

# **Year One Peer-Evaluation Report**

**College of Western Idaho  
Nampa, Idaho  
Fall 2012**

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

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# Evaluation Committee

**Dr. Karen Schmitt (Chair)**

Dean, Community & Technical College  
University of Alaska Anchorage  
Anchorage, Alaska

**Mr. Garth Sleight**

Associate Dean of Academic Affairs  
Miles Community College  
Miles City, Montana

**Dr. Robert Morin**

Division Chair, Professor of Political Science  
Western Nevada College  
Carson City, Nevada

## **Introduction**

The College of Western Idaho (CWI) is a comprehensive community college that opened in January of 2009 and it is the newest community college in Idaho. Prior to the opening of the College of Western Idaho, southwest Idaho lacked a comprehensive community college. The College of Western Idaho delivers college credit instruction and awards certificates and degrees through a memorandum of understanding with the College of Southern Idaho. When the College of Western Idaho opened in January of 2009 it offered general education, workforce training, and community education programs with more than 1,200 students enrolled; the college's enrollment has grown to 8,375 students in the Spring 2012 Semester. In July of 2009 the College of Western Idaho acquired the professional-technical programs and adult basic education programs from the Larry Selland College at Boise State University which had more than 10,000 (duplicated) non-credit enrollments in 2011.

The Commission accepted the College of Western Idaho's Application for Candidacy in January of 2010. An on-site Comprehensive Initial Candidacy Peer-Evaluation was conducted from October 5-7, 2011 and a report was filed with the Commission. The Commission granted the College of Western Idaho Candidacy for Accreditation status at the associate degree level, with an effective date of Candidacy being January 11, 2012 in a letter dated February 12, 2012 and signed by Dr. Sandra E. Elman, NWCCU President. Dr. Elman requested that the College of Western Idaho address the five Recommendations from the Fall 2011 Comprehensive Initial Candidacy Peer-Evaluation Report in the Fall 2012 Year One Self-Evaluation Report.

From September 15 to November 19, 2012, a three-person peer-evaluation committee from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU, Commission) conducted a Year One Peer Evaluation of the College of Western Idaho in an off-site telephonic and virtual environment. The structure of the evaluation consisted of a teleconferenced organizational meeting and teleconferenced evaluation meetings. The peer evaluation was conducted based upon the Commission's 2010 Accreditation Standards and Eligibility Requirements.

### **Report on Fall 2011 Recommendation 1**

Recommendation 1 reads as follows:

*While acknowledging that the College of Western Idaho has made progress in developing initial core themes and proposed measures of mission fulfillment, the evaluation committee recommends that the College move aggressively to ensure that CWI's core themes align with clearly articulated and well-supported institutional priorities, that the*

*core theme measures are meaningful, relevant, and assessable, and that the core theme assessment process is fully integrated with the College's planning and evaluation mechanisms (Standard 1.B.2, 3.B.1, 3.B.3, 4.A.A and ER 23).*

The College of Western Idaho has moved aggressively since Fall 2011 regarding the development of clearly articulated and assessable core themes. The College of Western Idaho's Core Theme Chair Committee has worked to align the core themes with institutional priorities, mission, and vision. Core theme objectives were redesigned so that they all correlate to at least one institutional priority by definition. The College of Western Idaho, in a collaborative fashion, has updated each core theme and core theme objectives. A revised Institutional Progress Metric has been drafted where some indicators have been revised, redefined and also created to accurately depict the institution's assessable measurements. The College of Western Idaho has integrated the core theme assessment process into the institution's planning and evaluation mechanisms. The institution has revised the strategic planning process and conducts an Annual Assessment Summit in order to consider assessment data regarding an evaluation of the accomplishment of core theme objectives. The institution's process is open and available to all through the use of weekly newsletters and information posted on the institution's website.

## **Report on Fall 2011 Recommendation 2**

Recommendation 2 reads as follows:

*In order to build on progress already made in initial institutional planning, the evaluation committee recommends the College establish an ongoing, systematic, and comprehensive cycle of integrated planning, resource allocation, and evaluation that leads to mission fulfillment as defined by CWI's core themes. Achieving this goal will require a robust system for the collection and analysis of appropriately defined data, as well mechanisms for meaningful input from faculty and staff (Standard 2.A.1, 3.A.1, 3.A.2, 3.A.3 and ER 23).*

The College of Western Idaho has created a cyclical strategic planning process that guides the institution. The first step in the strategic planning process is an Annual Assessment Summit and is the summit intended to serve as a learning and participation event for faculty and staff. The strategic planning process begins and ends in April each year, allowing for opportunities for faculty and staff participation. The institution has created a comprehensive cycle of integrated planning, resource allocation and evaluation. A planning and assessment office offers guidance to integrate core theme assessments with planning and evaluation mechanisms. The new planning cycle includes budget considerations, core theme evaluation, and assessments. The College of Western Idaho no longer relies upon the College of Southern Idaho's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. The College of Western Idaho now possesses its own ERP,

Datatel, to include student services functions such as admissions, registration and the awarding of financial aid. The College of Western Idaho now controls its own institutional data and this allows the college to collect, analyze, and provide valid and reliable reporting in a meaningful format.

## **Report on Fall 2011 Recommendation 3**

Recommendation 3 reads as follows:

*The evaluation committee recommends that the College of Western Idaho develop and implement plans to appoint full-time faculty and staff sufficient in numbers to accomplish the institution's educational goals (Standard 2.B.1, 2.B.4, 2.B.5 and ER10).*

The College of Western Idaho has a plan in place to appoint full-time faculty and staff and the institution has implemented its plan. The Board of Trustees approved the hiring of 57.5 additional employees, of which 43.5 are dedicated to students. The institution has hired a Human Resources Generalist and plans on hiring another Human Resources Generalist. The College of Western Idaho has hired multiple full-time (12 month) Assistant Deans for Instruction. The institution is implementing a faculty promotion process and defining the criteria for four separate ranks of faculty. The College of Western Idaho's Year One Self Evaluation Report states that there were 44 promotions to Assistant Professor in the Spring of 2012; however, the Report does not specify whether these were the result of a promotional process for recently hired full-time faculty members or were criteria-based promotions for existing full-time faculty members.

**Concern:** The Evaluation Committee has a concern regarding the lack of detailed information in the Year One Self-Evaluation Report to specifically address the latter portion of Recommendation 3. While the number and rate of faculty and staff added at CWI are impressive, the college does not clearly describe how the reported numbers and types of full-time faculty and staff ensure sufficiency to accomplish the institution's educational goals.

## **Report on Fall 2011 Recommendation 4**

Recommendation 4 reads as follows:

*While the College of Western Idaho has made admirable progress toward acquisition of library materials and enhancing the library's virtual presence, the evaluators did not find evidence of sufficient library infrastructure, staffing, or holdings to achieve the learning*

*outcomes of CWI's rapidly expanding academic programs. Accordingly, the evaluation committee recommends immediate action to increase library services, staffing, and materials to adequately support programs at all campus locations (Standard 2.E.1 and ER 13).*

The College of Western Idaho has taken significant actions to address Recommendation 4 by increasing library services, staffing and materials. The College of Western Idaho implemented OCLC's Worldshare Management Services and WorldCat Local catalog on June 1, 2012. Worldshare Management Services enables the library to streamline staff processes and improve efficiency. WorldCat Local combines library holdings and a majority of online databases into a single search interface, improving the ability of users to find and access materials from the College of Western Idaho and other institutions.

The library has been allocated 5,086 square feet in a new building currently under construction at the Nampa Campus, resulting in a net space increase of approximately 2,000 square feet. The library implemented a book mailing service during the Fall of 2012 in order to improve access for student residing outside of Nampa. A second professional librarian was hired and joined the library staff at the College of Western Idaho in July of 2012 and the library is in the process of accepting applications for an additional, third professional librarian position specializing in electronic resources.

The College of Western Idaho contracted with Baker & Taylor in 2012 to provide approximately \$280,000 in materials to the institution's library. Since July of 2011, the library has more than doubled its physical collection and has added approximately 60,000 ebooks. On June 1, 2012, the library separated its online resources from the College of Southern Idaho. The College of Western Idaho has established independent subscriptions to many databases and is in the process of adding new databases to its collection.

## **Report on Fall 2011 Recommendation 5**

Recommendation 5 reads as follows:

*While the College of Western Idaho has met the demands of rapid growth, program acquisition and development, policy and governance development, and financial planning to date in a remarkable fashion, the evaluation committee recommends that the College should move promptly to develop and adopt a realistic plan for long-range sustainability that will address enrollment management, staff retention and development, fiscal stability, and support services that will enhance student progression and completion (Standard 5.B and ER 24).*

The College of Western Idaho has formulated a realistic plan and has implemented many initiatives regarding long-range sustainability. The College of Western Idaho has focused on enrollment management from the perspective of physical space. The institution is focused upon an effort to seek the assistance of the Governor to form a Dormitory Housing Commission. The goal would be to explore the possibility of a new student union building at the Nampa Campus, in order to house classrooms, library and other related functions.

The College of Western Idaho has implemented initiatives regarding faculty and staff retention and professional development. The institution will focus on retention of high performers, involvement of a Human Resources advisory committee, campus culture as a subject of leadership focus, and the administration of an annual employee survey. The College of Western Idaho has implemented a faculty rank and promotion process. The Human Resources office had added a full-time employee to assist in training for faculty and staff and has developed a series of leadership training meetings.

The College of Western Idaho has addressed the issue of fiscal stability. The institution has developed a detailed budget and finance process and the Trustees of the College of Western Idaho have created a financial and budget advisory committee. Despite difficult fiscal and economic times in Idaho over the past few years, the College of Western Idaho has received increased appropriations. In FY 2011 the institution received a one-time appropriation of \$5.0 million from the Idaho Legislature. In FY 2012, the College of Western Idaho received approximately \$4.2 million for General Education programs and approximately \$6.2 million for Professional Technical Education programs. The institution received an increase in funding from the state for FY 2013.

The institution has created and organized the College of Western Idaho Foundation, an official 501C(3) organization under federal law, and has initiated a fundraising campaign. The Foundation had a goal of raising \$4.0 million for the new Micron Center facility and the goal was increased to \$4.5 million because the Foundation had received gifts or pledges totaling \$3.7 million as of August 24, 2012.

The College of Western Idaho has focused on support services that will serve to enhance student progression and completion. The institution has implemented a New Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration (OAR) programs for all incoming students. Additionally, the institution has developed an Advisor Development Program for professional and faculty advisors. The institution has also transitioned all student processes to Datatel/Colleague creating a single service platform, known as MyCWI. The College of Western Idaho has expanded its One Stop Service Center model, providing students with a wide range of student support services and has increased personnel resources in the area of Enrollment and Student Services.

**Concern:** The Evaluation Committee did not find evidence for enrollment targets with explication of the impacts of this growth on the institution for the five year period in the Year One Self-Evaluation Report as requested by the Commission. The fourth paragraph of Dr. Elman’s letter, dated February 9, 2012, to the College of Western Idaho on behalf of the Commission, states “insofar as effective management of this enrollment phenomenon is critical to the future viability of the College, the Commission requests that the institution’s Year One Report be expanded to provide an explication of the institution’s growth targets based on realistic assumptions for the next five years and concomitant impact of the growth in enrollment on the infrastructure of the institution.”

## **Assessment of the Self-Evaluation Report**

The Evaluation Committee received the College of Western Idaho’s Year One Self-Evaluation Report, including Attachments and Appendix, in a timely fashion in electronic form and hard copy form. The Evaluation Committee did not receive a copy of the College of Western Idaho catalog in electronic form or hard copy form; however, the Evaluation Committee was able to access the catalog online at the institution’s website. The Year One Self-Evaluation Report and supporting documentation were well organized, thorough, and concise. The College of Western Idaho provided a detailed, thoughtful and useful self-evaluation of its institution to address the requirements set forth in Eligibility Requirements Two and Three, and Standard One.

## **Report on Eligibility Requirements**

### **Eligibility Requirement Two – Authority**

The College of Western Idaho operates in compliance with Idaho Code, Title 33, Education, Chapter 21 Junior Community College, the policies of the Idaho State Board of Education, and the policies of the College of Western Idaho Board of Trustees. As a candidate for accreditation, the College of Western Idaho has worked with its accreditation partner, the College of Southern Idaho, to assure quality instruction in all programs.

### **Eligibility Requirement Three – Mission and Core Themes**

The Board of Trustees of the College of Western Idaho approved the existing mission and core themes in December of 2009 and in developing the College of Western Idaho’s Strategic Plan 2013-2017 in February of 2012. The college’s Year One Self-Evaluation Report indicates that all of the resources at the College of Western Idaho are devoted to support of its educational mission, vision, and goals.

# Section One

## **Introduction:**

The College of Western Idaho's Mission Statement is "The College of Western Idaho is a public, open-access, and comprehensive community college committed to providing affordable access to quality teaching and learning opportunities to the residents of its service area in western Idaho."

The fulfillment of the mission of the College of Western Idaho is defined by four core themes:

Core Theme 1 – Professional Technical Education

Core Theme 2 – General Education

Core Theme 3 – Basic Skills Education

Core Theme 4 – Community Outreach

## **Standard 1.A: Mission**

The Board of Trustees of the College of Western Idaho approved the existing mission and core themes in December of 2009 and the College of Western Idaho's Strategic Plan 2012-2017 in February of 2012. The Mission Statement clearly sets forth a purpose that is appropriate for an institution of higher education and the mission of a comprehensive community college. The Mission Statement is published in the College of Western Idaho catalog as well as on the institution's website.

The Mission Statement guides the development of Institutional Priorities which guides the College of Western Idaho's strategic planning process. The College of Western Idaho has identified and set forth four core themes that constitute the pillars of the institution's mission. The degree of fulfillment of the institution's mission is premised upon meeting or making progress toward benchmarks and goals defined for each objective within each core theme. A rationale statement is provided for each objective which identifies and establishes indicators of achievement and sets performance targets. The indicators developed for each objective will provide the institution with data that is descriptive, comparative, contextual, quantitative, qualitative and longitudinal.

The Attachments and Appendix contained in the institution's Year One Self-Evaluation Report describe a detailed assessment framework that will guide the institution in the collection of the requisite data in order to ascertain the degree of progress made towards meeting the benchmarks and goals defined for each core theme.

**Compliment:** The College of Western Idaho is complimented in the progress made in the formulation, development, and refinement of the institution's mission, vision and core themes.

## **Standard 1.B: Core Themes**

Each of the four core themes identifies objectives and goals with a rationale statement that identifies indicators of achievement and sets performance targets. Core Theme 1 sets forth four objectives, Core Theme 2 sets forth three objectives, Core Theme 3 sets forth three objectives, and Core Theme 4 sets forth three objectives. The indicators of achievement are designed to provide meaningful data and support analysis that will allow the institution to measure its progress and assess its performance for each objective and core theme.

The College of Western Idaho's Year One Self-Evaluation Report clearly communicates that the development, reflection and refinement of the four core themes is a continuous work in progress. In April of 2012, a committee at the institution representing each core theme began working with the institution's accreditation committee to reflectively discuss and refine the core themes and objectives. As a result of this process many of the objectives and assessment measures were significantly revised.

**Compliment:** The Evaluation Committee compliments the College of Western Idaho for its efforts and commitment to a continuous process of reflection and refinement of its core themes and indicators of achievement, including the ongoing development of clear rationale explanations for the metrics and targets chosen to assess its performance.

**Concern:** The Evaluation Committee has concerns regarding precision of the rationale used to define indicators as direct measures; the lack of data collected to-date; the clarity of the usage of the terms threshold and target; and the lack of targets set for some of the core theme objectives. The Committee's concerns were focused on the objectives that contain statements of future action or specification such as "establish baseline", "establish baseline and improve....", "proposed objectives will be achieved each year" and "establish baseline and maintain or improve for all metrics." Examples of objectives still in need of refinement include Objectives 1 and 2 contained in Core Theme 2; Objective 2 contained in Core Theme 3; and Objectives 1 and 2 contained in Core Theme 4.

## **Summary**

The College of Western Idaho's Year One Self-Evaluation Report provided the Evaluation Committee with a clear and detailed understanding of the institution's mission, vision, and core themes. The Evaluation Committee reviewed detailed information regarding the College of Western Idaho's progress on addressing the five Recommendations from the Fall 2011 Evaluation Report.

The College of Western Idaho and its Board of Trustees have adopted a mission statement appropriate for a comprehensive community college. The mission statement provides a foundation for the vision and core themes of the institution. The fulfillment of the mission is defined by the College's success in achieving the objectives of the four core themes. Each objective provides a rationale statement that identifies and establishes indicators of achievement and performance targets. The Evaluation Committee observed that the majority of the objectives and indicators of achievement are set forth in meaningful and assessable terms while some still require development and/or refinement.

## **Commendations and Recommendations**

### **Commendations:**

1. The Evaluation Committee commends the College of Western Idaho for its progress and achievement in addressing the matters identified in the Recommendations contained in the Fall 2011 Evaluation Report.
2. The Evaluation Committee commends the College of Western Idaho for its commitment to a collaborative process for defining mission fulfillment.
3. The Evaluation Committee commends the college of Western Idaho for its collaborative approach in planning and formulating indicators of achievement, metrics and targets, and rationale statements for each of the four core themes.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the College of Western Idaho continue to engage in the ongoing process of reflection and refinement of the indicators of achievement, metrics and targets to ensure that all objectives have meaningful, assessable, verifiable indicators of achievement in order to form the basis for evaluating the accomplishment of all of the objectives of the four core themes (Standard 1.B.2).
2. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the College of Western Idaho develop and implement plans to appoint full-time faculty and staff sufficient in numbers to accomplish the institution's educational goals (Standard 2.B.1, 2.B.4, 2.B.5, and Eligibility Requirement 23).
3. The Evaluation Committee recommends that the College of Western Idaho further address Recommendation 5 from the Fall 2011 Report and provide an explication of the

institution's growth targets based on realistic assumptions for the next five years and concomitant impact of the growth in enrollment on the infrastructure of the institution. (Standard 5.B and ER 24)