



Eastern Oregon University

Ad Hoc Self-Evaluation Report

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EOU Response to Recommendation 3 and Recommendation 4 from the fall 2018 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Self-Evaluation Report

September 15, 2020

Introduction

This Ad Hoc Report was requested as a follow-up to the NWCCU Comprehensive Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Self-Evaluation, which was conducted on-site via peer review committee in October 2018. Eastern Oregon University received four recommendations from the Commission as a result of this visit, and this report addresses Recommendation #3 and Recommendation #4. These Recommendations will be addressed again as part of the Mid Cycle report expected in fall 2021.

Text of Recommendations #3 and #4

Recommendation #3: Fully implement and sustain an effective system of evaluation of all its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered, to evaluate achievement of clearly identified program goals or intended outcomes and evaluate the impacts of program and service changes (Standard 4.A.2).

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

Both Recommendation #3 and Recommendation #4 are concerned with the EOU's systems of assessment and evaluation. This response first describes the systems that are in place at EOU, and then for each Recommendation, the report emphasizes and illustrates how these processes address the specific concerns outlined in the Recommendations.

Note that the response focuses on EOU's assessments of programs and services, rather than Core Theme assessments. This is in keeping with EOU's move away from using Core Themes to characterize our institutional progress, in favor of maintaining an undiluted focus on the outcomes and measures that are directly related to the mission and strategic plan. This transition was undertaken gradually and almost seamlessly, with Core Theme outcomes adjusted annually to become more closely aligned with strategic plan outcomes.

Student Learning Assessment and Evaluation at EOU

EOU has been evaluating and improving Student Learning Outcomes since well prior to 2008, as demonstrated in the [2008 Self-Study](#). In the referenced pages, it will be seen that each academic program analyzed the results of their Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) assessments and recommended improvements. That is, they evaluated their efforts with an eye toward improving both student performance and program effectiveness. This process has continued through 2020, with future assessments scheduled out to 2028, as can be seen on the [Academic Program Assessment](#) site. The first page of the Academic Program Assessment site highlights the current assessment focus, while Archive links are provided at the bottom of the page for 2018-2030, 2015-2018, and 2009-2015, respectively.

Examining each of the program assessment reports demonstrates that each faculty member analyzes and evaluates the results of his or her assessment in a Closing the Loop Statement, with an additional evaluative note by the Vice Provost for Academic Quality (VPAQ). The faculty conducting the assessments share their reports with their program faculty so everyone aligns with the plans for improvement. At the end of the academic year, upon completion of the assessment of a particular outcome, the VPAQ writes a Composite Report, aggregating the data from all the programs, summarizing the results, highlighting strengths revealed in the data, noting gaps and recommending improvements. The academic program improvement plans are entered into the annual Academic Program Reviews (APRs) for follow through the next academic year, when Improvement Reports are submitted. In these ways, evaluation with an emphasis on teaching and learning improvement is continuous.

General Education Learning Outcomes (GLOs) assessments parallel the PLO cycle. There is a similar history and future plans for assessing student performance of our GLOs and evaluating the results in Composite Reports. The results also become part of the annual APR in each discipline. EOU's GLOs are comprised of [Communication](#), [Critical Thinking](#), [Inquiry](#), and [Civic Engagement](#). That process has also been in place since 2008. GLOs are assessed and evaluated on a rotating basis, mirroring the same outcomes assessed in the annual PLO cycle. Examining the GLO reports again demonstrates that each faculty member analyzes and evaluates the results of his or her assessment in a Closing the Loop Statement. The VPAQ writes an additional evaluative statement. The faculty conducting the assessments share their reports with their program faculty so everyone in the program aligns with the plans for improvement. The improvement plans are entered into the annual APRs for follow through the ensuing academic year, when Improvement Reports are submitted. At the end of the academic year, upon completion of the assessment of a particular outcome, the VPAQ writes a composite report, aggregating the data from all the programs, summarizing the results, highlighting strengths revealed in the data, noting gaps and recommending improvements. In these ways, evaluation with an emphasis on improvement of teaching and learning with respect to GLOs is continuous.

An important part of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) evaluation is reflection on the outcomes and criteria themselves. Faculty are normed on those for GLOs; workshops at the beginning of each year help faculty reflect on the efficacy of their PLO outcomes and criteria. Collaborating, they see which programs have better articulated exactly what they want their majors to learn and be able to do. At that point, there is an opportunity to refine outcomes and criteria before entering the assessment cycle that year.

The VPAQ's Composite Reports are shared with the university community and serve as a guide for faculty development workshops, sponsored by the [Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment](#) (CTLA). In AY 19, CTLA sponsored 49 faculty development events, with a total of 442 participants (duplicated count), and 15,315 contact hours (number of participants times the number of hours). In AY 19, CTLA sponsored 99 assessment-focused events, with a total of 218 participants (duplicated count), and 53,782 contact hours. In addition, CTLA each year sponsors a Summer Teaching Institute (STI) focused on improving teaching and learning. The STI application asks faculty applicants to identify areas to focus on in the summer institute, ensuring the connection between program and self-evaluation. During the ensuing academic year, participants share the knowledge and pedagogical approaches developed in the STI with the wider university community of practice through Teaching and Learning Technology Roundtables, twice a month.

Year to year, EOU meets its targets for student learning as assessed by GLOs and PLOs. On a three-point scale and using composite medians, the target for GLOs is 85% scoring a 3 (Proficient) or 2 (Adequate); for PLOs' it is 100% scoring a 3 or 2. Because targets are met more often than not, most improvements are procedural and/or conceptual. Additionally, individual academic programs refine their outcomes, criteria, and assignment designs through reverse design protocols based on gathered data and evidence, collected in the SLO assessment process and outcomes workshops. Thus, teaching and learning improvement is continuous, based on assessment data, evaluation, and workshops, with full faculty and academic program involvement. In fact, faculty and programs drive continuous SLO improvement through a process of assessment and evaluation. The results are fed into Academic Affairs strategic goals and, when warranted, budget requests are submitted to the Budget and Planning Committee. At that level, the assessment results and process are again evaluated, before the budget request is forwarded to the Cabinet, where another evaluation occurs. This process is part of EOU's university-wide Institutional Effectiveness processes, which ensures that SLO assessment is central to EOU's strategic plan, [The Ascent](#), and that a thorough evaluation of the assessment process occurs regularly.

Institutional Planning and Evaluation Processes at EOU

EOU's annual planning and evaluation process has been consistently applied without hiatus, even as it has been gradually modified and improved. The process [follows an annual cycle](#) and is centred around our individual and collective progress towards our strategic plan, [The Ascent 2029](#), which encompasses 6 broad Goals, each with 2 or 3 Objectives, and multiple Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The Institutional Monitoring Metrics that EOU uses to measure progress towards its Strategic Goals were focussed in earlier years on [EOU's Core Theme Objectives](#). Small annual changes over the years have resulted in the [current set of Monitoring Metrics](#), which is very closely aligned with the Strategic Plan KPIs. A [crosswalk relating Core Theme Objectives to the Strategic Plan KPIs](#) was developed to help ensure that EOU's focus remained consistent even as changes were being introduced.

The institutional effectiveness process is structured to ensure that the priorities articulated in The Ascent 2029 guide decisions on resource allocation and the application of institutional capacity. There are multiple opportunities for evaluation of programs and services woven into the process. The places where evaluation most clearly occurs are:

- Annual Departmental Reports. Each department or unit monitors and reports on unit KPIs (which are self-selected and not the same as The Ascent 2029 KPIs) for the major functions that unit has identified. Departmental reports follow a [report template](#) in which each of the unit goals must be related to a Goal from The Ascent 2029. Informed by data on current performance, each unit evaluates their achievements and identifies actions to improve performance.
- Budget requests. Units are expected to modify their internal resource allocation in order to implement improvements that will help progress toward departmental and ultimately institutional goals, as measured by the unit and institutional KPIs. Units may also request additional resources by submitting a [Scope Document](#) to the responsible Vice President. The [Scope Document template](#) incorporates an evaluative process by including a description of the need, the plan for improvement, and the expected

outcomes in terms of the KPIs. The highest priority requests are incorporated into the annual budget cycle.

- Budget & Planning Committee review. The Budget and Planning Committee makes [recommendations concerning institutional budget allocations](#) to the University Council, which provides recommendations to the Executive Cabinet. The Budget & Planning Committee is expected to review and analyze data on the institutional KPIs and to ensure that their recommendations are aligned with the EOU mission, Core Themes, Objectives, and The Ascent 2029.
- Executive Cabinet review. The Executive Cabinet, based on Budget & Planning Committee input and their own review of performance, undertakes another evaluative process as they prioritize requests and make recommendations to the President, who in turn approves the final budget request that is submitted to the Board of Trustees.

Progress reviews and evaluations of activities are incorporated into processes at all levels of the Institution. VP's evaluate and discuss their progress towards goals with the President each quarter, with VP level reporting expected to include information on gaps, analysis of results, and discussion of future priorities. The President's Cabinet also engages in a bi-annual discussion of progress. Just as Departments across campus are expected to evaluate their progress annually, the committees, teams, and groups at EOU are expected to engage in an evaluative process to assess their impact, adjust targets, and modify plans if necessary. Some good examples from the previous year are the work of the Strategic Enrollment Leadership Team (SELT), the Center for Teaching, Learning and Assessment (CTLA) Advisory Group, and the Diversity Committee.

The [SELT](#) is expected to plan and coordinate activities to ensure the successful attainment of Goal Three of The Ascent 2029 Strategic Planning Framework -- "Grow the number of lives impacted – expand student access, opportunity, and completion". They use data to make planning and directional changes, which have included instituting an OPM partnership with Wiley/Learning House, restructuring advising, engaging in an enrollment process evaluation, and starting discussions on separating the Department of Regional Outreach and Innovation from the on-campus academic units.

The [CTLA](#) Advisory Group is charged with using aggregate data to inform discussions and decisions about the types of professional development and resources needed to enhance student learning. Data used by the CTLA includes the results from the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE) the Faculty Survey on Student Engagement (FSSE), the FSSE / NSSE Combined Report, selected items from EOU's annual Graduating Student Survey, and other relevant surveys or reports such as (in 2020) a benchmarked Pandemic Response Survey. Initiatives arising from the CTLA are very responsive to current institutional needs, such as the Summer Teaching Academy (viewable on EOU's [Teaching and Learning Youtube site](#)), which was set up in response to an identified need for faculty to become more comfortable with online teaching.

The [Diversity Committee](#) conducts numerous activities to help ensure diverse experiences and equitable outcomes for student faculty and staff, including using data from national surveys as well as local surveys on campus culture. In AY 2019/20 the Diversity Committee [administered a survey focussing on cultural competency](#) on campus, and the results will be evaluated in Academic Year 2020/21 and used to help promote diversity and close equity gaps.

How EOU's processes address Recommendation #3

To coherently summarize how these evaluative processes address recommendation #3, EOU's Accreditation Coordinating Team (ACT) sought additional context from the [Year Seven Peer Evaluation Report](#). The two quotes in blue below, taken from the Peer Evaluation report, both focus on the need for evaluation to be continued and sustained.

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

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

The processes and activities described in the previous sections show ample evidence that EOU's evaluation processes have been implemented in a systematic fashion, sustained over the years, and are continuing to be sustained and improved. The student learning outcomes assessment is methodical and comprehensive, and includes summary reports and closing the loop statements. Likewise, the Institutional Effectiveness Process at EOU is regular and systematic and is reified by tying it into the annual budget process. Reflections on results and proposals for action plans occur at all levels of the institution -- departments, committees, and working groups.

How EOU's processes address Recommendation #4

To demonstrate that EOU's processes address Recommendation #4, the process descriptions above focus on evidence that these processes address the three major components of Recommendation #4:

- Assessments are completed regularly throughout the accreditation cycle
- Data is consistently used to inform planning and decision making
- Results are made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner

The student learning outcomes assessment follows a regular schedule wherein faculty conduct assessments every term; the results are used by Deans to inform their College reports, action plans and budget requests, and used by the CTLA to plan faculty professional development; and the assessment cycle and results can be seen on the [Assessment website](#).

Regular ongoing application of the Institutional Effectiveness process is ensured at EOU via our adherence to an annual planning and effectiveness calendar. Data and analysis are required to

justify action plans and budget requests, and the inclusion of such data driven analyses is ensured through the templates for scope documents and budget requests. Data driven analyses are ubiquitous throughout the institution, as evidenced through a variety of examples. Results of analyses are highlighted in annual reports, and the [Institutional Effectiveness website](#) also showcases a wealth of data and analyses, including scope documents for major institutional initiatives.

Conclusion

This report fully addresses Recommendations #3 and #4 and in doing so illustrates EOU's commitment to assessment, evaluation, and using data to ensure a relevant and meaningful process. In Academic Year 2020/21 the Accreditation Coordinating Team (ACT) and the Advisory Committee to the Center for Teaching, Learning and Assessment (CTLA) will be conducting a thorough review of assessment processes. The goals of the review are to allow us to make effective use of newly purchased data collection and visualization software (Campus Labs) to centralize planning and assessment data as well as enhance accessibility across constituencies. The group will also be examining the outcomes currently assessed to ensure that our learning assessments are addressing the issues most relevant to the EOU's strategic plan. We would welcome feedback from the NWCCU in response to this report, so that we can end up with the best possible process as we move forward.