

# AACRAO Annual Meeting in Orlando

## March 24 – 27, 2008



### **Accreditation:**

### **A Little History,**

### **Some Generally Useful**

### **Information, and**

### **Tips for Managing**

### **the 10-Year Review**

### **Effectively**

**Session ID: 443**

# Facilitator, Presenter, and Thanks



## **Facilitated by:**

Adriana Farella  
University Registrar  
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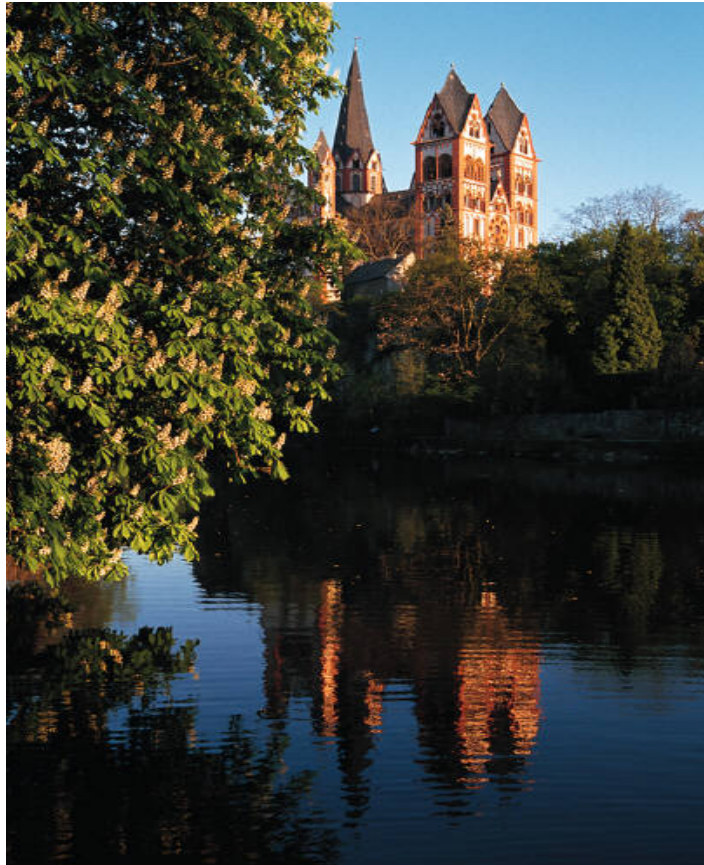
## **Presented by:**

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University Registrar  
Washington State University, Pullman

**Thanks to Reta Pikowsky**  
**Registrar**  
**Georgia Tech University**

**Thanks to Robert Hensley**  
**Director of Admissions**  
**University of New Orleans**

# Outline of Presentation



- Overview and History
- Types of Accreditation
- Regional Associations
- Timeline of Activities
- The Self-Study
- Hot Tips
- Hot Topics
- Resources

# Oversight of the Accrediting Associations



- **Council for Higher  
Education Accreditation**  
One Dupont Circle NW  
Suite 510  
Washington, DC 20036  
(tel) 202-955-6126  
(fax) 202-955-6129  
[chea@chea.org](mailto:chea@chea.org)  
[www.chea.org](http://www.chea.org)



# Definition and Goals

## Definition

Accreditation is review of the quality of higher education institutions and programs. In the US, accreditation is the major way that students, families, government officials, and the press know that an institution or program provides a quality education.

## Accreditation Goals

- Ensure academic quality
- Develop evaluation criteria
- Conduct peer evaluations
- Assess that criteria are met

(from [www.chea.org](http://www.chea.org))



# History



- USA: No Federal Ministry of Education
- No central authority
- States assume control
- Degree of autonomy and independence
- US institutions vary in character and quality

# Why Accreditation is Important



- Because federal government requires accreditation for federal grants, loans, and other funds.
- Because state governments require accreditation for funds and for students to sit for state licensure examinations in some professional fields.
- Because employers depend on accreditation.

(from [www.chea.org](http://www.chea.org))

# How Does Accreditation Work?



- Accrediting organizations develop standards.
- Institution undertakes a self-study based on the standards.
- Peers make a site visit and then make a recommendation.
- The accrediting organization acts on the recommendation and makes a judgment.
- Process repeats each 3-10 years.

(from [www.chea.org](http://www.chea.org))



# Institutional Accreditation



- Granted by a regional accrediting agency within a scope of authority approved by the U.S. Department of Education
- Applies to the institution as a whole, not individual programs or units within the institution
- Focuses on overall objectives, so quality may vary among programs or departments

(from [www.nwccu.org](http://www.nwccu.org))

# Specialized Accreditation



- Certain professional schools and individual educational programs are granted specialized accreditation by a number of national organizations.
- It is one way to assure quality of the accredited programs.
- It could cover an entire school or just an individual curriculum within a department.

(from [www.nwccu.org](http://www.nwccu.org))

# Sample Special Accreditations



**There are approximately 60 such agencies.**

- Society of American Foresters
- National Architectural Accrediting Board
- Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs
- American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business
- American Bar Association, Association of American Law Schools
- Council for Accreditation on Counseling and Related Education Programs
- American Dietetic Association
- Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology, Inc.
- National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

# Regional Associations



- Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges (MSA)
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)
- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA)
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)



# Scope of NWCCU

The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) is an independent, non-profit membership organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) **as the regional authority on educational quality and institutional effectiveness of higher education institutions** in the seven-state Northwest region of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. It fulfills its mission by establishing accreditation criteria and evaluation procedures by which institutions are reviewed.



# Northwest Association Standards



- Standard One – Institutional Mission and Goals, Planning and Effectiveness
- **Standard Two – Educational Program and its Effectiveness**
- **Standard Three – Students**
- Standard Four – Faculty
- Standard Five – Library and Information Resources
- Standard Six – Governance and Administration
- Standard Seven – Finance
- Standard Eight – Physical Resources
- Standard Nine – Institutional Integrity

# Usual Sequence of Accreditation Visits



- Accreditation is not granted permanently or for a definite number of years.
- Accreditation is an ongoing status that must be reaffirmed periodically.
- Every institution conducts a self-study and is visited by an evaluation committee at least every ten years.
- Each institution prepares an interim report and is visited by one or more representatives of the Commission at five-year intervals between decennial visits.

(from [www.nwccu.org](http://www.nwccu.org))

# Washington State University

## Accreditation Timeline

<b>AY 2005- 2006</b>	<b>Sept 2006- May 2007</b>	<b>Sept-Dec 2007</b>	<b>Jan-June 2008</b>	<b>July-Aug 2008</b>	<b>Aug 2008- June 2009</b>	<b>Sept-Dec 2008</b>	<b>Jan 2009</b>	<b>Spring 2009</b>
Last full year of data on which to base self-study	Units compile self studies	Self-study draft integrating all units completed	Internal Review of draft—whole system down to unit level	Final review and sign-off in principle by president, Exec VP, Chancellors, Regents	University formulates action plans in response to self-study	Final editing and printing of self-study	All self-study materials to NWCCU (print, web, CD)	Evaluation Team Site visit
		University issues identified	Units formulate action plans in light of whole self-study			Action plans and progress incorporated into self-study		



# WSU Accreditation Website

## Office of the Provost Accreditation

PROVOST HOME

AAA HOME

► ACCREDITATION

ACCOUNTABILITY

ASSESSMENT

PROGRAM PLANNING  
AND REVIEW

### WSU Regional Institutional Accreditation

Once every ten years we organize ourselves to review and evaluate the entire institution in a process that takes nearly three years to complete. We test ourselves against a set of standards that has been developed and revised over time by the membership of the [Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities](#).

In preparing the self-study report and visit, WSU will be expected to demonstrate that it meets each standard, each element of the Commission's Eligibility Requirements and accreditation Standards and Related Policies, and all other applicable policies. The self-study document should be succinct, thoughtful, and analytical including an appraisal of the institution's strengths, weaknesses, and achievements relative to each standard.

### WSU 2009 Accreditation Supporting Documents

- Committee Members
- [Project Charter](#)
- [Project Scope Statement](#)
- [Project Timeline](#)

### Additional Resources:

- [Western Association of Schools and Colleges: Evidence Guide, A Guide to Using Evidence in the Accreditation Process](#)
- [The University of Utah, 2006 Accreditation Documentation](#)

### Accreditation Self Study Archives:

- [2004 Regular Interim Self-Study](#)
- [2002 Progress Report for 1999 Accreditation](#)

[WSU Strategic Plan](#)



## Accreditation Standards:

[Standard One — Institutional Mission and Goals, Planning and Effectiveness](#)

[Standard Two — Educational Program and Its Effectiveness](#)

[Standard Three — Students](#)

[Standard Four — Faculty](#)

[Standard Five — Libraries and Information Resources](#)

[Standard Six — Governance and Administration](#)

[Standard Seven — Finance](#)

[Standard Eight — Physical Facilities](#)

[Standard Nine — Institutional Integrity](#)

## 2009 REGIONAL ACCREDITATION PROJECT SCOPE STATEMENT



<b>Project and Product Objectives</b>	Ensure that our accredited status continues unabated by preparing a Regional Accreditation self-study, meet all eligibility requirements and to have addressed all recommendations from the 2005 evaluation for all our programs and related degrees. Evaluate and recommend future direction for WSU Strategic Plan.
<b>Project Boundaries</b>	Project limited to preparing, and publishing self-study using NWCCU nine eligibility requirements, and WSU Strategic Plan addressing all recommendations from past 2005 evaluation and preparing for the evaluation visit.
<b>Projected Requirements and Deliverables</b>	Washington State University complies with the Higher Education Act Title IV of 1965 by meeting all accreditation standards of the Northwest Commission of Colleges and Universities by July 31, 2009. To comply WSU will engage in a University-wide self-study based on the NWCCU Accreditation Standards, followed by a multi-member Evaluation Team Visit. Deliverables on web include: Project tracking, assignments, final Ten Year Accreditation Self-Study, exhibits and documentation. Self-Study will also be published in print.
<b>Product Acceptance Criteria</b>	As a minimum self-study must meet the nine eligibility requirements and address the past recommendations. The process shall also include an ongoing evaluation of how WSU has made progress in achieving our accomplishments according to our Strategic Plan while also addressing our challenges and articulating our goals to strengthen those challenges.

# WSU Project Scope (cont)

<b>Project constraints</b>	Constraints exist in our large University-wide coordination of people-power. This process requires input and coordination across the state to provide timely and accurate evidence based analysis and planning while all involved carry on current education and infrastructure jobs. Budget time to be absorbed within individual programs, departments, and schools.	
<b>Project Assumptions</b>	<p>For the successful completion of the project it is assumed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Staffing will be available to work on committees providing data, analysis and writing for the self-study.</li> <li>a. Budget is available for all web and printing material publishing; support budget for Steering Committee training and evaluation team visit.</li> <li>a. Data available for to meet established standards.</li> <li>b. Documentation of Strategic Plan successes and challenges.</li> </ul>	
<b>Initial Project Organization</b>	<p>Project managers Steering committee Study committees Support staff</p>	
<b>Initial Defined Risks</b>	<p>The following risks have been identified and, if not overcome, may affect the schedule, cost, or quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. availability of resources</li> <li>b. uncertainty over the source and availability of materials and data</li> <li>c. Executive management changes</li> <li>d. delays of deliverables to Study committees</li> <li>e. lack of University-wide knowledge and participation in process</li> <li>f. lack of documentation articulating WSU's responsiveness to past 2005 recommendations</li> </ul>	
<b>Schedule Milestones</b>	<p>Steering Committee Appointed</p> <p>Study Committees Appointed</p> <p>Self-Study Kick-Off</p> <p>Data Collection and Analysis</p> <p>Conclusions, Summaries, Writing</p> <p>Compiling CD and Editing; collecting documents and exhibits</p> <p>Web Upload and Printing</p> <p>Evaluation Team Visit</p>	<p>Sept. 2006</p> <p>Oct. 2006</p> <p>Dec. 2006</p> <p>Nov. 2006 – Dec. 2007</p> <p>Sept. 2007 – May 2008</p> <p>Sept. 2008 – Dec. 2008</p> <p>Dec. 2008</p> <p>April 2009</p>

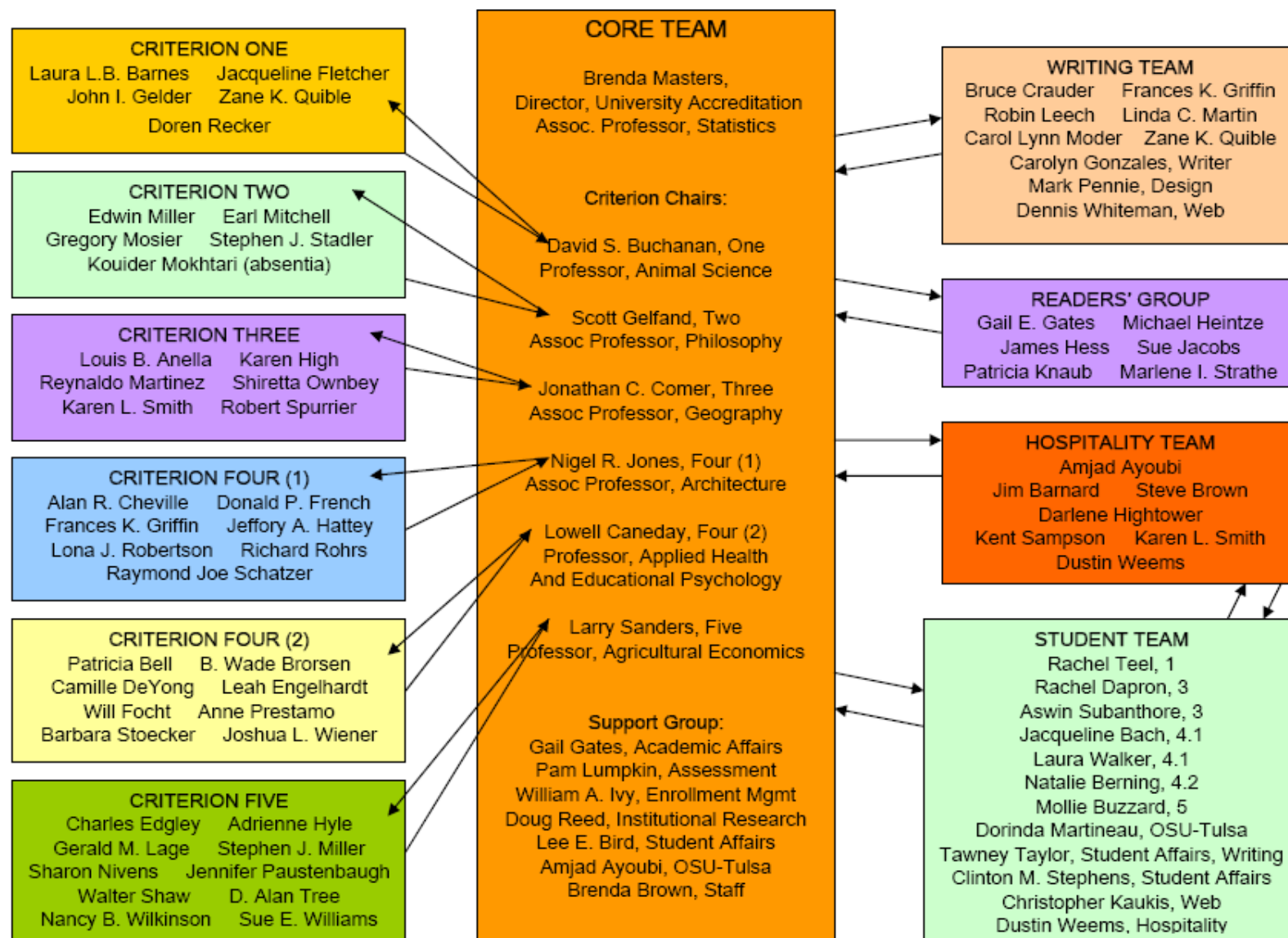
# Project Scope (cont)

## **Initial Work Breakdown Structure**

1. Data Collection
  - a. Create outline of standards for sub-committees and templates for departments
  - b. Appoint department, school, program sub-committees
  - c. Collect data from IR, SARA, etc.
  - d. Return for additional data if incomplete
  - e. Data submission to Sub-committees
2. Writing
  - a. Assign sections to members of committees for first round of writing summaries, and conclusions
  - b. Steering committee analysis, compiles, and edits
  - c. Submit to designer for base document design
  - d. Return to editors for design, layout and final edits
3. Publishing
  - a. Complete print versions upload to web
  - b. Submit print version to printer
  - c. Upload documents and exhibits
  - d. Prepare CD w/ links to websites.
4. Evaluation Team Visit
  - a. Plan locations; timings
  - b. Assign assistants
  - c. Book travel arrangements



# Oklahoma State University Accreditation Steering Committee 2005



# Self-study



- Each association has its own terms and criteria
- A self-study is all about
  - documenting your successes
  - identifying your weaknesses
  - having a plan to address weaknesses
  - documenting assessment of student learning
  - demonstrating that you have “closed the loop”

# Basic Institutional Data



- Data from the academic and fiscal year preceding the year of the evaluation committee visit are typically used for the self-study.
- Current data from the year of the visit are typically provided for the evaluation committee, on a form supplied by the commissions (see web sites).
- Completed copies of the form are distributed with the self-study to Commissioners, the Commission office, and members of the visiting committee.

# NWCCU Basic Institutional Data



- Highest degree
- Type of institution
- Institutional control
- Institutional calendar
- Special/programmatic accreditation
- Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) enrollment
- Full-time unduplicated head count enrollment
- Numbers of full-time and part-time instructional faculty and staff and numbers of full-time only faculty and staff by highest degree earned



# NWCCU Basic Institutional Data (cont)



- Number of instructional staff added for current year
- Number of instructional staff employed previous year but not reemployed
- Mean salaries and mean years of service of full-time instructional and research staff
- Financial information
- Domestic off-campus degree programs and academic credit sites
- Programs and academic courses offered at sites outside the U.S.

# Supporting Documents



- Organizational chart
- Student handbook
- Mission and goals of each unit
- Evidence of goal attainment
- Evidence on the impact of student services on students
- Sample copies of student publications
- Brief resumes of professional staff

# Hot Topics



- Applicability of Transfer Credit
  - Accreditation does not provide automatic acceptance of credit or degree
  - It is the prerogative of the receiving institution
  - Standard practice
- Accreditation-like activity at the federal level vs. independent accreditation associations
- Accreditation mills

# Hot Tips

- Start early.
- Be informed.
- Read the last self-study and interim reports.
- Draft an early version.
- Discover what data you need to gather.
- If you use NSSE or other surveys, map results to standards.
- Volunteer to be on committees, especially outside your obvious area.
- Make use of existing committees.
- Confirm that your catalog supports the standards.
- Learn from others.



# Web Sites of Interest



- [http://www.ncacihe.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=83&Itemid=111](http://www.ncacihe.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=83&Itemid=111)
- <http://www.provost.uidaho.edu/documents/NWCCUCommitteeRptF04.pdf&pid=85972&doc=1>
- <http://www.nwccu.org>
- <http://www.worldwidelearn.com/earning/accrediting-associations.htm>
- <http://accreditation.okstate.edu>
- <http://www.olympia.wsu.edu/provost/Accred.stm>
- <http://www.ed.gov/students/prep/college/diplomamills/accreditation.html>



# Another Resource & Contact Info



Preparing for Accreditation,  
Chapter 22, in *The  
Registrar's Guide:  
Evolving Best Practices in  
Records and Registration*  
by Reta Pikowsky

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