

Staff Forums  
February 21 & 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018  
Independent Accreditation

Oregon Coast Community College is pursuing independent accreditation through the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. Currently, OCCC's programs and services are accredited through an agreement with Portland Community College. There are three phases on the path to independent accreditation: Applicant, Candidate & Accredited Independently.

- January 8, 2016, Oregon Coast Community College was granted Applicant status as a Candidate for Accreditation from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU).
- OCCC is now engaged in our next phase towards accreditation, completing our self-evaluation to apply for initial **Candidacy**. NWCCU has scheduled their evaluation visit to occur April 9-11, 2018.
- **Forums with the Evaluators**
  - Staff: Monday April 9, 3:30 to 4:30 PM
  - Faculty: Tuesday, April 10, noon to 1:00 PM
- Once the Evaluation team establishes their preferred schedule and topics, individual faculty, staff and administrators will be invited to those sessions.

Preparing for the visit:

1. **Small Bites**, an example:

*Mission:*

*At Oregon Coast Community College we equip students for success by providing educational pathways and supports in response to the diverse needs of our community. Through accessible and engaging programs, we enrich the economic and civic vitality of Lincoln County and beyond.*

Core Themes:

- Student Success: Ensuring students individually, and as cohorts, achieve their goals. A primary measure for degree-seeking students is completion (certificate, degree, or transfer).
- Educational Pathways: Ensuring that the pathways we offer students (developmental, transfer, careers & transfer) are relevant, rigorous, well designed and meet the needs of students and employers.

2. **Mock Visit by PCC Staff, March 19 & 20<sup>th</sup>**
3. **On-going** between now and April 9<sup>th</sup>: more small bites, focused sessions, email updates

## What is NWCCU Accreditation? How will independence impact us?

Regional accreditation is a process of recognizing educational institutions for performance, integrity, and quality that entitles them to the confidence of the educational community and the public. Here are a few ways independence will be different from our current state:

### Students

- Students will no longer have to navigate both the OCCC and PCC systems for records and financial aid. Direct access to federal financial aid (Pell Grants and Loans, and Work Study)
- Academic records, including diplomas, will be from OCCC
- Assurances that credits earned at OCCC will be accepted for evaluation for transfer to another institution (always up to the receiving institution what will count)
- Potential for decreased textbook costs (faculty may select low-cost or OERs)
- College address (and emails) will be oregoncoastcc.edu

### Faculty

- Stronger roles in shared curriculum (development and assessment)
- Stronger role in academic policies, and establishing faculty qualifications
- Selection of own course materials
- Clarified governance structures for faculty input to these issues

### Staff and Administration

- Functions performed at PCC will be fully completed at OCCC
- Some addition of staff.
- College can invest locally the \$\$ currently being spent to pay for the contract with PCC.
- Tracking and managing loan default rate
- Eligibility for certain federal grants for system improvement.

## TYPES OF ACCREDITATION

Institutional accreditation is granted by a regional accrediting agency within a scope of authority approved by the U.S. Department of Education. Institutional accreditation applies to the institution, not individual programs or units within the institution.

Specialized accreditation of certain professional schools and individual educational programs is granted by a number of national organizations, each representing a professional area such as business, law, engineering, or nursing. Though each of these organizations has its distinctive definitions of eligibility, criteria for accreditation, and operating procedures, accreditation by a specialized accrediting agency is one means of assuring quality of the accredited programs.