Year One Peer-Evaluation Report

Wenatchee Valley College
Wenatchee, Washington
September 15 – November 4, 2011

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

Wenatchee Valley College (WVC), located in Wenatchee, Washington, was founded in 1939 as a private college. It became a public community college in 1967, serving the counties of Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan and includes a satellite center located 100 miles north of the main campus, which was established in 1972. The College serves a 10,000 square-mile rural area with enrollment for the 2010-2011 academic year of approximately 8,000 students in credit-bearing classes, representing 3,257 FTEs.

Budget reductions have had a significant impact on WVC, which they have addressed through enrollment planning and additional sources of revenue. The college collaborates with Central Washington University, local high schools and business and industry in order to leverage resources to expand access to higher education despite economic setbacks, and WVC continues to update its facilities master plan as well as initiate a new strategic plan.

From September 15 to November 4, 2011, a three-person peer-evaluation team from the Commission conducted a Year One Peer Evaluation of Wenatchee Valley College in an off-site telephonic and virtual environment. The structure of the evaluation consisted of a teleconferenced organizational meeting and teleconferenced evaluation meetings through audio conferencing authorized by the Commission. The peer evaluation was conducted based upon the Commission’s 2010 Accreditation Standards and Eligibility Requirements.

Assessment of the Self-Evaluation Report

The Evaluation Committee received electronic and hard copies of the College’s Year One Self-Evaluation Report, as well as the College’s Course Catalog 2010–2011. Wenatchee Valley College has participated in the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) pilot project of the revised accreditation standards and they are currently entering into the second cycle of the seven-year comprehensive evaluation model. This Year One report clearly addresses Standard One with respect to core themes and mission fulfillment.
Report on Previous Recommendations

Report on Recommendation from the 2009 Year Three Evaluation

WVC received one recommendation from the 2009 Year Three Evaluation:

1. **Given the role of distance education in achieving its Core Theme objectives, the Evaluation Committee recommends that the College carefully consider the population of students it intends to serve and the requisite study skills and technological proficiency for students to be successful when the College selects the delivery methods of instruction. In addition, the Evaluation Committee recommends the College ensure the adequacy of the technology infrastructure to support instruction delivered by distance education methods. Finally, the Evaluation Committee recommends the College ensure that faculty and staff have the technological and pedagogical knowledge to create an effective learning environment for distance education. (2.D.1)**

WVC completed its Year Three report and visit in the Fall of 2009 which recommended “technological and pedagogical knowledge to create an effective learning environment for distance education” become part of students prerequisites as well as faculty development. The college has undertaken active engagement in student readiness and success, technological infrastructure as well as faculty and staff support for creating an effective learning environment that included piloting the Quality Matters program, Sloan-C Workshops, learning communities and individual assistance. One of the most significant changes with regard to the recommendation was to reorganize around three major elements: student readiness, technology infrastructure, and faculty development specific to distance education. It appears to the Year One Evaluation Panel that WVC has taken a creative approach to addressing the recommendation, and the changes in place seem an appropriate response to the recommendation.

Report on Recommendation from the Spring 2010 Year Five Report

WVC received the following recommendation from the Spring 2010 Year Five Report:

1. **While the institution is engaged in assessment of its programs and services and assessment of core theme objectives, the Commission recommends that the institution implement its improvement cycle more consistently across the institution (Standard 4.B).**

Wenatchee Valley College participated in a Year Five report in the Spring of 2010 as part of the revised standards pilot project. At that time a recommendation to “implement its improvement more consistently across the institution” (Standard 4.B) was given to WVC. Changes that have been implemented include linkage between core themes and planning as well as revision of a model to report on student learning outcomes. These changes include a revised timeline and an
improved revision and reporting format that appear to the Year One Evaluation Panel will provide a means for addressing the issue behind this recommendation.

**Report on Recommendations from the Fall 2010 Year Seven Report**

Following the Fall 2010 Year Seven Evaluation, WVC was given the following three recommendations. Per correspondence from the Commission office, dated February 7, 2011, these will be addressed in the Fall 2013 Year Three Report.

1. *In the context of Core Themes, the committee recommends that the College focus on documenting, through an effective, regular, and comprehensive system of assessment of student achievement, that students who complete its educational courses, programs, and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, achieve identified course, program, and degree learning outcomes (Standard 4.A.3).*

2. *The committee recommends that the institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of planning, resources, capacity, practices, and assessment with respect to achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of its programs or services, wherever offered and however delivered (Standard 4.A.5).*

3. *The committee recommends that the College develop a protocol to ensure the results of core theme assessments and results of assessments of programs and services are: a) based on meaningful institutionally identified indicators of achievement; b) used for improvement by informing planning, decision making, and allocation of resources and capacity; and c) made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner. Moreover, evaluators recommend the College use results of student learning to inform the academic and learning-support planning and practices that lead to the enhancement of student learning achievements (Standard 4.B.1 and 4.B.2). The Year Seven Evaluation for Wenatchee Valley College was in October 2010. The recommendations include documentation of educational effectiveness (Standard 4.A.3), holistic institutional alignment of planning with resources, capacity and assessment (Standard 4.A.5) and that the college develop a protocol to ensure that assessment is meaningful and informs institutional practice (Standard 4.B.1 and 4.B.2).*

**Compliment:**

Wenatchee Valley College’s agreement to subject the institution to the “hyper-speed” evaluation cycle of NWCCU in order to provide an opportunity for the NWCCU Board of Commissioners to evaluate and review the new process in its entirety is commendable. It is evident that the experience has provided WVC with valuable insight into how the new standards can be used to direct institutional success.
Report on Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility Requirement Two – Authority

Originally Wenatchee Valley College gained authority to operate with the Community College Act of 1967 by the Washington State Legislature. Currently Wenatchee Valley College is one of 34 institutions under the governance of the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. WVC derives its statutory authority to operate as specified in Revised Code of Washington (RCW 28B.50 – *The Community and Technical College Act of 1991*) and establishes that it is open access with the purpose of providing pre-transfer preparation, workforce education, basic skills instruction and lifelong learning opportunities.

Eligibility Requirement Three – Mission and Core Themes

According to the information provided in the report, Wenatchee Valley College’s Board of Trustees adopted the mission statement on February 20, 2008. Using the Carver Model of Policy Governance, the initial adoption included seven core themes. Due to the variability of indicators and measures, the Planning Committee made a proposal that included four core themes with objective statements and indicators. Extensive campus community circulation and revision by the Planning Committee resulted in approval from the Board of Trustees on June 15, 2011 of the following core themes:

- Educational Achievement
- Support for Learning
- Responsiveness to Local Needs
- Diversity and Cultural Enrichment

The Board of Trustees delegated the determination of indicators and measures to the college leadership. Identification of specific data sources and reporting methods along with a schedule of ends policy reports will be reviewed this fall. The institution’s mission and core themes are clearly defined, and appear to serve the educational interests of TVC’s students.
Section One

Introduction:

The College’s Mission Statement, as provided in the Year One Self-Evaluation Report, as well as in the Course Catalog 2011 – 2012, is as follows:

Wenatchee Valley College enriches North Central Washington by serving educational and cultural needs of communities and residents throughout the service area. The college provides high quality transfer, liberal arts, professional/technical, basic skills and continuing education for student of diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds.

Report on Standard 1.A: Mission

The College’s Mission and Ends Statements are widely disseminated to its internal and external communities through the college catalog, the WVC web site and other online venues, as well as in many places on campus, and throughout the service district. The Year One Self-Evaluation Report provided detailed documentation that the Mission and services provided by Wenatchee Valley College articulate a purpose appropriate for an institution of higher learning and give direction for its efforts.

Documentation of the mission fulfillment through the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were reviewed in 2011 and align with the core themes identified. The decision to demonstrate acceptable levels of performance in two specific categories (1) student progress toward goals, and (2) community engagement for mission fulfillment, then weighting these with a system of 100 points for each section in the scorecard manner, was clear and concise.

The scorecard model for Student Progress Toward Goals includes:

- Retention: 40 pts
- Completion: 30 pts
- Transition: 20 pts
- Support for Learning: 10 pts

The Community Engagement side includes:

- Community Enrichment: 15 pts
- Student/Staff Diversity: 20 pts
- Enrollment: 10 pts
- Stakeholder Satisfaction: 40 pts
- Targeted Outreach: 15 pts
This scorecard method of evaluation with specific measures based on archival data that identified baseline thresholds of performance clearly delineates each component of the mission by key performance indicator (KPI). These KPIs are linked to measures which could demonstrate mission fulfillment yet specific levels of achievement have not been clearly identified.

Report on Standard 1.B: Core Themes

Wenatchee Valley College’s presentation of Core Themes is clearly articulated. Each theme is followed by a brief description which provides a rationale for that theme and a clearly defined Objective which is further broken down into Indicators of Achievement and what, once clear benchmarks are established, it will be measured by. The process has provided a foundation for consistent, regular planning and outcomes assessment throughout the college.

Summary

Wenatchee Valley College’s Year One Self-Evaluation Report guided the Evaluation Committee through the College’s conceptual framework, thereby enabling the Committee to gain insight into and conduct an objective evaluation of WVC’s intentions with respect to Eligibility Requirements Two and Three, and Standard One of the 2010 Standards.

The College has established an appropriate mission statement for a comprehensive community college. The mission statement provides a basis for establishing the identity and focus of the College. The College has established four Core Themes that support the mission. The themes have objectives, indicators of achievement, and measures for assessment. The Evaluation Committee found that establishment of acceptable levels of success for the indicators would support the college in assessing the degree to which each Core Theme objective is accomplished.
Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations:

1. The Evaluation Committee commends Wenatchee Valley College for having a well-established Mission Fulfillment Model which assesses the degree to which the institution is achieving its Mission. (Standard 1.A.2)
2. The Evaluation Committee commends Wenatchee Valley College on the integration of core themes and providing data sources for each objective which articulate the extent to which the core themes have been integrated into the community.

Recommendation:

1. Although the College has identified indicators of achievement for each Core Theme as well as what is being measured, the Evaluation Committee recommends that the College develop acceptable levels of achievement for evaluating the accomplishment of each objective for each Core Theme. (Standard 1B.2)