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March 19, 2009

Mr. James Richardson
President
Wenatchee Valley College
1300 Fifth Street
Wenatchee, WA 98801

Dear President ^{Jim}Richardson:

The purpose of this letter is two-fold. The first purpose is to express the Commission's appreciation to Wenatchee Valley College for its good faith participation in the Standards Revision and Implementation Pilot Project. The Commission has benefitted greatly from the College's contributions in working through the myriad of details required to translate the new conceptual accreditation model and oversight process into practice.

The second purpose of this letter is to inform you that at its March 10, 2009, meeting the Executive Committee of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, acting on behalf of the Board of Commissioners, accepted the Year One Report from Wenatchee Valley College. The seriousness and rigor in which the College approached the report is clearly evident in the product produced.

Commissioners were particularly impressed with the directness and frankness of the College's report in stating its progress as a pilot institution. They also appreciated the direct and succinct nature of the College's report. The College's mission and core themes are well-integrated and reflect a clear understanding of its role and responsibilities for the community it serves. The comprehensive effort and spirit of inclusion in the College's recently completed process of review and revision of its mission is noteworthy.

Commissioners did find some areas that would benefit from additional attention. In particular, they noted a need for greater clarity of the goals for some the College's core themes. They also expressed some concern regarding the assessability of some core theme achievement indicators. For example, it is not clear how the institution would assess indicator #2 ("a well-defined core curriculum articulated with university requirements") for its Transfer/Liberal Arts core theme.

Overall, Commissioners found the report to be very well done. It was cogent and consistent with the principles of revised Standard One and expectations for the Year One Report.

Commendations

1. The College is commended for the structure and candor of its Year One Report.
2. The College is commended for the identification and clarity of its core themes and the relationship of the core themes to its mission.
3. The College is commended for the process used to review its mission and goals.
4. The College is commended for the use primarily of direct measures of achievements for its core theme goals.

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Recommendations

1. The Commission recommends the College more clearly define its goals or intended outcomes for its core themes. While necessarily overarching, a clearer understanding of the goals or intended outcomes for its core themes will serve as a better guide for assessment of achievement of those goals or intended outcomes.
2. The Commission recommends the College review its indicators of achievement of core themes or intended outcomes to ensure they are assessable, meaningful, and provide direct evidence of intended achievements.
3. Although not required in the Year One Report, the Commission recommends the College develop and articulate benchmarks or acceptable levels of achievement for its indicators as it moves forward with its assessment activities. The Commission notes that identification of benchmarks or acceptable levels of achievement will assist both the College and the Board of Commissioners in evaluating the results of the College's assessment efforts when it reports its effectiveness in the Year Five Report scheduled for submission in spring 2010.

Finally, following the Executive Committee's review of the Year One Reports, a slight modification has been made to the requirements for Year One Reports. The requirement for an articulation of mission goals and indicators of achievement of mission goals has been replaced with a request for the institution to provide its definition of mission fulfillment and, within that definition, an interpretation of an acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment. Those changes are reflected in Section I of the enclosed *Guidelines for the Preparation of Year One Reports* (revised March 11, 2009). The College is asked to incorporate these changes in Chapter One of its Year Three Report due September 1, 2009.

This change is based on the observation that institutional mission goals were found, in general, to be indiscernible from core themes. The intent of the original requirement was to use the mission goals and indicators of achievement to enhance an understanding of the institution's mission and its interpretation of mission fulfillment, since they collectively form the framework for the institution and Commissioners to determine in revised Standard Five the extent to which the mission is fulfilled. It was determined that the new Year One Report requirement provides a clearer communication of that intent and guide for an institutional response.

Once again, congratulations on the College's accomplishments as a Pilot Project institution. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Best wishes for a successful completion of the academic year.

Sincerely,


Sandra E. Elman
President

SEE:rb

Enclosure: Guidelines

cc: Dr. Susan J. Murray, Executive Director, Institutional Effectiveness ✓