

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ronald L. Baker, Executive Vice President
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

FROM: Joni Mina, Chair
Lewis-Clark State College Faculty Association

DATE: October 16, 2009

RE: COMMENTS ON ACCREDITATION STANDARDS REVISION

At your invitation, the faculty of Lewis-Clark State College reviewed the proposed revisions to the NWCCU's Accreditation Standards. Our review included a meeting with Dr. J. Anthony Fernandez, our provost, who provided background information with respect to the standards and their revisions. While most of the faculty did not have any serious reservations about the proposed changes, some provided some valuable insights about the changes. Below are the comments that were made by faculty; they are reproduced verbatim to ensure the integrity of the faculty member's intent in making them.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pros: a bit easier to read, consistent workload rather than the spike at eight - ten years, focus on process rather than a single snapshot in time, college defined themes for assessment• Cons: 2011 start year for first report (that's soon!); never ending accreditation stress; by defining our own themes, do we lose some valuable comparisons with other colleges? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I have some concern about the decreased time between visits. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I like collapsing the standards from 9 to 5. Even though I saw items from the previous 9 standards in the new standards, the broader headings in the new 5 standards made sense to me.• I worry about how emphasizing one standard to review on specific years will work— it seems the standards overlap and affect each other. It seems that it may be difficult to look at one in isolation. |

Although some of the criteria in the original standards may have been integrated into various aspects of the new standards, the only "new" standard with direct bearing on this topic (e.g., that mentions research, etc., in an undergraduate institution) is:

“2.B.5 Faculty responsibilities and workloads are commensurate with the institution’s expectations for teaching, service, scholarship, research, and/or artistic creation.”

Although I admire the idea of streamlining and condensing the criteria in the new form, I worry about leaving out such topics as “Institutional policies and procedures, including ethical considerations, concerning scholarship, research, and artistic creation, are clearly communicated,” and “4.B.4 Consistent with its mission and goals, the institution provides appropriate financial, physical, administrative, and information resources for scholarship, research, and artistic creation,” and “4.B.5 The nature of the institution's research mission and goals and its commitment to faculty scholarship, research, and artistic creation are reflected in the assignment of faculty responsibilities, the expectation and reward of faculty performance, and opportunities for faculty renewal through sabbatical leaves or other similar programs.”

Thank you for the opportunity to provide faculty’s input in this very important process. If you have any questions about the foregoing comments, please feel free to contact me.

cc: Faculty Senate/NWCCU Standards Revision Task Force
Dr. J. Anthony Fernandez, Provost

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