
ISU is in the midst of a four year self evaluation process for reaffirmation of our institutional accreditation by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Previously in News and Notes, ISU's Accreditation Steering Committee reported that ISU is in the midst of a four year self evaluation process for reaffirmation of our institutional accreditation by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). Last year the Steering Committee worked to articulate ISU's mission and establish a mechanism for documenting that we are fulfilling our mission. This year, supported by the Standard Two subcommittees, we are working to show that ISU has sufficient resources and infrastructure in place to enable mission fulfillment. The resulting Year Two Self Evaluation will be submitted to the NWCCU in September 2012. We will share a draft of this document with the campus as soon as possible.

The determination of how well we are fulfilling our mission must be data driven and evidence based. Much of that evidence will come from our assessment efforts. For accreditation purposes, assessment is quite straightforward. For any important activity we should continuously be asking ourselves the questions:

1. What are we trying to achieve?
2. How well are we doing at achieving it?
3. Based on what we see in 2), might we do something different to improve our achievement?
4. Based on what we see in 2) might we refine what we are we are trying to achieve?
5. If, based on 2), we change anything, does it improve our level of achievement?

In essence, assessment is a loop-a repeating exercise our institutional units have always engaged in, at least informally. Formal assessment really just consists of articulating this process and has been an accreditation requirement for many years. While there is no requirement that every unit engage in an identical assessment process, the NWCCU does expect that every major activity (e.g., degree programs, co-curricular programs, and service units) be able to document effective assessment processes. Associate Vice President Kay Christensen is coordinating ISU assessment efforts; please feel free to contact her if you have any questions or comments.

You can find more on accreditation and ISU at <http://www.isu.edu/acadaff/accreditation.shtml>.