



Idaho State University

Ad Hoc Report

March 1, 2016

Table of Contents

List of Tables
Introduction 1
Response to Year Seven Recommendations 2
 Recommendation 2:..... 2
 Recommendation 5:..... 10
Conclusion 16

List of Tables

TABLE 1: TIMELINE 5

Introduction

In October 2014, Idaho State University (University) underwent its Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) Year 7 Comprehensive Self-Evaluation Peer Review site visit. On January 26, 2015, NWCCU reaffirmed the University's regional accreditation. In reaffirming the University's accreditation, NWCCU made five recommendations. NWCCU's Recommendation 1 required that the University either revise its mission statement, or review and revise its core themes, indicators, and benchmarks/targets to ensure they encompassed the entirety of the present mission statement. Responses to this recommendation are addressed in the University's Year One Self-Evaluation Report, which is being submitted simultaneously with this Ad Hoc Report. This report is required to address Recommendations 2 and 5. Recommendations 3 and 4 will be addressed in the University's mid-cycle review in 2017.

Response to Year Seven Recommendations

This section responds to the January 26, 2015 NWCCU recommendations from the University's October 2014 Year Seven Comprehensive Self-Evaluation. The text of each topic is presented, followed by responses. Of the five recommendations, Recommendation 1 is addressed in the University's Year One report, Recommendations 2 and 5 are addressed below, and Recommendations 3 and 4 will be addressed in the University's mid-cycle report.

Recommendation 2:

The evaluation committee recommends that the institution build upon its present governance framework by promoting an environment of transparency and collegiality, resulting in trust that encourages the expression and consideration of the views of faculty, staff, administrators, and students on matters in which they have a direct and reasonable interest (Standard 2.A.1).

The University continues to build upon its present advisory framework, in alignment with the Idaho State Board of Education's [Governing Policies and Procedures](#), to provide effective processes for the views of faculty, staff, administrators, and students to be heard on matters in which they have a direct and reasonable interest. University constituent groups provide a key role in advising and making recommendations to the president on matters of direct and reasonable interest to them, as part of the policy and decision-making processes of the University. Further, Idaho State University's leadership continues to transform the culture by seeking opportunities to increase the organization's self-awareness. To accomplish this, the University is incorporating into its systems a number of processes that support stakeholder and customer inclusion, increases their feedback, and promotes transparency. Since the Year 7 Comprehensive Self-Evaluation Peer Review visit in fall 2014, the University has created multiple opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to participate in accomplishing its mission and guiding the institution's strategic direction. As part of the process, to not only address Recommendation 1 but also Recommendations 2, 3, and 4, the University created the Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Council (IEAC). The IEAC was designed out of a need to more efficiently and inclusively coordinate campus-wide planning, accreditation, academic assessment, and institutional reporting efforts across the University.

Institutional Effectiveness and the Institutional Effectiveness & Assessment Council (IEAC)

At the heart of the institution's changes is the creation of an institutional effectiveness and assessment framework. Institutional effectiveness is the systematic, ongoing process of collecting, analyzing and acting upon data and information relating to the goals and outcomes developed to support the University's mission. The focus is on measuring results and using those results to aid in decision-making and improvement.

The [Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Council](#) (IEAC) is responsible for overseeing the University's planning process, coordinating and assessing strategic directions, ensuring that the University meets NWCCU accreditation standards, and implementing the University's strategic

planning agenda. The IEAC serves as a coordinated, sustainable system to pursue institutional assessment and effectiveness, with the primary functions as follows:

- Provide the organizational framework for integrating institutional effectiveness into the fabric of the university.
- Provide integrative and coordinated academic, facilities, technology, and financial planning and implementation.
- Reduce redundancy and increase efficiency, transparency, and accountability among strategic planning, institutional management, university accreditation, state and federal reporting requirements.
- Optimize data and reports system wide.
- Develop an assessment plan that supports the implementation of the strategic plan.
- Enhance consistent and coordinated communication between schools, colleges, departments, and administration regarding assessment and institutional effectiveness.
- Provide a forum to share best practices, generate ideas for process improvement.

The [IEAC is composed](#) of a Steering Committee, and six Subcommittees. The IEAC Steering Committee serves in an advisory role, reporting to the President and is comprised of individuals who have the skills, knowledge and authority to lead in this institutional effort. The IEAC Steering Committee is chaired by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and consists of representatives from across campus. There are six subcommittees (one for each of the University's four core themes, one for facilities, and one for information technology), and each is chaired by a Vice President, Associate Vice President, or Director. Subcommittee membership consists of a broad range of representatives from academic affairs, student affairs, finance and administration, technology, operations, faculty, staff, and students, and from all campus outreach locations. The IEAC Subcommittees report annually to the IEAC Steering Committee on strategic plan fulfillment. They are responsible for assessing how their activities and accomplishments align with the strategic plan and core themes, achievement of their area's associated goals or outcomes, and using data for decisions and improvement.

To facilitate the accreditation process, the University created the Accreditation, Assessment & Academic Program Review Committee (AAAPR). The AAAPR is a standing committee that has been redefined from the previous Accreditation Leadership Group (ALG) and now supports the IEAC's work of campus-wide planning, accreditation, academic assessment, and institutional reporting. At the core of its function are the guiding principles of transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness. These are fundamental in supporting the University's mission fulfillment and satisfactory accomplishing the NWCCU's accreditation. Its primary functions are as follows:

- Develop the organizational framework for alignment of institutional effectiveness and academic assessment across the University

- Facilitate the integration and coordination of academic, facilities, technology, and budgetary planning
- Develop the organizational framework for communication regarding institutional accreditation, assessment, and academic program review
- Coordinate and support University-wide accreditation reporting
- Coordinate and support University-wide strategic planning
- Assist in University program and service quality initiatives

Since its inception, the AAAPR has focused its efforts on providing ongoing communication regarding accreditation, assessment, and academic programming through the existing university governance system; developing, implementing, and monitoring timelines for strategic planning and NWCCU accreditation requirements; collecting and consolidating feedback and recommendations from open forums into final revisions to the mission and core themes for submission to the IEAC Steering Committee; drafting NWCCU accreditation reports per the designated timeline for submission to IEAC Steering Committee; and collecting and analyzing data in order to make recommendations to IEAC in regards to institutional planning and effectiveness.

The effectiveness of the AAAPR is not only shown in the fulfillment of the NWCCU's report but also its effective ability to provide guidance and support to IE in program management. During their weekly meetings, the AAAPR assigned tasks within the organization to faculty and staff, developed the necessary framework to effectively established processes that supported program development and evaluation for specialized and general accreditation.

Although the IEAC is a new structure within the University, it has already proven effective as the institution moved forward with redrafting the University's mission statement, its four core themes, the supporting objectives, and the associated indicators. The IEAC provided multiple campus-wide opportunities, through open forums, e-mail, and other on-line communication, over a four-month period for faculty, staff, and students to provide feedback on several drafts of both the mission and core themes. This inclusion resulted in the IEAC receiving responses from faculty, staff, and students. While in the past, the stakeholder feedback and contributions were minimal, this effort and the levels of participation were more broadly representative of the campus stakeholders. The [timeline](#), processes and feedback have been posted on the University's IEAC website.

The IEAC Core Theme Subcommittees worked on reviewing and revising the current core themes, objectives, and indicators, as well as the mission statement September through early November. Once IEAC Subcommittees completed their draft work, the IEAC Subcommittee chairs made recommendations to the IEAC Steering committee on proposed changes to the University's mission and core themes. The proposed changes were broadly distributed to campus stakeholders (faculty, staff, and students) through email and posted on the IEAC website December 1-14, 2015. At that time, the IEAC Steering Committee considered feedback from the

open forums, various campus meetings, and public comments to arrive at the current mission. Prior to submitting the final draft for review and approval of the State Board of Education, it was shared with the Council of Deans, Faculty Senate, and campus leadership; no concerns were expressed. A specific timeline of meetings and open forums were conducted as follows:

Table 1: Timeline

Date	Meetings/Open Forums
August & September 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 31: Faculty Senate • September 15: Council of Deans (then as part of the bi-monthly meeting updates) • September 1 – November 6 Subcommittees review/revise draft core theme descriptor language, objectives, and indicators
October 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 1: Faculty/Staff Open Forum – Pocatello/Idaho Falls • October 6: Faculty/Staff Open Forum – Meridian • October 14: Faculty/Staff Open Forum – Pocatello/Idaho Falls • October 19: IEAC Steering Committee Meeting • October 20: Student Open Forum – Meridian • October 21: College of Technology • October 22: College of Arts & Letters
November 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 2: Graduate School • November 3: Advancement, General Counsel, Controller • November 4: Student Open Forum – Pocatello/Idaho Falls • November 16: IEAC Steering Committee Meeting • November 19: Meridian Faculty Advisory • November 30: Faculty Senate
December 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 1 – 14: Campus-wide distribution of proposed, revised mission and core themes for final comments • December 14: IEAC Steering Committee Meeting • December 15 – 18: Consolidate feedback received and prepare final revised draft mission and core themes
January 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 11: Faculty Senate • January 19: Council of Deans
February 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 18: State Board of Education approves Mission and Core Themes

The IEAC evaluated and incorporated the feedback that resulted in revised mission statement and core themes that were approved by the Idaho State Board of Education on [February 18, 2016](#). Several comments by faculty, staff, and students indicated they felt satisfied with the process. This level of transparency and inclusion will continue as the University undertakes future endeavors.

The Future of the University's Strategic Planning Process

The University is analyzing its current strategic plan to determine if the plan is effectively supporting the University's mission and core themes, and achieving the President's vision and the established priority objectives. In 2016, the University will begin a systematic, holistic approach to adjusting areas within the plan that the IEAC feels fall short of the University's desired goals.

To begin the process, the University is developing a new strength, weakness, opportunities and threat (SWOT) assessment by collecting feedback through various means from University stakeholders, then conducting its analysis. Institutional Effectiveness, with oversight from the IEAC, is establishing strategic planning working groups that will review and focus on different elements of the University's mission and core themes, and the President's vision and strategic objectives in order to create action plans and measures. This process incorporates stakeholders throughout the organization and its Centers for Learning in Idaho Falls, Twin Falls, and Meridian. Upon completion and implementation of the action plans, the IEAC, in concert with the strategic planning working group champions, will review the measures to evaluate their alignment with the accomplishment of the strategic objectives. The stakeholders are responsible for working with the strategic planning working group champions to adjust the plans and the measures, as necessary. Annually, after the IEAC reviews and makes its recommendations, the President can redirect strategic objectives to ensure institutional success.

In January 2016, the University hired Dr. Charles Bird, a subject matter expert on outreach/branch campuses to provide the University with a comprehensive report on how to better develop its Centers for Learning. Dr. Bird has extensive experience working on multiple branch campuses in Ohio. He visited the main campus and the three Centers for Learning in Idaho Falls, Twin Falls, and Meridian. Dr. Bird met with the University's leadership, the College Deans, each of the Centers for Learning Directors, faculty, and staff, as well as the President of the College of Southern Idaho, located in Twin Falls. During these exchanges, he gathered data by listening to the participants discuss opportunities, challenges, and perceptions that each of the Centers for Learning face. He then provided feedback on various topics including structural support, enrollment, course scheduling, and faculty. Participants in the process provided feedback that described the visit as illuminating and satisfying. Dr. Bird is providing the University with a written report outlining suggested changes to policy and practice that will enhance the University's Centers for Learning. Idaho State University will analyze the recommendations and adopt selected changes by incorporating them into future operational and strategic plans.

Surveying the Stakeholders

The President directed Institutional Effectiveness to administer a series of surveys to provide the organization with a baseline regarding its organizational effectiveness, an understanding of policies and procedures, student perceptions of their experiences, and faculty perceptions of student engagement. Between the months of February through May, the University will administer surveys to faculty, staff, and students. The University's Institutional Research Director

will utilize the Enterprise system to administer the anonymous National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE), and an employee survey.

The analyzed surveys will not only serve as a tool to provide the University with instantaneous feedback, but they will also provide the organization with data to support the SWOT analysis for future strategic planning sessions. The analyzed surveys will provide the leadership with a better understanding of the successes, challenges, and opportunities. By utilizing the analyzed data generated by these surveys, the University's leadership will make positive changes that will affect the stakeholders and customers for years to come.

The FSSE and NSSE will provide feedback to faculty and university leadership on faculty and student perceptions of student engagement. Since the NSSE and FSSE surveys are occurring within weeks of one another, the results will start timely conversations linking learning and student engagement, which could lead to a more responsive assessment for future planning and provide the deans and faculty with faculty development concepts that may lead to additional initiatives.

The surveys will validate and quantify the quality of the faculty-student interactions, which is a very important part of student retention. The surveys are also a mechanism to measure the University's quality of high-impact learning, community-based projects, students' research interaction with faculty, the students' internship field experience, and service learning. This further supports the assessment associated with Core Themes 1 and 4. All of these activities create well-rounded students and allow them future workforce opportunities based on their experience.

NSSE results can also deliver evidence to support institutional accreditation efforts with an emphasis on mapping student engagement results to regional and professional accreditation standards. NSSE data provides feedback from students on curricular efficacy and delivery that informs outcomes. This allows for the integration of student engagement data into accreditation processes. Additionally, the NSSE student survey will provide the University with the students' perspectives in regard to the financial stresses associated with paying for school, the cost of additional fees, and the return on their investment. Based on student feedback in previous surveys, the University is currently investigating innovative ways to support students' financial challenges and is preparing to invest in additional programs that help students financially.

Advisory Support

Faculty play a key role in providing input, advice, and making recommendations to the President, Provost, and other Administration through key advisory committees as follows:

The [Faculty Senate](#) represents the University Faculty in the initiation, consideration, recommendation, and implementation of policy within the purpose and powers of the University Faculty. The Faculty Senate considers matters referred to it by the University Faculty, Senators, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the University President, or the President's representative. It recommends to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs changes

in academic and other policies that affect the Faculty, and through the President recommends policy changes to the Board.

The [Undergraduate Curriculum Council](#) is responsible for ensuring the quality and appropriateness of undergraduate courses and undergraduate degree programs offered by the University. All proposals for the addition of or changes in undergraduate courses and undergraduate degree programs must be approved by the Curriculum Council.

The [General Education Requirements Committee](#), a subcommittee of the Undergraduate Curriculum Council, is responsible for courses and policies that relate to the University's general education requirements for appropriateness, rigor, assessment, and to make recommendations based on these evaluations to the Undergraduate Curriculum Council.

The [Graduate Council](#) is responsible for ensuring the quality and appropriateness of graduate courses and graduate degree programs. The Graduate Council provides recommendations concerning establishment and maintenance of requirements for graduation; allocation of privileges such as scholarships, honors, awards and grants-in-aid for graduate students; and the establishment of grade standards to be maintained by graduate students.

The [Research Council](#) is responsible for advising the Vice President for Research on the formulation, review, and application of policies touching on research matters. The Research Council provides oversight of subcommittees involved in the peer review and administration of internal grant awards funded by the Vice President for Research.

The ISU Faculty Senate has made great strides within the University since 2014. The Senate completed work on a draft Faculty Senate Constitution in 2014, engaging in a progressive editing process with general faculty, faculty councils, and deans to review the document and provide comments. Working with their constituents, Senators addressed concerns, received feedback and emphasized inclusion and transparency throughout the process. Although the faculty ultimately did not pass the Constitution when put to a vote, the overall process used during the attempted ratification underscored the Senate's efforts to encourage transparency and communication throughout the campus community. At the same time that the Senate was working on this draft Constitution, Idaho's State Board of Education revised its policy to no longer require faculty constitutions at state institutions. Due to this change in Board policy, the Senate elected to shift its focus to immediate internal policy matters.

One example of this effort is the reestablishment of the Academic Standards Committee, a subcommittee of Faculty Senate. The Academic Standards Committee will address elements of the Undergraduate Catalog not under the purview of other University councils, such as the Undergraduate Curriculum Council or the General Education Requirements Committee.

The Faculty Senate continues to make progress toward integrating into the University's decision-making process on matters of faculty responsibility and concern. In November 2015 Faculty Senate created the Academic Standards Committee, established bylaws that include the charge of recommending university policy and procedures pertaining to undergraduate academic

standards for admission, progression, and the granting of degrees and certificates. They identified specific areas of concern that included but were not limited to: 1) advising, 2) academic standards, 3) scholastic appeals, 4) admission and progression requirements, 5) honors programs and societies, 6) advanced standing and placement, 7) evaluation of transfer policies, 8) standards for award of ISU credit, and 9) review of academic calendars and scheduling.

Recent examples that highlight this trend include the inclusion of the Faculty Senate in the development and implementation of IEAC Steering Committee and its subcommittees. Administration officials and the Senate worked together to establish the goals for this effort, to recruit faculty participation in the subcommittees, and to review and revise the final documents created through the effort. Similar collaborations are visible in the Special Budget Consultation Committee and in the Senate's recent implementation of open forum reviews of proposed ISU Policies and Procedures (ISUPP).

The administration has also asked Faculty Senate to engage in the [drafting of ISUPP](#) in areas that have direct impact on faculty activity. Working with faculty, the Faculty Senate has created ad hoc Policy Task Forces to develop new or adjust existing policies. As part of its process, the Senate provides lines of communication and time for faculty input before sending the policies forward to the administration for final approval. This trend toward emphasizing transparency and increasing inclusion has contributed to a growing sense of trust between the faculty and the offices of the President and Provost.

Recommendation 5:

The evaluation committee recommends that the institution develop and implement a process of ongoing assessment of student learning outcomes for its General Education programs (Standard 4.A).

The [General Education Requirements Committee](#), a subcommittee of the Undergraduate Curriculum Council, is responsible for the oversight of courses and policies that relate to the University's general education requirements and is responsible for ensuring the appropriateness, rigor, and assessment, of general education courses. Idaho State University's general education program constitutes a recognizable core of general education courses that represent an integration of basic knowledge and methodologies of the humanities and fine arts, mathematical and natural sciences, and social sciences. Its design promotes comprehensive literacy—including effective communication, mathematical, and technological skills; reasoning and creativity; cultural awareness, and information literacy—and a broad knowledge base in the liberal arts.

Idaho State University's general education program is comprised of nine core objective areas covering written communication; oral communication; mathematics; humanities, fine arts, and foreign languages; natural sciences, social and behavioral sciences; critical thinking; information literacy; and cultural diversity. Within each of these core objective areas student learning outcomes are identified and articulated for that area. Additionally, each course included in a particular core objective area has a series of student learning outcomes that have been evaluated by the General Education Requirements Committee and have been found to support the particular objective. This committee is charged with reviewing all requests made by academic departments to include courses as satisfying a general education requirement. The learning outcomes, identified for the core objective areas and the courses that meet the objectives, are also assessable.

In April 2014, the Idaho State Board of Education (the Board) approved a new statewide general education [policy III.N](#). The policy establishes statewide competencies that guide institutions' determination of course that will be designated as Idaho General Education Matriculation (GEM) courses, and creates a transparent and seamless transfer experience for undergraduate students. To that end, the policy identifies six GEM competency areas, with the first two emphasizing integrative skills that are intended to inform the learning process throughout general education coursework and the major, and the other four representing ways of knowing that are intended to expose students to ideas and engage them in a broad range of active learning experiences. The six competency areas are Written Communication, Oral Communication, Mathematical Ways of Knowing, Scientific Ways of Knowing, Humanistic and Artistic Ways of Knowing, and Social and Behavioral Ways of Knowing.

At the time of the University's Comprehensive Year 7 Self-Evaluation, the University had written a draft general education assessment plan, but had not formally adopted or implemented it. The University has made significant progress in the development and implementation of an

assessment process for general education. During the 2014-15 academic year, the General Education Requirements Committee (GERC) revised and completed a [comprehensive university-wide assessment plan](#) for general education. This assessment plan includes requirements and guidelines for the assessment of each course, of each general education objective category, and of the overall program's ability to provide effective foundational knowledge as it relates to general education.

The annual timeline for General Education Course assessment reporting is as follows:

September 19 – New general education course assessment plans due: For new general education courses, course assessment plans must be submitted with GERC and UCC proposals by September 19 of the academic year prior to proposed inclusion in the undergraduate catalog.

November 1 - Annual assessment reports due: As described in their Course Assessment Plans, departments will collect specified course materials—such as syllabi, exams, and assignments—and student work—such as exams, essays, and projects—each semester on an ongoing basis. Even if only one or two learning outcomes are assessed each year, the materials used for any part of the assessment must be collected and maintained during the assessment process in a FERPA-compliant manner. These materials will be reviewed internally within the department, and departments are expected to use these findings to improve both courses and assessment procedures where appropriate. (See Annual Assessment Plan Report Template).

January 7 – 5-year assessment reports due: The assessment cycle for each objective will be completed every five years, with one or two specific objectives cycling into focus each year. Detailed reports on all courses satisfying the reviewed objectives will be submitted to GERC by January 7. No annual report is required during the year that a 5-Year Report is due, and departments offering multiple courses under a single objective are welcome to collect an overall evaluation of the assessment process itself, explaining what was and was not effective, and providing recommendations for changes to the plan in the future.

In fall 2015, the requirements for submission of assessment plans were fully operational. Departments offering general education courses submitted their plans for review by GERC. In preparation for this process, faculty serving on GERC met with deans and department chairs to discuss the assessment process. Upon review, GERC approved the majority of the departments' plans and returned those needing revisions back to their respective departments for revisions. GERC had approved all of the course assessment plans by the end of fall 2015.

Individual departments are responsible for crafting Course Assessment Plans to assess the general education learning outcomes for all the general education courses they offer. These plans are required to specify the course materials and student output to be collected, and the procedures for internal review of these materials and subsequent action within the department. As of the date of this report, all plans have been approved by GERC. Each department is required

to carry out planned assessment internally, maintaining a collection of materials and filing a brief annual report with GERC summarizing its general education assessment activities.

[Departmental Obligations](#) are identified on the GERC website, and each department that offers general education courses is required to develop an assessment plan for each of these courses. The plan must describe the following:

- procedures for collecting course materials such as syllabi, exams, and assignment prompts
- procedures for collecting direct assessment instruments (student work) such as major essays, capstone projects, or major exams
- correlation of assessment materials to specific general education learning outcomes (as opposed to other course outcomes)
- procedures for departmental review of assessment materials
- procedures, guidelines, or rubrics ensuring consistency in the evaluation process, which should encompass all mechanisms through which a department awards general education credit, including substantively different course sections, Early College Program courses, and exam credit

The plans linked below have been approved by GERC as examples of what a satisfactory course assessment plan can look like. They differ widely, as do the courses and learning outcomes that they address. Sample Assessment Plans provided on the GERC website for faculty to use as guidance in writing their own:

Objective 4 Sample: [ENGL Assessment Plan](#), [PHIL 1101](#) and [Philosophy Rubric](#)

Objective 5 Sample: [CHEM 1111/1111](#)

For purposes of evaluating other course assessment plans, GERC crafted a tentative internal checklist against which to evaluate plans. Although this list largely repeats information in the assessment plan template, we hope that as this work becomes more familiar across campus, this may further clarify expectations. Course assessment plans should satisfy all items in the list below.

1. Does the plan outline a clear schedule for both the collection and review of assessment information, and indicate who will be responsible for these actions?
2. Does the plan collect data in a way that accurately represents the entire course, encompassing multiple instructors and delivery formats? (If only a selection of students are assessed, are they adequate in number and selected randomly?)
3. Are the direct assessment instruments appropriate to the learning outcomes they are intended to assess? Do they have appropriate rigor, response format, and evaluation criteria/process? Is the required number of learning outcomes adequately assessed?

4. Is there a clear and reasonable procedure for the recording and tabulation of summary assessment data from original instruments?
5. Is it clear that assessment data will be used productively to improve course content and delivery?

The assessment cycle for each objective will be completed every five years, with one or two specific objectives cycling into focus each year. Detailed reports on all courses satisfying the reviewed objectives will be submitted to GERC by **January 7**. An Annual Report is required during the year that a 5-Year Report is due, and departments offering multiple courses under a single objective are welcome to collect them in a single report if convenient.

Five-Year Reports will describe the overall findings from the assessment process, including a description of the processes, a summary of the findings, recommendations for changes to be made to courses or to learning outcomes, and details regarding any changes already made. These reports should take into account the information included in the Annual Reports, but should go beyond these to provide a complete assessment of each course as fulfilling the general education objective. Each 5-Year Report should include:

- A description of the methods used for assessment of each learning outcome, including an explanation of why these particular methods were chosen.
- An explanation of how the analysis was performed, including an appendix with copies of any rubrics developed for the purpose.
- A discussion of the major findings.
- A discussion of changes made and recommended on the basis of this assessment.
- An overall evaluation of the assessment process itself, explaining what was and was not effective, and providing recommendations for changes to the plan in the future.
- Access to assessment materials themselves, either as appendices or by other arrangement.
- Grade distributions within each course, and discussion of these data. (This information will be used by Objective Review Committees to compare course offerings within an objective, not to assess learning outcomes.)
- Other data relevant to assessing the effectiveness of each course.

Objective-wide course review and preliminary program-level assessment will be performed by committees including one representative from each department or program involved in the given objective. Departments will appoint representatives to these committees when filing their 5-Year Reports. These reports will be reviewed by GERC, which may provide feedback on their content and request revisions prior to approving them. Upon approval, copies will be sent to UCC, and then Academic Affairs for appropriate recordkeeping. GERC will review all annual reports and will vote to accept them as complete. GERC will then inform the departments of any questions or observations about the report. Upon acceptance, annual reports will be forwarded to UCC for

approval and filing with Academic Affairs. During the same year that 5-Year Reports are submitted for a given objective, GERC will appoint a chair from among its own members and solicit one representative from each department offering a course within the objective to form an Objective Review Committee (ORC, described below).

Members of GERC will review the findings in the ORC Reports and discuss all of the recommendations made. GERC will then determine whether to pursue any changes to the general education courses, to the general education objectives, or to the stated learning outcomes for any of the objectives, appending GERC recommendations to the ORC Report and forwarding it to UCC. Any recommended changes to learning outcomes for objectives established by the Idaho State Board of Education will eventually be forwarded to the University's representatives on the State Board of Education's general education discipline groups.

In addition, every five years GERC will use ORC Reports as starting points for a comprehensive review of the University's general education program. This review will consider the effectiveness of all objectives in meeting the overall goals for general education, and whether course offerings in each objective are sufficient to meet student needs. Findings will be described in a Comprehensive General Education Assessment Report to be approved by UCC and filed with Academic Affairs. If changes are deemed appropriate in the current objectives, a more extensive campus-wide review would ensue.

The University will establish an Objective Review Committee (ORC). For each objective, an Objective Review Committee will be formed every five years to evaluate the courses of the objective and its learning outcomes. The membership of each ORC will include one representative from each department or program that offers a general education course in the objective, who will be recommended by the department chairs of these units. A representative from GERC will serve as the chair of the ORC, and should convene the committee at the beginning of spring semester. Each ORC will have a minimum of three members; GERC will recruit any additional members needed in consultation with department chairs.

Objective Review Committees will review, at a minimum, the 5-Year Departmental Objective Review Report and Annual Reports from each department. These will include syllabi for all unique sections of all courses meeting the objective, assignments and exams used in course assessments to determine if students are meeting expectations, and descriptions of any other modes by which students are awarded credit for these courses. ORCs may also use previous ORC and GERC reports, when available, and may request additional materials. After performing the review described above, each ORC will reach findings as to whether the courses currently in its objective have been adequately assessed, whether these courses are fully meeting the learning outcomes, and whether the learning outcomes themselves are in keeping with the spirit of the objective. These findings and resulting recommendations will be reported to GERC. Reports from ORCs are due to GERC and to the Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Affairs by March 1st.

The assessment results are to be used primarily at the department level to identify courses that should be modified in order to better meet the requirements of general education, or removed from the GEM curriculum because of poor alignment with its learning outcomes. An objective-wide review may also result in either of these recommendations. In addition, program assessment may lead to recommendations to adjust the learning outcomes for an objective or to eliminate an objective altogether. The specific findings of the assessment process will direct the next steps in the process—whether recommendations are made to an academic department, to Curriculum Council, to Academic Affairs, or to the State Board of Education. In addition, a description of the assessment process and its results are to be provided to the Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness, who is responsible for ensuring that the University is meeting the accreditation requirements set out by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU).

In addition to the processes and procedures implemented for assessing general education, the University is providing faculty development opportunities in the Spring 2016 and Fall 2016 semesters. The goals of the workshops are to support faculty in developing assessment practices that deepen, integrate, and demonstrate student learning, through advocacy of learning-centered assessment policies, and to support faculty in accomplishing the general education assessment requirements, and specific program assessment requirements. The workshops are intended to be hands-on training focused on the following:

- Development of assessment plans, including a plan for data collection, analysis, and “closing the loop” initiatives. Discussion and review of foundations in best practices around assessment of student learning.
- Building rubrics for course, program, and campus-wide assessment to include instruction on analytic rubrics, rules for design, a step-by-step approach to rubric creation, and then hands-on practice.
- Rubric calibration in obtaining useful assessment data prior to implementation.
- Designing signature assignments as a way of obtaining useful student learning data. Discussion of how these assignments can be designed, either from an existing assignment or from scratch.

The long-term goal is for the Assessment Coordinators located in each of the colleges is to become trained in these areas so that they can support the faculty in each of their colleges through a train-the-trainer model.

Conclusion

Idaho State University's leadership is diligently working to promote an environment of transparency and collegiality by instilling within the University's framework an infrastructure that guides and builds on these principles. As shown during the mission and core theme rewrite, the IEAC has proven itself as a functional organization and fostered opportunities for increased transparency and inclusion into its processes. Idaho State University's future strategic planning sessions will encompass stakeholders from around the University to create action plans that support the University's strategic objectives. To better understand challenges its students, faculty, and staff face, Idaho State University is scheduling a series of surveys. The staff and faculty will have access to the results and the analysis, and the strategic planning working groups will incorporate those findings into future strategic planning sessions. The Faculty Senate continues to serve as the voice of the faculty. The Faculty Senate helps guide administrators in the development of policy and provides the University the faculty perspective on initiatives.

Idaho State University remains determined to make positive changes to the organization's climate and to focus on the strengths of the faculty and staff to encourage the expression and consideration of the views of faculty, staff, administrators, and students. The leadership is actively seeking feedback from faculty, staff, and students and ensure those groups feel they have a voice and a means of initiating positive change. Idaho State University has made an earnest effort in a short amount of time to address NWCCU's Recommendation 2, and while challenges remain, the University has made significant strides toward achieving its goals and promoting an environment of transparency and collegiality that will result in trust.

Since the October 2014 Year 7 Comprehensive Self-Evaluation, the University has a fully operationalized process of conducting an on-going assessment of student learning outcomes for general education. Further, the University is working to build upon this effort as a framework for overall course assessment of student learning outcomes beyond that of general education. All departments have submitted assessment plans for all general education courses, and beginning fall of 2016 departments will submit their first round of annual assessment reports using student work as the basis for determining the effectiveness of each general education course.