



**Year One Self-Evaluation Report
Seattle University
Seattle, Washington**

Submitted to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
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Introduction

Seattle University welcomes the opportunity to participate in the new accreditation standards developed by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. The university has prepared for this process by aligning its strategic planning with the structures and timelines of the new accreditation handbook. The university has this year approved and begun implementation of revised strategic priorities that are designed to also serve as core themes for the purposes of self-evaluation. The university believes this integration of strategic planning with self-evaluation will strengthen and benefit both processes.

The Commission's letter dated January 25, 2011 reaffirming the university's accreditation included a request that this Year One Report provide an addendum responding to Recommendation One from the evaluation team report. Seattle University recognizes the significance and legitimacy of the Commission's concerns as outlined in Recommendation One as well as the need to make assessment of student learning outcomes fully comprehensive and systematic.

The university, as described in Addendums A and B, will implement the structures necessary to accomplish this goal. The university established a process in January 2010 to design a new undergraduate core curriculum (general education program) based on learning outcomes. In January 2011, the University Core Revision Committee released a preliminary report that identifies learning objectives for the revised core and proposes a curricular model based upon alignment with, and demonstrated accomplishment of, those objectives. This curriculum will be developed in Academic Year 2011-2012 and will be implemented in fall 2012.

To ensure systematic assessment beyond the core, the university has developed and begun institutional review of a proposal for a system of assessment that includes the accountability, incentives, oversight and resources necessary to make assessment of student learning outcomes truly comprehensive.

The development of core themes, objectives and indicators within the year one report has allowed Seattle University to distill and clarify the actions and accomplishments that are most critical to the fulfillment of the university's mission and strategic goals. The university looks forward to using the remaining reports of the accreditation cycle as a vehicle to both facilitate and assess the accomplishment of the goals set out in this report.

Institutional Context

Founded in 1891, Seattle University is dedicated to educating the whole person, to professional formation, and to empowering leaders for a just and humane world. Faculty, staff and students share a vision of the institution, aspiring to be the premier independent university of the Northwest in academic quality, Jesuit-Catholic inspiration, and service to society.

Seattle University is the largest independent university in the Pacific Northwest. Seattle University's current student body of 7,817 students includes 4,565 undergraduates, 2,240 graduate students, and 1,012 law students. Campus residence halls provide housing for 1,919 undergraduate students. Students at Seattle University are among the most culturally diverse in the region; 57 percent are White, 15 percent are Asian, and 14 percent come from underrepresented minorities (Black, Hispanic and Native American). The university has 740 faculty members, of whom 318 are tenured/tenure-track, 166 are full-time non-tenure track, and 256 are part-time. The university employs 678 staff members.

Seattle University holds institutional accreditation from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities and discipline-specific accreditation from a number of academic and professional bodies, including the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, the American Bar Association, the Association of Theological Schools, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs.

The university's academic program is organized into eight colleges and schools, including the College of Arts and Sciences, the Albers School of Business and Economics, the College of Science and Engineering, the School of Law, the College of Education, the College of Nursing, the School of Theology and Ministry, and the Matteo Ricci College. Seattle University is recognized nationally and internationally for the quality of its education. The university is ranked sixth among Western regional universities by *U.S. News and World Report*, which also lists the university's engineering programs among the top 50 undergraduate-only programs in the country, the M.B.A. program among the top 30 part-time programs nationally, and the School of Law among the top 100 nationally. The university is included in the prestigious *Fiske Guide to Colleges* and it is among the 368 best colleges and universities in the country as listed by the *Princeton Review*.

Preface

Brief Update on Institutional Changes since the Last Report

Seattle University's most recent report to the Commission was in August 2010 (this document was an update to the April 2010 self study report). The university has not, since that time, made changes that meet the criteria outlined in *Policy A-2* as constituting a substantive change.

The university continues to make changes and improvements intended to carry forward its mission of educating the whole person, professional formation and empowering leaders for a just and humane world. Examples include:

- The renovated Lemieux Library and new McGoldrick Learning Commons opened in September 2010 and is exceeding expectations as the academic center of the campus.
- A revision of the university's undergraduate core curriculum (the general education program) is successfully moving forward toward a fall 2012 implementation. The University Core Revision Committee has submitted a preliminary report identifying learning objectives and a curriculum model.
- A comprehensive compensation and benefits study is underway and the university has set aside funds to supplement salaries where they are found to be below market.
- Strategic planning has been revised to incorporate the emergent priority of Investing in the Excellence of Our Faculty and Staff, to broaden opportunities for campus participation, to create action plans for each strategic priority, and to align planning with accreditation.
- An undergraduate strategic enrollment plan is under development.
- The university expects to open a new recreational fitness center in September 2011.

Response to the Recommendations/Issues Requested by the Commission

The January 25, 2011 letter from the Northwest Commission reaffirming Seattle University's accreditation requires that the university take appropriate action to ensure that Recommendation One of the fall 2010 Comprehensive Evaluation Report is addressed and resolved. The letter also requested that the university submit an addendum to this report that will address this recommendation; refer to Addendums A and B for this response.

The university will attach an addendum to its Year Three Self-Evaluation Report that will address Recommendations Two through Six.

Date of Most Recent Review of Mission and Core Themes

In May 2003, the Board of Trustees (BOT) approved new mission, vision, and values statements for the University. The process leading to the adoption of these statements was outlined in the university's 2010 self study.

In November 2010, the BOT approved five strategic priorities intended to direct the university's fulfillment of its mission in the new decade: Academic Excellence; Engaging the World; Catholic, Jesuit Character; Formation for Leadership, and Investing in the Excellence of Our Faculty and Staff. In approving these strategic priorities, the BOT directed that these priorities should also serve as "core themes" for accreditation consistent with the Commission's definition of themes as individually manifesting, and collectively encompassing, the mission of the university.

Chapter One: Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations

Section I: Standard 1.A, Mission

Mission, Vision, and Values (Approved May 8, 2003)

Mission: Seattle University is dedicated to educating the whole person, to professional formation, and to empowering leaders for a just and humane world.

Vision: We will be the premier independent university of the Northwest in academic quality, Jesuit Catholic inspiration, and service to society.

Values: Care, academic excellence, diversity, faith, justice, leadership

Interpretation of Fulfillment of the Mission

The university's mission statement was developed in 2002-2003 through a process consistent with Commission expectations relating to both community involvement and board oversight. This process, outlined in detail in the university's 2010 self study, was broadly participatory and involved faculty, staff and students. The mission statement was formally approved by the BOT in May 2003.

The mission of the university gives direction to and is broadly understood by the university community. The mission is widely published, including on the university's website and in marketing materials for prospective students; it is also posted in every building. The mission and strategic priorities guide resource allocation, curriculum development and program review. Recent surveys show that alumni, faculty, staff, and students have high levels of understanding and appreciation of the mission.

The vitality and centrality of the mission of Seattle University has previously been noted by the Commission. The report from the evaluation team that visited Seattle University in October 2010 noted that "it was very clear to the evaluation team that this Mission defines the University, including all its activities, and that the goals (or strategic directions) flow from that Mission and are widely understood by the campus community. Indeed, in the experience of the evaluation team, there is an uncommonly high awareness and deep commitment to the mission on the part of everyone with whom the committee members met."

Articulation of an Acceptable Threshold or Extent of Mission Fulfillment

Seattle University has defined a set of five institutional outcomes and characteristics that it considers to constitute acceptable thresholds for the fulfillment of the university's mission. Consistent with Commission standards, these accomplishments are not aspirational but rather reflect minimum standards or baselines for mission fulfillment.

Based on the university's mission of educating the whole person, professional formation, and empowering leaders for a just and humane world, these outcomes address student and alumni success, academic quality, and the education of the whole person, including the impact of the values and culture of the university on students and alumni.

In developing these outcomes, the university has identified both modes of measurement and specific targets against which the performance of the university can be assessed. Where possible, outcomes are defined against peer and national benchmarks.

- 1) **The graduation rate for undergraduates at Seattle University will exceed the national average for independent universities.** Graduation rates are a broadly accepted measure of how well institutions serve students, used by institutions, prospective students, and outside agencies to evaluate academic quality as well as the likelihood that a student will succeed in obtaining a degree. The six-year average for all undergraduates is the best high-level indicator; it also permits the university to compare itself to a national peer group.
- 2) **Seattle University results for seniors participating in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) will exceed the average scores for universities in the same Carnegie class by a statistically significant margin for each benchmark.** The NSSE is the most commonly accepted indicator of undergraduate participation in activities associated with high levels of learning, particularly the deep learning that is consistent with the university's mission to educate the whole person. NSSE provides benchmark scores for five areas: 1) Level of academic challenge; 2) Active and collaborative learning; 3) Student-faculty interaction; 4) Enriching educational experiences; and 5) Supportive campus environment.
- 3) **Seattle University will demonstrate the quality of its professional programs at both the graduate and undergraduate levels through successful disciplinary accreditation.** As noted in the 2010 NWCCU evaluation committee report, disciplinary accreditation serves as *prima facie* evidence of educational program effectiveness. It also speaks to the university's mission to provide professional formation. Seattle University will demonstrate the capacity to pursue and obtain disciplinary accreditation for those programs to which such accreditation is available.
- 4) **Seattle University will be classified as a community engagement institution by the Carnegie Foundation.** This classification is a national and independently evaluated metric of community engagement, outreach, and partnerships.
- 5) **Seattle University students and alumni will volunteer and participate in the civic realm at rates that exceed available comparison groups by statistically significant margins.** Seattle University provides a wide range of curricular and co-curricular activities that seek to empower

leaders for a just and humane world, and the rate at which students participate in these programs is a key metric. For current students, these activities include service learning. The university uses rates of alumni volunteerism and civic engagement as an indicator of the impact of a Seattle University education post-graduation.

Section II: Standard 1.B, Core Themes

The BOT approved in November 2010 five strategic priorities intended to direct the fulfillment of the university's mission in the new decade: Academic Excellence; Engaging the World; Catholic, Jesuit Character; Formation for Leadership; and Investing in the Excellence of Our Faculty and Staff. In approving these strategic priorities, the BOT directed that these should also serve as core themes for accreditation, consistent with the Commission's definition of core themes as individually manifesting, and collectively encompassing, the mission of the university. The university believes that the integration of strategic planning with self evaluation strengthens and benefits both processes.

In approving these priorities, the BOT also endorsed a model of strategic planning that provides for the development of an action plan for each strategic priority, including specific initiatives and success metrics. The initiatives and success metrics are aligned with the core theme objectives and indicators of achievement as defined by the Northwest Commission.

Development of these action plans is underway. (In the case of Academic Excellence, the action plan is already in place.) Both the planning process and the action plan structure are designed to promote coordination across plans, the articulation of clear objectives and methods of assessment, broad involvement and regular reporting.

Implementation of the core themes/strategic priorities will be assessed annually. Institutional plans, including budget allocations, will be adjusted based on that assessment, and a report will be made to the university community.

Core Theme One: Academic Excellence

Brief Description of the Core Theme

The promotion of academic excellence is the key strategic goal of Seattle University. The primary measure of academic excellence is student accomplishment of the university's stipulated learning outcomes. Rigorous and engaging curriculum, a supportive environment, and excellence in teaching and scholarship all contribute to the realization of this goal.

Objectives of the Core Theme

Rigorous and Engaging Curriculum

Objective: The university pursues the delivery of rigorous and engaging curriculum in every degree program.

It is the university's objective that every degree program is of high quality and fulfills its specified learning objectives and outcomes. Upon completion of their programs, students will have acquired the capacities, knowledge and skills appropriate to their disciplines and degree levels. Curriculum will be delivered in such a way that it promotes academic rigor and engaged learning.

Indicators of achievement:

- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) scores in four benchmark areas
Rationale: The NSSE contains benchmark scores in four areas: 1) Level of academic challenge; 2) Active and collaborative learning; 3) Student-faculty interaction; and 4) Enriching educational experiences. NSSE measures the time and effort students put into their education as well as the availability of resources and learning opportunities.
- Disciplinary accreditation of professional programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels
Rationale: Disciplinary accreditation is a rigorous process that comprehensively addresses the quality and standards of a set of academic programs. The peer review model of disciplinary accreditation is of particular value at the graduate level, where appropriate benchmarking data are less available.
- Achievement of learning outcomes
Rationale: Student achievement of learning outcomes and objectives is the most fundamental accomplishment of an institution of higher education. The university systematically and comprehensively assesses achievement of those learning outcomes; see Addendum B for more information.
- Pre-and post-testing
Rationale: Seattle University will use pre- and post-testing of undergraduates using national, standardized exams in order to better understand the value added of a Seattle University

education through student mastery of learning objectives over a period of time. Review of instruments such as the Collegiate Learning Assessment is underway.

Campus Environment and Student Success

Objective: A rigorous academic curriculum is complemented by a supportive campus environment that facilitates students' successful completion of their academic degree programs.

To promote high levels of achievement and learning, rigorous academic programs must be complemented by effective support services and a campus environment that enriches the educational experiences of all students.

Indicators of achievement:

- Graduation rate
Rationale: The graduation rate is a commonly accepted measure of how well institutions serve students. It is particularly useful as national and peer data are readily available.

- NSSE benchmark: Supportive campus environment
Rationale: This benchmark area includes questions on administrative personnel and offices, perceptions that the university has a substantial commitment to student academic success, and time devoted to co-curricular activities, among other topics.

Supporting Excellence in Teaching and Scholarship

Objective: The quality of students' academic experience is enhanced through working with faculty members who are supported in their roles as educators and scholars.

Excellence in academic programming requires that faculty successfully fulfill multiple responsibilities, including teaching, scholarship, and service. The university supports the career development of individual faculty members by offering enhanced support for research and teaching.

Indicators of achievement:

- Quality and impact of faculty publications
Rationale: Citation analysis is used to assess the impact of faculty publications, while the acceptance rates of the journals that publish articles by Seattle University faculty indicate quality.

- Evidence for Rigorous and Engaging Curriculum
Rationale: In the absence of industry-standard direct measures of teaching effectiveness that work across a range of disciplines, the university relies on student learning as an indicator of the skill of its faculty as educators. The indicators for the Rigorous and Engaging Curriculum objective, especially student achievement of learning outcomes and pre- and post-testing, support this objective as well.

Core Theme Two: Engaging the World

Brief Description of the Core Theme

Education at Seattle University is characterized by the deep and respectful engagement of students and the university in its global and local communities. Seattle University advances global education by strengthening institutional leadership, commitment and capacity in this area. The university leverages its urban character and enhances the learning of students by making a stronger commitment to the wider community through the Seattle University Youth Initiative.

Objectives of the Core Theme

Service Learning and Community Engagement

Objective: Seattle University provides students with opportunities for transformational service learning and promotes commitment to community action.

Through service learning (curricular and co-curricular), the university provides students with opportunities to develop respectful relationships with a variety of communities. The primary way the university will promote this within its diverse local neighborhood is through the Seattle University Youth Initiative, which establishes sustained connections to the immediate community.

Indicators of achievement:

- Number of students who participate in service learning
Rationale: A significant proportion of faculty members integrate service learning into their courses, thereby reaching a large number of students. Co-curricular programming provides another avenue for involvement. The university measures one aspect of success through the total number of participants.
- Levels of commitment to community action
Rationale: Seattle University will measure the effectiveness of this objective through one or more surveys that assess the attitudes and actions of its students related to community service. Development of an instrument is underway.

Global Engagement

Objective: Seattle University promotes student development of intercultural competencies through international programs and activities.

The university seeks and promotes global engagement through study abroad, faculty exchange programs, international internships and international community service.

Indicators of achievement:

- Number of students who participate in education abroad

Rationale: One of the most impactful ways for students to engage the world is through international experience, and this is enhanced through organized education abroad experiences.

- Levels of intercultural competencies

Rationale: Seattle University will assess effectiveness through one or more instruments, such as the Global Perspectives Inventory (which measures cognitive awareness, intrapersonal perspectives and interpersonal attitudes) or the Intercultural Development Inventory (which measures cross-cultural sensitivity and behaviors).

Inspiring Dialogue

Objective: Seattle University fosters a dynamic campus environment through dialogue about the cultural, social, and religious complexities of the contemporary world.

The university offers events and programs that promote active and deep conversation within the diverse campus community about topics pertinent to the contemporary world, including cultural, social and religious challenges.

Indicator of achievement:

- Frequency of significant student engagement with people of different perspectives

Rationale: The university works to inspire dialogue about global issues; through surveys, the university ascertains whether or not students have had significant conversations with people of perspectives different from their own.

- Levels of intercultural competencies

Rationale: Seattle University will assess effectiveness through one or more instruments, such as the Global Perspectives Inventory (which measures cognitive awareness, intrapersonal perspectives and interpersonal attitudes) or the Intercultural Development Inventory (which measures cross-cultural sensitivity and behaviors).

Core Theme Three: Catholic, Jesuit Character

Brief Description of the Core Theme

Seattle University is Catholic and Jesuit in its origin, mission and vision. As a Catholic institution, it shares with other Christian traditions a belief in the saving work of Jesus Christ. The university respects other faith traditions and recognizes that many people committed to the transformation of society operate out of humanistic philosophical convictions. Seattle University prepares student leaders for a just and humane world. To accomplish this goal, the university hires faculty and staff and recruits students committed to its humanistic, Catholic and Jesuit mission and educates them to understand and put in practice the deepest principles of that mission. The university sees in its Catholic Jesuit mission a call both to understand Catholic thought and culture and to promote ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.

Objectives of the Core Theme

Leadership Formation

Objective: The university prepares leaders for a just and humane world through an integrated, sequenced program of formation for leadership.

Leadership formation is a component of Seattle University's mission and is recognized in the university learning objectives. This area of responsibility is shared by multiple divisions, requiring collaboration and integration in order to be most effective. The university's mission statement assigns purpose to leadership in the sense of how it can effect change to promote a more just and humane world. The program of leadership formation reflects this purpose; therefore this objective supports the core theme of Catholic, Jesuit Character as well as Formation for Leadership. The cross-theme approach lends strength to this objective, as it does to the integration of programs located in multiple divisions.

Indicator of achievement:

- Student achievement of leadership as a component of the university's learning objectives
Rationale: University-level learning objectives are broken into multiple components, each of which is individually assessed. Leadership is one of these named components and the university uses the framework for assessment of learning objectives to assess achievement of the leadership formation objective. See Addendum B for more information on the assessment of learning objectives.

Recruitment, Hiring, and Education for Mission

Objective: Faculty, staff, and students are familiar with and committed to the fundamental values of the university.

Seattle University has a strong campus-wide commitment to its mission. Faculty and staff are knowledgeable about the mission, how it relates to their work, and how it guides the operations and direction of the university. Seattle University benefits from this common understanding in a number of ways, including a clear institutional identity, the ability to recruit and retain employees who are a good mission fit, and a sense of community and common good. This objective focuses on promoting and expanding mission commitment. The more clearly Seattle University can accomplish this, the easier it will be to recruit, admit and hire a community of people motivated to contribute to and benefit from its educational and spiritual vision.

Indicator of achievement:

- Level of mission commitment

Rationale: Through surveys of faculty, staff and students, the university measures the degree to which the community understands and is committed to the mission. This includes knowledge of the mission statement itself as well as behavior that demonstrates commitment.

Ecumenical and Interfaith Dialogue

Objective: Seattle University works to increase understanding and dialogue between different faith traditions.

Seattle University embraces a diversity of belief systems on campus, and the global society in which students will live and work is filled with different perspectives. The university encourages ecumenical and interfaith dialogue as a way to promote understanding of similarities as well as differences.

Indicator of achievement:

- Levels of meaningful dialogue

Rationale: Through surveys, the university will evaluate the extent to which students, faculty, and staff engage in meaningful dialogue and find it contributes to their understanding of different faith traditions.

Understanding of Catholic Thought and Culture

Objective: The university promotes an understanding and appreciation of Catholic thought and culture.

As a Catholic institution, Seattle University belongs to a wider community. Whether or not faculty, staff, and students are themselves Catholic, the university works to build an understanding of what Catholicism is and how it is manifested in a religiously diverse educational community. This

objective is pursued through educational and spiritual programs available on the campus and in other settings.

Indicator of achievement:

- Growth in understanding and appreciation of Catholic thought and culture
Rationale: The university will ascertain through surveys whether faculty, staff and students find that the university has contributed to their understanding and appreciation of Catholic thought and culture.

Core Theme Four: Formation for Leadership

Brief Description of the Core Theme

The university prepares leaders for a just and humane world by creating a community that enables and supports students to develop the knowledge, skills and values to make life choices and serve as leaders with a clear sense of their agency in the world.

Objectives of the Core Theme

Leadership Formation

Objective: The university prepares leaders for a just and humane world through an integrated, sequenced program of formation for leadership.

Leadership formation is a component of Seattle University's mission and is recognized in university learning objectives. This area of responsibility is shared by multiple divisions, requiring collaboration and integration in order to be most effective. This objective focuses on developing programs and services as well as ensuring that they work together to foster leadership within the student body. It is a shared objective between two core themes: Catholic, Jesuit Character and Formation for Leadership.

Indicator of achievement:

- Student achievement of leadership as a component of the university's learning objectives
Rationale: University-level learning objectives are broken into multiple components, each of which is individually assessed. Leadership is one of these named components and the university uses the framework for assessment of learning objectives to assess achievement of the leadership formation objective. See Addendum B for more information on the assessment of learning objectives.

Engagement in Community

Objective: To promote a community that enables and supports students, the university offers programs that cultivate a sense of belonging and compassion.

This objective acknowledges that leadership and its cultivation do not exist in a vacuum. A vibrant campus community promotes student growth as well as connection. Community-based learning, such as is found in cohort programs, along with a variety of co-curricular programs, are examples of ways the university works to build community.

Indicators of achievement:

- Student participation in activities
Rationale: Communities are formed through purposeful interactions; participation rates in university-sponsored activities measure the frequency of those interactions.

- Student perception of inclusion within the university community
Rationale: The university evaluates students' connection to the university through surveys that ascertain students' sense of belonging to a community.

Core Theme Five: Investing in the Excellence of Our Faculty and Staff

Brief Description of the Core Theme

Essential to the growth and development of Seattle University as a great independent university in the Northwest is a commitment to invest in the excellence of faculty and staff. In the spirit of the mission, the university commits itself to a diverse work environment and campus culture marked by care, collaboration and innovation that challenges and supports faculty and staff to perform at the highest levels. Areas of emphasis include compensation and benefits, professional and personal development opportunities, advances in technology and upgrades to the physical campus.

Objectives of the Core Theme

Faculty and Staff Compensation

Objective: The university's system of compensation enables it to attract and retain qualified faculty and staff.

The delivery of the university's mission and first four core themes depends on its faculty and staff; without dedicated and successful faculty and staff, the university could not operate. Compensation is central to the university's ability to attract and retain well-qualified faculty and staff.

Indicator of achievement:

- Benchmarked compensation and market analysis
Rationale: The university evaluates its compensation against peer institutions and local labor markets to ascertain whether faculty and staff are remunerated at a competitive rate.

Operational Effectiveness

Objective: The university promotes operational effectiveness through excellence in faculty and staff performance.

The university supports and enables its employees to function at high levels. It regularly examines its practices and tools, including technology, provides professional development and training opportunities, and seeks continuous improvement.

Indicators of achievement:

- Achievement of core themes
Rationale: The effectiveness of faculty and staff is demonstrated through the accomplishment of the other four core themes.
- Annual performance appraisals
Rationale: The university uses annual appraisals to assess and improve each individual's performance. The university reviews the percentage of faculty and staff members who undergo

appraisals each year, solicits feedback on the review process, and makes improvements on the basis of that feedback.

- Use of technology to improve business practices
Rationale: The university deploys technical solutions in areas that stand to benefit the most from improved efficiency, greater security or expanded functionality.

Conclusion

Seattle University appreciates that the new accreditation standards and schedule are more complementary to regular university operations than the previous structure. In Academic Year 2010-2011, the university benefited from its ability to align its strategic priorities with the core themes. The production of the Year One Self-Evaluation Report was facilitated and simplified by work in strategic planning. The university looks forward to similar alignments in subsequent years as it turns its attention to resources, capacity, planning, implementation, assessment and mission fulfillment.

In particular, Seattle University recognizes the value of being able to define mission fulfillment in concrete terms and objectives. The university welcomes the insights of the Commission and peer evaluators on these topics and looks forward to refining its institutional objectives so they better serve the university and more clearly demonstrate the university's value.

The university will continue to develop and improve its institutional plans over the next seven years, including its core themes and strategic priorities. The core themes are drawn from the strategic priorities and are articulated in such a way that the outcomes are feasible given the current environment, including resource levels, while giving direction to future work and investments. As the university implements its strategic priority action plans over the next few years, it expects to revise its core themes so they continue to be useful.

The university is working to address the recommendations raised by the Commission in its 2010 Full-Scale Evaluation Committee Report. Outlined in Addendum A are the improvements the university has proposed and will endeavor to have in place by June 2012 regarding Recommendation One. Recommendations Two through Six will be addressed in the Year Three Self-Evaluation report in 2013.

Addendum A

Seattle University Response to Recommendation One of the 2010 Comprehensive Evaluation Committee Report

Recommendation One from the Comprehensive Evaluation Committee Report:

The 2005 Regular Interim Report called on the University to “...solidify its proposed Assessment Plan, (to) develop a coordinated system for data collection and interpretation, and (to) clarify how continued oversight will be managed.” Although progress has been made in particular areas, such practices are not consistently implemented or monitored across all units and programs of the University. In short, the University still has not yet met the requirement of a true culture of student learning outcome assessment. Given the Commission’s history of concern regarding this matter, the Evaluation Committee strongly recommends immediate action on the part of the University to address these deficiencies.

The January 25, 2011 letter from the Northwest Commission reaffirming Seattle University’s accreditation requires the university to take appropriate action to ensure that Recommendation One of the Fall 2010 Comprehensive Evaluation Report is addressed and resolved. The letter also requested that the university submit an addendum to the Year One Self-Evaluation Report that outlines its response to this recommendation. This document is in response to that request.

Seattle University is addressing and responding to Recommendation One by implementing and sustaining a comprehensive system for the assessment of student learning outcomes. The university established in January 2010 a process to develop a new core (general education) curriculum designed around learning outcomes. The University Core Revision Committee released in January 2011 a preliminary report that identifies learning objectives for the revised core and proposes a curricular model based upon alignment with, and demonstrated accomplishment of, those objectives. This curriculum will be developed in Academic Year 2011-2012 and implemented in fall 2012. Implementation of the core curriculum will include resources and structures to support the sustained assessment of the core learning objectives and the revision of curriculum responsive to the results of that assessment. To support effective implementation of these new practices, the university has provided the funds to shift the core director to a full-time position in Academic Year 2011-2012.

To complement the work of core revision and bring about systematic assessment across the university, the Office of University Planning has developed a draft document: “Framework for Systematic Assessment of Learning Outcomes.” This framework (attached) includes standards for assessment of learning outcomes, practices that involve all academic programs and ensure accountability, and policies to ensure comprehensive participation. The Executive Team of the university has reviewed this document and given it preliminary approval. In spring 2011, the document will be reviewed by a broad range of stakeholders, including the University Assessment

Committee, Deans' Council, Academic Assembly, and student governance bodies. The document, as modified based on this broader review, will be brought back to the Executive Team for final approval before the end of Academic Year 2010-2011.

While stakeholder review is critical as a means of improving the proposal and building support for its implementation, this review will not result in modifications that compromise the capacity of the proposed framework to accomplish its central objective of bringing about comprehensive and systematic assessment.

This addendum outlines how this plan is responsive to the main components called for in Recommendation One: (1) solidify an assessment plan; (2) develop a coordinated system for data collection and interpretation; and (3) clarify how continued oversight will be managed.

Solidify an assessment plan

Addendum B, "Framework for Systematic Assessment of University, Academic Program and Co-Curricular Learning Outcomes at Seattle University," is a comprehensive assessment plan. It assigns specific roles and responsibilities for all parties involved in assessment of learning outcomes. For assessment of academic program learning outcomes, this includes program faculty, college/school assessment coordinators, Deans and, ultimately, the Provost. Assessment of co-curricular programs is the responsibility of program staff and the appropriate Vice President or Provost. The University Assessment Committee leads the assessment of university learning outcomes. The Office of University Planning is responsible for ensuring the comprehensive success of all assessment practices, maintaining documentation demonstrating this success, and reporting on the status of assessment to the Executive Team and other stakeholders, including the NWCCU.

Program review will also be modified in conjunction with this framework. Programs will be required to submit their plans for when and how they will assess each of their learning outcomes, to discuss what was learned from assessment results, and to review what changes were made in response to assessment.

Sustaining a coordinated system for assessment (as well as data collection and interpretation) requires support for faculty and staff doing the assessment. The university has made progress in establishing a culture of assessment; however, not all faculty and staff are conversant with best practices and how to adapt them to their programs. The university is responding by providing training and support for faculty and staff who need assistance in developing effective assessment practices. Faculty members who have expertise with assessment in different disciplinary areas will be provided with stipends so they can work as peer mentors with departments or programs that are having difficulty with assessment.

Develop a coordinated system for data collection and interpretation

As assessment is integral to the delivery of quality educational programs, primary responsibility falls to the program faculty. Assessment data are generated at the academic or co-curricular program levels, with Deans and Vice-Presidents responsible for overseeing the collection of assessment data for programs under their management. To help carry out this responsibility, each Dean has appointed an assessment coordinator to oversee day-to-day management. Assessment data will also be sent to the Office of University Planning for additional review and institutional documentation.

At each stage of data collection, the data will be reviewed and assessed to ensure the quality and integrity of the assessment work. This three-tiered approach (data collection and review at the program, school/college and institutional levels) will be essential to assure that effective assessment is implemented across all programs.

The oversight and management of a comprehensive system of assessment requires human resources. Professional responsibilities include developing guidelines, providing training and evaluating assessment data and protocols. Administrative responsibilities include collecting and tracking data and reports as well as coordinating meetings and activities. In order to meet these demands, assessment is now part of the Assistant Vice President for University Planning's portfolio of responsibilities. Administrative support has also been identified.

Clarify how continued oversight will be managed

As noted above, accountability for the assessment of learning outcomes exists at the program, college/school, and university levels. The Provost is responsible for ensuring the good faith participation of all academic programs in the practice of assessment. The Provost and Vice Presidents for Student Development and Mission and Ministry are responsible for co-curricular programs in their respective areas.

The Office of University Planning is responsible for ensuring that data for all assessment efforts are collected and maintained in a central office. This office is also responsible for reviewing and evaluating assessment data, and reporting to programs, Deans and the Provost on the condition of assessment practices across the university.

This clear assignment of responsibility is augmented by changes in policy and procedure that will motivate good performance. The performance evaluations for positions that play a role in assessment will address the quality of assessment practices in the appropriate area of responsibility. Programs will be encouraged and supported in their pursuit of assessment, however, should they not make reasonable progress, discretionary funding may be restricted.

Moving forward

The university recognizes that successful resolution of the Commission's concerns will come about only via the demonstrated success of these plans. With the combination of existing activity relating to assessment and the stronger structures and mechanisms proposed in the framework document, the university will endeavor to accomplish and expects to be able to demonstrate the following by June 2012:

- All undergraduate programs will have reported to the University Assessment Committee (UAC) on how their program learning outcomes align with the new undergraduate learning objectives.
- All programs will have submitted an assessment calendar outlining when each program learning outcome will be assessed and when assessment results will be reviewed by faculty.
- All programs will have submitted assessment plans describing not only when but how each learning outcome will be assessed.
- Assessment reporting and record keeping mechanisms will be established for the UAC and the planning office, and these mechanisms will be coordinated with assessment reporting and record keeping in each college and school.
- Work will have begun on developing an assessment plan for the new undergraduate core.
- The UAC will have identified where assessment data is currently available for assessing student achievement of the new undergraduate learning objectives and will have begun identifying means for collecting evidence to assess the remaining objectives.
- Revised program review standards, including clearer expectations regarding evidence of effective assessment of learning outcomes, will have been approved.
- New graduate university learning objectives will be in place, with graduate programs identifying where program outcomes and graduate learning objectives overlap or complement each other.

Addendum B

Proposed Framework for Systematic Assessment of University, Academic Program, and Co-Curricular Learning Outcomes at Seattle University

Comprehensive and systematic assessment that documents the extent to which our students achieve stipulated learning outcomes is critical to successful pursuit of our strategic priorities (particularly academic excellence) and to the accomplishment of our institutional mission. The purpose of this document is to describe and propose a system through which such assessment will take place.

Note: Co-curricular programs may have goals that are not learning outcomes, such as residence hall programming that promotes social interaction or stress relief. While assessment of the effectiveness of these programs to meet those goals is an important aspect of program management, this document addresses assessment of co-curricular programming only as it relates to student achievement of stated learning objectives. Similarly, co-curricular programs may support strategic objectives identified at the university level; while assessment results from these programs constitute important evidence of institutional effectiveness and should be reported to the planning office, such assessment is not the emphasis of this document.

Background on Educational Goals, Learning Objectives and Learning Outcomes at Seattle University

Systematic assessment of student learning must address university learning objectives, academic program learning outcomes and co-curricular outcomes. These domains, while related, are distinct and call for significantly different assessment strategies.

- **Educational Goals:** The Academic Strategic Action Plan specifies four educational goals for undergraduate and graduate/professional programs, respectively. These include *proficiency in basic life and learning skills, depth in an academic discipline or field of study, breadth and integration of deep learning, and strength in one's learning dispositions and core personal values*. These goals provide a foundation for both learning objectives and outcomes.
- **Learning Objectives:** In September 2010, the Board of Trustees (BOT) approved five undergraduate learning objectives which affirm that SU students, upon completion of their studies, will be:
 - 1) *Prepared To Encounter The World*
 - 2) *Adept In Their Discipline*
 - 3) *Empowered To Make A Difference*
 - 4) *Self-Reflective In Their Pursuit Of Meaning And Purpose*
 - 5) *Committed To Justice And Ethical Action*

Learning objectives for graduate students are currently under review, with the expectation that a revised set of graduate university learning objectives will be developed in consultation with faculty in the various graduate programs and approved by the Board of Trustees.

- **Program Learning Outcomes:** Program learning outcomes are in place for all academic and most co-curricular programs. The faculty of each program (or staff for co-curricular programs) is responsible for assessing student achievement of these outcomes. Where program outcomes align with university objectives, the evidence of student achievement of these outcomes also provides evidence of student achievement of the related university outcomes.

A primary consideration in this proposal is that assessment efforts within academic and co-curricular programs are aimed toward improving student learning through the identification and implementation of improvements in curriculum, program design, teaching and advising. While systematic assessment requires standard procedures and documentation, the system implemented should seek to minimize the amount of time faculty and co-curricular program staff members spend engaged in assessment activities that are not directly useful for delivering excellent programs that promote student learning.

Assessment of Academic Program Learning Outcomes

Role of the Program Faculty – Each college or school and academic department is responsible for the development and implementation of systematic assessment of all learning outcomes for each of its academic programs. It is the responsibility of the faculty in each academic program to develop and implement a plan to conduct regular systematic assessment of each program learning outcome it publicizes, to evaluate assessment results, and, when appropriate, to implement changes designed to improve student achievement of learning outcomes as well as assess the effectiveness of these changes. Such assessment should be built, wherever possible, on direct student demonstration that they have achieved the outcome being assessed.

While an individual faculty member may be the primary author of the assessment plan, it is the collective responsibility of the department faculty to create and execute this plan. Department Chairs and Program Directors are responsible for ensuring that:

- Program learning outcomes express expected results students will achieve in completing the program.
- The plan must include a regular cycle for assessing direct evidence of student achievement of each program learning outcome.
- All program outcomes must be assessed at least once during each program review cycle.
- Programs with disciplinary or professional accreditation requirements are encouraged to coordinate their assessment plan with those requirements in a manner consistent with college and/or university standards for program accreditation.

- Assessment results must be reviewed and discussed by the faculty to determine whether they demonstrate satisfactory student achievement of program learning outcomes.
- In addition, departments are strongly encouraged to invite one or more faculty members from outside the department to review and comment on the program assessment plan itself, the implementation of that plan, and the appropriateness of analysis and response to collected evidence of student learning.
- When faculty implement changes in teaching and/or curriculum aimed at improving student achievement of one or more learning outcomes, student achievement should be reassessed after the changes are in place in order to evaluate their effectiveness.
- Assessment data, analysis and results should be documented by the department, and copies transmitted to the college or school assessment coordinator for review. The assessment coordinator should forward all assessment data, analysis, and results to the planning office for review and integration into institutional assessment reports and evidence.
- Program faculty should identify program learning outcomes which align with and support student achievement of university learning objectives, and should communicate such alignment of outcomes to the University Assessment Committee (UAC) via the reporting process established by that committee.

Role of the Deans – The Dean of each college or school is responsible for ensuring the following three standards:

- Each academic program develops and implements an assessment plan which systematically assesses student achievement of all learning outcomes associated with that program.
- Evidence of student achievement of learning outcomes is collected and retained.
- Faculty members analyze the evidence collected and use it to guide program improvements.

Deans will identify one or more assessment coordinator(s) for their college or school who will work with programs to ensure their assessment plans meet college/school and university standards and that required data and reports are transmitted to the planning office. In the event that assessment plans or the implementation of these plans do not meet university and/or college standards, the Dean is responsible for ensuring changes are made to bring assessment plans and efforts up to standard. The Deans will prepare a brief annual report for the Provost on the state of assessment for academic programs in their respective colleges or schools, listing programs that have implemented a satisfactory assessment program meeting the three standards listed above, those programs that have not yet met this standard, and plans to remediate such programs.

Role of Academic Assembly and Program Review – It is critical that academic program review be integrated into faculty governance. This standard is accomplished through the leadership role of the Academic Assembly in the program review process. As part of program review, each program is expected to describe how student achievement of each program learning outcome is assessed, and

how the results of that assessment are reviewed by faculty and, when appropriate, used to make changes aimed at improving student achievement of these outcomes.

Role of the Planning Office - The planning office, as the coordinating office for ensuring the university meets all standards for regional accreditation, has a responsibility to clearly articulate standards of assessment which must be met in both university and program assessment efforts and to ensure that all departmental assessment efforts clearly demonstrate that they are meeting these standards. The planning office:

- Reviews assessment reports and indicates which program assessment efforts are meeting university and accreditation standards and, if standards are not met, identifies specific deficiencies and reports these to the appropriate department, college/school Dean or division head, and to the Vice President for University Planning and Vice Provost.
- Provides consultation to help programs develop and implement an assessment plan that meets the required standards.
- Supports the integration of systems through which assessment data can be gathered and analyzed, including surveys, online course assessment systems, learning management systems and/or ePortfolio systems.
- Maintains a repository of assessment data and assessment reports so that the university can provide evidence of systematic and comprehensive assessment of academic programs.
- Develops and maintains reports tracking the performance of systematic assessment across all academic programs and the level of student achievement of university learning outcomes.

Assessment of University Learning Objectives

University learning objectives at the graduate and undergraduate levels express results the university is committed to students achieving regardless of which degree program they complete. Because these objectives span colleges/schools and academic departments as well as co-curricular experiences, assessment of student achievement of these outcomes needs to be coordinated at a university level rather than being fully delegated to each department.

Role of the Departments – In formulating learning outcomes, the faculty of each program are expected to consider the ways in which program learning outcomes may align with and support students in achieving broader university learning objectives. Not every program is expected to address all of the university level objectives, though it is likely that each program will contribute to students achieving one or more of the university objectives.

Role of the University Assessment Committee - The UAC has coordinated revision of the undergraduate learning objectives and is in the process of coordinating revision of graduate learning objectives. This committee is well positioned to take the lead in designing, implementing, and responding to assessment of student achievement of each of the university learning objectives. The UAC will:

- Document the ways in which academic and co-curricular programs support student achievement of university learning objectives.
 - Identify the way these university learning objectives are operationalized into directly assessable learning outcomes in various programs.
 - Monitor assessment of these program outcomes to ensure evidence of student achievement is collected, analyzed, and used to improve the effectiveness of programs in promoting student realization of university learning objectives.
 - Monitor the participation of students in experiences shown to promote realization of university learning objectives, to ensure these objectives are achieved with all students.
- Identify direct and indirect evidence that will be used to assess the extent to which students achieve these objectives at the university level.
- Analyze evidence and report on the extent to which students currently achieve each objective.
- When necessary, convene cross departmental and cross divisional groups to formulate plans for improving student achievement of particular learning objectives and monitor implementation and effectiveness of proposed changes.

Role of the University Core – The university core is an academic program completed by all undergraduate students. The current revision of the core curriculum has involved identifying core learning outcomes that map to the new university undergraduate learning objectives. While the core is not expected to be the sole vehicle through which students achieve university learning objectives, any effective strategy for ensuring all undergraduates achieve these objectives will necessarily build on a foundation of core outcomes. Core assessment efforts provide a critical component of any plan for assessing university learning objectives. The core assessment committee will therefore communicate its assessment plans with the UAC, and the UAC will develop assessment plans which complement and extend rather than duplicate these efforts.

Assessment of Co-Curricular Program Outcomes

A notable amount of the learning that students experience at Seattle University results from their participation in community and engagement in co-curricular activities. A complete assessment of how the university promotes student learning and achievement of university learning objectives will include assessment of the impact of co-curricular programs. Offices which oversee co-curricular programs are expected to identify the ways in which their programs align with and support university learning objectives and how they reflect the university mission and promote the achievement of strategic priorities, as well as report this alignment. Because university learning objectives are met through participation in a variety of academic and co-curricular programs, the University Assessment Committee will consider what proportion of students participate in one or more programs shown to promote student achievement of each university learning objective. This

assessment will require effective tracking and reporting of student participation in those co-curricular activities which are shown to be effective means for student achievement of particular university learning objectives.

To allow the UAC to incorporate such evidence into its assessment efforts, the department/division overseeing a program(s) that contributes to student achievement of one or more university learning objectives is asked to report the following information:

- Identify the program including when it is offered, who oversees the program, who delivers it and which student populations participate in the program.
- Describe the ways in which student participation in the program contributes to student achievement of one or more university learning objectives.
- Describe what evidence, if any, is collected that demonstrates student level of achievement of the university learning outcome(s) which the program supports.
- Describe how that evidence is evaluated, who analyzes the results and how that analysis informs changes to the program aimed at improving learning outcomes for future participants.
- Identify the appropriate contact person for inquiries about assessment of the program vis-à-vis university learning outcomes.