria or test questions in which fewer than 50% of students reach your benchmark or standard of mastery are useful to investigate further when "closing-the-loop" to determine how to improve teaching or the assessment process.

Example benchmarks or standards of mastery could be:

- At least 80% of students will be ranked at acceptable or exceptional in subject content knowledge, written communication, and oral communication skills. (Threshold based on rubric)
- 100% of students will successfully complete the ethics training and lab safety training.
- By graduation, 80% of students will have participated in a volunteer experience related to the field of study.
- 80% of students will successfully complete specific courses within the program within a two-year period.

This document's source materials include:

College of Coastal Georgia's Office of Institutional Effectiveness (2016). *Program Assessment Planning Guide*.https://www.ccga.edu/uploaded/Institutional_Effectiveness/CCGA_Program_Assessment_Planning_Guide.pdf

University of North Carolina's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (2017). *Using Rubrics to Assess Student Learning Outcomes at the Program Level*. https://oira.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/297/2017/07/Developing-and-Using-Rubrics.pdf

APPENDIX

EXAMPLES OF RUBRIC RATING SCALES

Holistic scales allow the rater to assign a single score based on an overall judgment of the student work. The holistic scales include global indicators, but may lack specific feedback needed to target student growth.	**Excellent writer 6** — The essay clearly states a position, provides support for the position, raises a counter argument or objection, and refutes it. The evidence, both in support of the position and in refutation of counterpositions, is persuasive and original (that is, drawn from the student's own observations, not borrowed). The essay tackles a significant objection or counterargument, not a trivial one. The relationships between position, evidence, counterargument, and refutation are clear, and the essay does not contain extraneous or irrelevant information. **Good writer 5** — The essay states a position, supports it, raises an objection or counterargument, and refutes it. The essay may, however, contain one or more of the following ragged edges: evidence is not uniformly persuasive or original; the counter-argument is not a very serious threat to the position; one has to read between the lines to see relationships between ideas and some ideas seem out of place or irrelevant. **Average Writer 4** — The essay states a position and raises a counterargument, but their is well developed. The objection or counterargument considered may lean toward the trivial. The essay may also seem disorganised. Nonetheless, the essay should receive a 4 in acknowledgement of the cognitive complexity of the task. It is more difficult to address arguments and counterarguments than it is simply to support one line of argument. **Fair writer 3** — The essay states a position, provides strong and original evidence supporting the position, and is well organised. However, the essay does not address possible objections or counterarguments. Thus, even though the support seems stronger and the essay may be more well organised than the 4 essay, it should not receive more than a 3. **Weak writer 2** — The essay states a position and provides some support, but it doesn't do it very well. Evidence is scanty, general, trivial or not original. The essay achieves its length largely through repetition of ideas and inclusion of irrelevant information. The overall impression is that the essay has been dashed off at the last minute. **Very weak writer 1** — The essay does not state the student's position on the issue. Instead, it restates the position presented in the assignment and summarizes the evidence discussed in the text or in class. The essay may include an occasional I agree with, but it provides nothing beyond what was said in class or in the readings. The essay receives a 1 rather than a 0 because there may be some merit to being able to summarise what the author of the text said. Source : Gibbs, G., Habeshaw, S. and Habeshaw, T, (1986). *53 Interesting Ways to Assess Your Students. Technical and Educational Services:Bristo*, pp. 11-26.
Checklists are dichotomous (e.g. Yes/No; Met/Not Met) and easy to use; however, they may not provide substantive information regarding performance levels.	See checklist below

Interactive Presentation Checklist	Yes	No
Time Management		
1. Did I use my time at an even pace, completing all sections of the presentation?		
2. Did I set up and begin promptly?		
Organization		
3. Was the flow of my presentation and material logical and smooth?		
4. Were all the presented materials well-organized and readily available?		
Resource use		
5. Did I use different media to present my information?		
6. Did I use the most important media for the kind of information I presented?		
Audience Awareness		
7. Did I make frequent eye contact with my audience?		
8. Did I vary my voice to suit my presentation?		
9. Did I present my material in a way that suited my audience?		
Aesthetics		
10. Did I present myself in a professional way in my dress and grooming?		
11. Did I hand out and use materials that were ascetically pleasing?		

Rating scales identify a range of performance without specific descriptors for each performance level. They may not provide sufficient information for raters to score consistently and the feedback to students may not be specific enough for revision or future growth.

Rating Scale Example: Computer Program Quality Assessment

Expected Learning Outcome: The student will write efficient, documented, error-free computer programs that meet the specifications.

Criteria for Success: A maximum of one item is rated as "Below Expectations".

Computer Program	Below Expectations=1	Meets Expectations=2	Exceeds Expectations=3	Comments
Achieves what it was designed to do				
Operates without errors				
Source code is efficient				
Source code is well- documented				

Exceeds Expectations = Performance is above the expectations stated in the outcomes.

Meets Expectations = Performance meets the expectations stated in the outcomes.

Below Expectations = Performance does not meet the expectations stated in the outcomes.

Analytic scales articulate specific levels of performance for each individual criterion. Scoring using analytic scales is typically more consistent and specific areas of growth can be identified. The analytic scales take more time to develop.

Analytic Scale Rubric for Evaluating a Portfolio

	1	2	3	4	Score
Portfolio Requirement	Poor ePortfolio is missing more than 4 minimum requirements as stated in the syllabus.	Fair ePortfolio is missing 3 minimum requirements as stated in the syllabus.	Good ePortfolio meets all minimum requirements as stated in the syllabus.	Exceptional ePortfolio meets all minimum and above requirements as stated in the syllabus.	
Creative use of Technology	Poor No use of graphics, Internet resources, photographs, sound and /or video to enhance ePortfolio and reflective statements.	Fair Little use of graphics, Internet resources, photographs, sound and /or video to enhance ePortfolio and reflective statements.	Good Some use of graphics, Internet resources, photographs, sound and /or video to enhance ePortfolio and reflective statements.	Exceptional Good use of graphics, Internet resources, photographs, sound and /or video to enhance ePortfolio and reflective statements.	
Artifacts	Poor Most artifacts and work samples are unrelated to the purpose of the course and portfolio.	Fair Few artifacts and work samples are related to the purpose of the course.	Good Most artifacts and work samples are related to the purpose of the course and portfolio.	Exceptional All artifacts and work samples are clearly and directly related to the purpose of the course and portfolio.	
Organization & Writing	Poor The text has many errors in grammar capitalization, punctuation, and spelling requiring major editing and revision.	Fair The text has errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling requiring editing and revision.	Good The text has a few errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling requiring editing and revision. Easy to read and navigate.	Exceptional The text has no errors in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. Easy to read and navigate.	
Reflections	Poor Considerable difficulty in expressing reflections demonstrates level of students' progress and knowledge development. Reflections incorporate the what, so what and now what in artifacts.	Fair Difficulty expressing and reflecting demonstrates level students' progress and knowledge development. Reflections incorporate the what, so what and now what in artifacts.	Good Most reflections demonstrate students' progress and knowledge development. Reflections incorporate the what, so what and now what in artifacts.	Exceptional All reflections demonstrate students' progress and knowledge development. Reflections incorporate the what, so what and now what in artifacts	

Appendix C
Advising Assessment for Continuous Quality Improvement

Framework based on NWCCU 2020 Standard 2.G.6

As a university, we need a program of advising assessment that allows us to show that we are complying with three parts of the NWCCU standard on advising. We need to be able to show that:

1. **The institution designs, maintains, and evaluates a *systematic* and *effective* program of academic advisement to support student *development and success*.**

As evidenced by:
- Student satisfaction surveys – satisfaction with advising experience
  - Ensure a representative sample – Validity of measure
  - Get the total picture – Not just an anecdotal sample of a few loud voices
- Utilize NSSE points on advising for longitudinal measures
- As quantitative metrics, track retention and time to graduation with the new model to ensure they remain the same or improve.
- Ask students how knowledgeable their advisors were – onboarding and continuous

2. **Personnel responsible for advising students are knowledgeable of the curriculum, program and graduation requirements, and are adequately prepared to successfully fulfill their responsibilities.**

As evidenced by:
- Completion of an advising training program – Both for advisors and faculty. The content will be driven by professional development subcommittee of the AAC.
- Possible metrics: 1) The percentage of people who complete minimum training and 2) those that exceed it.
- AAC and professional development subcommittee to define minimums.
- Possibly rolled out via the Central Learning Academy. Becomes training that all new staff advisors / faculty advisors complete.
- Separate out benchmarks for onboarding (basics) and continuous learning for curricular and policy changes.

3. **Advising requirements and responsibilities of advisors are defined, published, and made available to students.**

As evidenced by:
- All students who need advisors can get access to one. At all instructional locations and for online students.
- Advising resources are effective and online and in print. Define the roles. Let students know what their responsibilities are. The resources are easy to find. Check with advising directors to see how they feel about this. Put this on each of the college's websites. Delineate these roles

clearly. Role differences for staff advisors and faculty advisors. Roles and responsibilities for advisors / students.

- Students in my.cwu need to see who their advisors are and who their faculty mentor / advisors.
- Utilize previous assessment work that shows the how well students are learning to use available advising resources. Possibly use UNIV 101 as a way to assess how students are using these materials. Talk with other directors about assessment strategies in this area.

Sharing assessment results – Don't just gather the data but use it for continuous improvement. Use assessment data to make changes and then verify that those changes had an impact. How will the training subcommittee use the assessment data to improve their training?

Appendix D
Orientation Initiatives for a Diverse Student Population

1. We use our demographic information, specifically the items below to inform our decision making.

   a. 45% of our incoming FY student are the first in their family to attend college. This creates a unique set of needs. We have learned that to best serve all student we must design our programs with those students with the greatest needs at the forefront of our minds. Then we can create pathways for all students within the framework we have built.

      The first gen population is of interest in that there is high percentage of sub-populations we as an institution have identified with risk predictors for persistence.
      -58% of our FY first generation students are from Traditionally Underrepresented Student Groups
      -56% of our FY First Generation student are Pell eligible
      -34% of our FY First Gen students Identify as Latinx/Hispanic this is 12% higher than the overall FY population.

   b. Gen Z students value their parent/support network member contributions during this transition.

2. EMBARK, formerly known as CENTRAL 101/301 is important as it provides foundational information to incoming students and their support networks. This is information that students need to be successful. Students desire the opportunity to complete some components of orientation when they want. This provides that flexibility. It is designed so that it can be completed in about 20 minutes but can be broken down into several times if desired. We are working to combine the experience for all students into one course using sections to drive completion of certain components and simple labeling for different populations. This information/course serves as bridge as they begin their orientation process.

   a. During the first quarter on campus, we do provide weekly newsletters to provide students with information and resources as they need it.

3. The Wildcat Guide [Spring, Summer, Fall] was created to address several areas; first knowing that many of our student are first gen and low income, research shows that these families experience the effects of the "Digital Divide" at statistically higher rate; second in this population (and others) support network members are looking for ways to see what their students see and experience to better support and understand the challenges their students will face.
   a. By printing and mailing the 1st edition of the Wildcat Guide students and families could all access the information.

    b. Subsequent issues provide students with information that can easily be reference and is timely to their experience.

4. Finances and the cost to attend college also continues to be an area we are seeking to address. To do that we have employed several different methods.
   a. Shifted from a 2-day to a 1-day required orientation session to alleviate the financial strain on our working student.
   b. We also do not assess the orientation fee until financial aid is available to cover these costs. As an access institution we must continue to find ways to provide pathways for students regardless of financial ability. We have historically also reduced or waived ~2% of fees.

5. Todos Somos Familia is a program designed for and by native Spanish speakers. At this session we focus on core transition elements and creating a sense of community. We provide shirts to each family member (down to child's small) believing that family plays a significant factor in a student's choice of institution. This session is more than a translation of content, rather it is an intentionally designed session to address issues of concern to our Spanish language families. We spend time talking about paying for college, housing & dining, medical services, campus safety. We also focus on the legacy of the prior and current students, faculty, and staff. In English we often say It takes a Village, in Spanish, Todos Somos Familia in the same way focuses on community and the role it plays in student success.

6. Our Parent and Family Programs works to empower support network members. We reinforce their importance in their student's success and discuss ways to help them in a productive and developmental manner. Our "Parent/Families in Transition" program has received ongoing feedback that it is very useful in helping them understand what both they and their student are feeling. Families that feel respected are also powerful ambassadors for Central back in their communities/schools.

7. Wildcat Success Day: Your Resource Refresher is another program that we created to help students persist from one quarter to the next. At this event we have core resources available to provide support to students as key dates and deadlines approach.

8. Associated Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives
   - Affinity Ribbons
   - Promotion of Gender Pronouns within Canvas
   - Promotion of the Equity Service Council (ESC) and Diversity and Equity Center (DEC) events
   - Shift to "chosen" name instead of "preferred" name
   - Working on identifying Spanish Language web content
   - Intentional inclusion of bilingual ability for Orientation
   - Utilization of the Cultural Wellness: To promote Celebration of Diversity and Inclusion
   - Orientation Staff trained to support all students, specifically students who may be transitioning
   - Students in transition session addresses gender, sexual minority, disability, race and other identity issues

- Orientation Leaders' training and development focuses on individual identity, privilege and belonging
- Welcome Week, and First Six Weeks and in EMBARK there are education components addressing and supporting these issues
- Orientation staff have actively recruited and hired a diverse staff with members with identities across that seek to reflect those found within our student populations
- Wildcat Guide seeks to address and support success by providing language and support (i.e. Impostorship syndrome, affinity groups...)
- Events that celebrate different cultures during Welcome Week: In the Heights (Latinx), Drag Show (LGBTQ)
- Land Acknowledgement a part of core events/publications