

What's New? Accreditation survey results

On May 5, Provost Paul Jarrell invited employees to participate in an accreditation related to awareness about the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) accreditation process. A total of 191 employees responded to the survey within a two-week period.

Overall, the majority of survey respondents correctly identified aspects of our institutional effectiveness that will be reviewed by NWCCU with 90 percent correctly identifying accreditation as an external review process that shows the college has achieved its mission. Other results related to the same question:

- 74 percent correctly identified accreditation as a process of evaluation of education quality and
- 80 percent correctly identified accreditation as a process of continuous improvement.

However, fewer respondents -- only 60 percent -- identified accreditation as a means for employers to judge whether students met specific higher education standards. This is an improvement from survey responses in fall 2019 when only about 50 percent of respondents were aware that employers may use accreditation as a means to gauge the quality of education received by potential employees.

Nearly all respondents correctly identified the most important aspects of accreditation: institutional effectiveness (96 percent); student learning (82 percent); student achievement (81 percent); and sufficient resources for mission fulfillment (nearly 69 percent).

About 67 percent of respondents identified financial stability and qualification of employees as another aspect of accreditation review. An additional question sought to identify awareness of additional aspects that will be reviewed; 97 percent of respondents were aware of how the college aligns its resources and how it defines and upholds academic freedom.

The majority of respondents (89 percent) identified gaps in student achievement and equity and ethical standards and practices (84 percent) as areas reviewed during accreditation. Fewer respondents (44 percent) identified academic freedom, although this is an improvement from the fall 2019 survey when only 35 percent were able to correctly identify academic freedom as part of the accreditation process. Two [NWCCU standards](#) directly address academic freedom and Lane outlines its policies for

academic freedom in [COPPS](#) and [Board of Education Policy 620](#) on Freedom of Inquiry and Expression.

About 47 percent of respondents reported a lack of familiarity about the NWCCU accreditation process and only 31 percent of respondents knew that [the NWCCU evaluation team would visit campus](#) in 2021. Evaluators will meet with campus leadership and other key stakeholders, but they also may ask anyone on campus questions. An open forum is also planned where evaluators share a summary of their evaluation.

Everyone who took the survey knew that there is a strong connection between student financial aid and accreditation. At least 62 percent of Lane students rely on financial aid and the [U.S. Department of Education](#) only administers federal student financial aid to students who attend accredited institutions.

The survey also asked how employees would like to receive information about the accreditation process with the majority preferring the ability to review a video, attend a forum or view a [website](#) to learn more about Lane's accreditation process.

The survey results indicate that awareness about NWCCU's site visit and the accreditation process has improved since the fall 2019 survey when only 16 percent of respondents in 2019 were aware of the 2021 site visit date and fewer were aware of review aspects, such as academic freedom.

The Accreditation Communication and Engagement Team will continue to use the survey results to target future communications and outreach to raise awareness about the process and our 2021 NWCCU site visit.