

The New Economy, Higher Education, and Accreditation



Sonny Ramaswamy
sonny@nwccu.org





New Economy

- Population
- Demographic changes
- Global competition
- Innovations
- Health
- Sustainability

- Climate change
- Resource stewardship
- Ecological footprint
- Environmentalism
- Anti-intellectual
- Anti-science





Higher Education

Internal Pressures

- Student learning
- Equity
- Cost of education
- Demographics
- Enrollments
- Budgets
- Technology
- Infrastructure
- Relevance
- Economic and social mobility

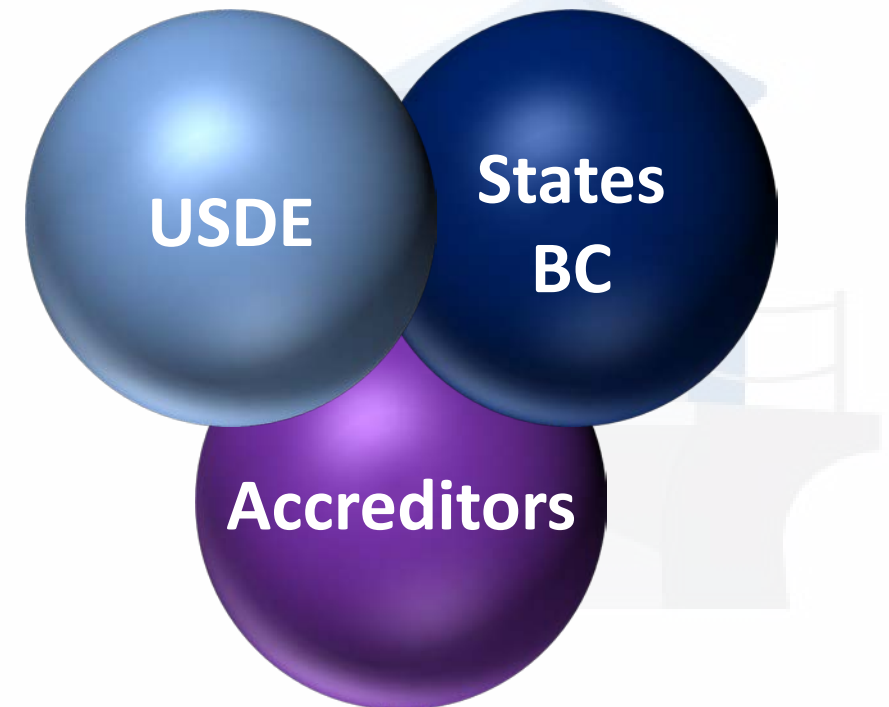
External Pressures

- Value proposition
- Federal, state, local rules
- Political considerations
- HEA reauthorization
- Relevance
- Demographics
- Technology, Online, MOOCs, MOOSEs
- Competition
- Integrity of education systems
- Changing US economy: gig, digital
- Need for reskilling, upskilling



Purpose of Accreditation

- Educational **quality, stability, and sustainability** assessed by **peer evaluators** against **standards, eligibility requirements, and policies**
- Institutions qualify for **Federal Title IV funds and grants and contracts**
- Institutional **reputation**
- **Purpose**
 - Student achievement, learning, and success
 - Accountability
 - Quality assurance
 - Continuous improvement





Accreditation and Institutional Improvement

- Institutional effectiveness
 - Outcomes
 - Student Success
 - Costs and Indebtedness
- Become a learning organization
- Institutional critical thinking
- Innovation
- Programmatic improvements
- Effective governance
- Improved infrastructure
- Improved processes
- Continuous improvement



NWCCU's Mission Reflecting Purpose

The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities accredits institutions of higher education by applying **evidence-informed standards** and **processes** to support **continuous improvements** and promote **student achievement and success**

Foci

- Student achievement, learning, success
- Educational quality
- Institutional effectiveness
- Continuous improvement
- Analytical self-assessment
- Critical peer review
- Accountability and transparency
- Disaggregated data- and evidence-informed
- Equity and closing gaps
- Research and engagement

Standards with Purpose

USDE Requirements

1. Student success & achievement
2. Curricula
3. Faculty
4. Facilities, equipment, supplies
5. Fiscal & administrative
6. Student support services
7. Recruiting & admissions
8. Program measures
9. Student complaints
10. Title IV

Proposed New Standards

Institutional Effectiveness (QUALITY)

- **Foci**
 - Goals
 - Indicators
- **Student Success**
 - Core competencies
 - Program learning outcomes
 - Retention
 - Completion
 - Graduation

Capacity, Resources, Governance (COMPLIANCE)

- **Offsite and Onsite**

Core Competencies/ General Education

1. Learning how to learn/
metacognition
2. Critical thinking
3. Problem solving
4. Information literacy
5. Global perspective
6. Integrative learning
7. Quantitative reasoning
8. Digital competencies
9. Ethical responsibility
10. Collaboration
11. Communication skills

2020 Standards

STANDARD ONE – Institutional Effectiveness

- Institutional mission
- Institutional effectiveness
- Student learning
- Student achievement

STANDARD TWO – Governance, Resources, and Capacity

- Governance
- Policies and procedures
- Institutional integrity
- Financial resources
- Human resources
- Student support resources
- Library and information resources
- Physical and technology infrastructure



2020 Eligibility Requirements

- Focus and independence
- Operational status
- Authority
- Institutional effectiveness
- Student learning
- Student achievement
- Non-discrimination
- Institutional integrity
- Governance/Leadership
- Student support services
- Infrastructure





7-Year Cycle



Risk-Based Accreditation

Within-Type Core Measures/Outcomes

- **Base Goals**
 - Institutional
 - Regional Peers
 - National Peers
- **Aspirational Goals**
 - Institutional
 - Regional Peers
 - National Peers





Reporting Cycle

ANNUAL REPORT

- Disaggregated Data
- Student Achievement
- Financials

- **Annual** Submission
- **Staff Review**

MID-CYCLE REPORT Standard One

- Report and Onsite Review
 - Assessment
 - Data Collection and Analysis
 - Planning

- **Onsite** peer review in **Year 3**
- Staff review of evaluation reports for Commission
- Meeting consent agenda

POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND FINANCIAL REVIEW (PRFR) Standard Two

- Report and Offsite Review
 - Financial Performance
 - Policies and Regulations

- **Offsite** peer review in **Year 6**
- Findings reported to Institutional Effectiveness Evaluation Team for Year 7

EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (EIE) Standards One and Two

- Report and Onsite Review of Student Success
 - Institutional Mission and Effectiveness
 - Student Learning
 - Student Achievement

- **Onsite** peer review in **Year 7**
- Review findings from PRFR
- Commission Decision



Student Achievement Measures

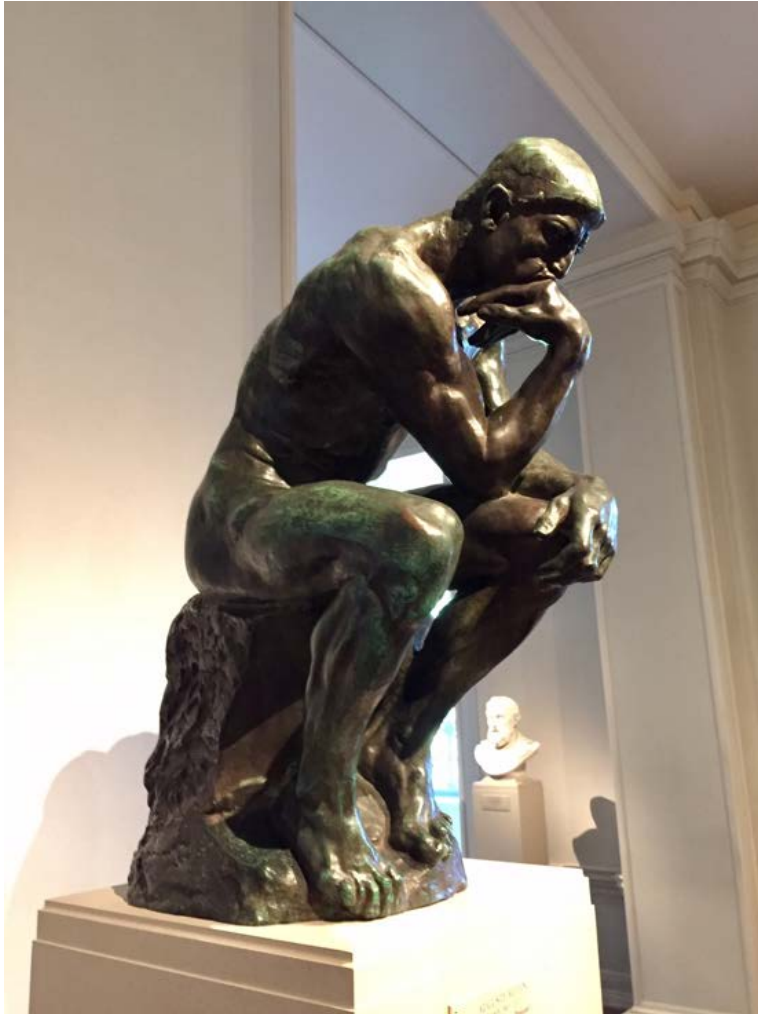
- Focus on **student success** and **closing equity gaps**
- Indicators **disaggregated** for student achievement
 - Race, ethnicity, gender, Pell eligibility, first generation
- Regional and national peer institutions **comparators**
- Focus on **continuous improvement**
- Use **transparent approaches** to inform strategies, allocation of resources, and to mitigate gaps

What We Hope to Accomplish



- Build **relationships** with institutions to foster **continuous improvement** focused on **outcomes**
- Promote **engagement** with faculty and other campus entities to become **fully** and meaningfully **involved** in accreditation
- Support **achievement** of institutional aspirational goals versus a **punitive** or “Gotcha” process





Accreditation

... is a journey, and not a destination

