

# **NWCCU Accreditation**

**Montana University System**

Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education

# Overview of Regional Accreditation

The overriding purpose of NWCCU accreditation is to assure stakeholders that an NWCCU-accredited institution has been rigorously evaluated and that it meets or exceeds the criteria required to maintain accreditation. In addition, NWCCU promotes a culture of data- and evidence-informed continuous institutional improvement, validates institutional integrity, and provides opportunities for feedback that improves the accreditation process.



# NWCCU Standards

## Standard One – Student Success, and Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

- A. Institutional Mission
- B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness
- C. Student Learning
- D. Student Achievement

## Standard Two – Governance, Resources, and Capacity

- A. Governance
- B. Academic Freedom
- C. Policies and Procedures
- D. Institutional Integrity
- E. Financial Resources
- F. Human Resources
- G. Student Support
- H. Library and Information Resources
- I. Physical and Technology Infrastructure



# The Accreditation Cycle

Figure 1: NWCCU Accreditation Reporting and Review Cycle

<b>ANNUAL REPORT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disaggregated Data</li> <li>• Student Achievement</li> <li>• Financials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Annual Submission</b></li> <li>• <b>Staff Review</b></li> </ul>
<b>MID-CYCLE REPORT Standard One</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report and Onsite Review</li> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Data Collection and Analysis</li> <li>• Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Onsite</b> peer review in <b>Year 3</b></li> <li>• Staff review of evaluation reports for Commission</li> <li>• Meeting consent agenda</li> </ul>
<b>POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND FINANCIAL REVIEW (PRFR) Standard Two</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report and Offsite Review</li> <li>• Financial Performance</li> <li>• Policies and Regulations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Offsite</b> peer review in <b>Year 6</b></li> <li>• Findings reported to Institutional Effectiveness Evaluation Team for Year 7</li> </ul>
<b>EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (EIE) Standards One and Two</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report and Onsite Review of Student Success</li> <li>• Institutional Mission and Effectiveness</li> <li>• Student Learning</li> <li>• Student Achievement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Onsite</b> peer review in <b>Year 7</b></li> <li>• Review findings from PRFR</li> <li>• Commission Decision</li> </ul>

# Commendations

- Collaborative and supportive environment focused on students
- Being innovative, flexible, and responsive to community workforce needs
- Staff and faculty for their genuine care for student achievement
- Climate of community engagement and responsiveness

# Commendations

- Process for program learning outcomes assessment, and robust tracking of student success metrics.
- Outstanding commitment to first generation college students, lower income students, and, in particular, Native American students.
- Commitment to experiential learning which leads to highly employable graduates and engaged alumni.
- Progress on student success and achievement, specifically improvements in retention and four-year graduation rates.
- Strong commitment to faculty, staff, and student shared governance and to productive collaboration toward common goals.

# Recurring Recommendations:

## Standards 1.B and 1.C

1.B.2 The institution sets and articulates meaningful goals, objectives, and indicators of its goals to define mission fulfillment (4)

1.C.5 The institution engages in an effective system of assessment to evaluate the quality of learning in its programs. (4)

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. (4)

# Recurring Recommendations:

## Standard 1 D

1.D.2 Consistent with its mission and in the context of and in comparison with regional and national peer institutions, the institution establishes and shares widely a set of indicators for student achievement including, but not limited to, persistence, completion, retention, and postgraduation success. (5)

1.D.3 The institution's disaggregated indicators of student achievement should be widely published and available on the institution's website. (3)

1.D.4 The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing indicators of student achievement are transparent and are used to inform and implement strategies and allocate resources to mitigate perceived gaps in achievement and equity (4)



# Panel



**John DeBoer**  
Vice Provost for  
Academic Affairs  
University of Montana

**Tracy Dougher**  
Vice Provost for  
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Montana State  
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**Kathleen Thatcher**  
Director for  
Assessment and  
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MSU Billings

# Accreditation in Light of the April 23 Executive Order



By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered:

Section 1. Purpose. A group of higher education accreditors are the gatekeepers that decide which colleges and universities American students can spend the more than \$100 billion in Federal student loans and Pell Grants dispersed each year. The accreditors' job is to determine which institutions provide a quality education — and therefore merit accreditation. Unfortunately, accreditors have not only failed in this responsibility to students, families, and

# Questions?