



Accreditation Report

From a Comprehensive
Self-Study Prepared for
The Northwest Commission
on Colleges and
Universities (NWCCU)

Administrators, Faculty and Staff Evaluate Western's Mission Fulfillment, Offer Highlights

In order to achieve recognition as a provider of trustworthy and accessible ministry training, Western Seminary is committed to the highest standards of educational integrity and Christian stewardship. As such, Western engages in regular, systematic, and evidence-based evaluation of its effectiveness in producing graduates. Western measures educational effectiveness through assessment of student learning outcomes and the successful placement of graduates within strategic ministry roles.

CORE THEMES

As we started the self-study process in preparation for re-accreditation with NWCCU, Western administrators collaborated with faculty, staff and students to identify the following four core themes: teaching and learning, student success, resourceful stewardship and community collaboration. These core themes are derived from our mission as a school, and be defined as follows:

Teaching and Learning: A fundamental pursuit of the Seminary is to prepare students for a lifetime of effective ministry. To that end, our first core theme reflects our commitment to meeting our mission by ensuring that students are grounded in evangelical convictions regarding the Bible and theology, are growing personally and spiritually into mature and effective ministers, and are trained in the necessary vocational skills.

Student Success: For student learning to succeed, we must create quality learning environments that facilitate effective learning among our students. These learning environments include the degree programs within which learning takes place, the relational environment that exists between students and with faculty, and the services offered to students.

Resourceful Stewardship: Western Seminary must continue strategically and creatively to steward essential resources, vital for the fulfillment of the institutional mission. These include faculty and staff personnel, campus facilities and technology, and financial resources.

Community Collaboration: The Seminary's mission envisions the training of leadership in church and parachurch organizations. This encompasses continuing education and non-credit events, as well as ensuring staff of partnership organizations complete their degree programs.

These four core themes served as the categories for evaluation in our study.

What is accreditation?

As practiced in the United States, accreditation is a voluntary, non-governmental peer-review process of quality assurance and institutional improvement. It recognizes higher education institutions for performance, integrity, and quality to merit the confidence of the educational community and the public. Accreditation by a regional accrediting agency qualifies institutions and enrolled students for access to federal funds to support teaching, research, and student financial aid.

What is the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities?

The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) is an independent, non-profit organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education to be the educational authority on educational quality and institutional effectiveness in the Northwest seven-state region of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington. It fulfills its mission by establishing accreditation criteria and evaluation procedures by which institutions are regularly reviewed for effectiveness.

Adapted from
<http://www.nwccu.org/index.htm>

Positive Findings From Our Study, Areas for Growth

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

As we examined our core themes, we were pleased to affirm that student learning objectives are being met. Evidence points to the majority of Western graduates meeting or surpassing the student learning outcomes expressed in our educational goals. For example:

1. For the past five years, 100% of our graduates have successfully passed ordination examinations.
2. More than 95% have passed the culminating theological and integration projects in their programs.
3. Over a five year average, more than 90% of our counseling graduates have passed state licensing exams on their first attempt.
4. More than 80% of our students maintain steady annual progress to complete their degrees on schedule.

PLACEMENT

Over the past ten years, 89% of our graduates have found successful placement in strategic ministry roles, and 92% of our graduates report they continue in their ministry roles. Western Seminary graduates are serving worldwide today as pastors, church planters, counselors, teachers, missionaries, missional ministry leaders, chaplains, ministry coaches, marketplace



ministry leaders -- effectively strengthening the gospel influence of the Church worldwide.

AREAS FOR CONTINUED GROWTH

Overall, we were pleased to see a primarily positive review of our current mission fulfillment. Identifying areas for growth and development will allow us to intentionally invest resources in the areas identified by Western Seminary students, staff, faculty and administrators. Moving forward, we also identified a number of areas to be addressed:

1. Continuing to bolster the financial resources of the Seminary through multiple revenue streams.
2. Strengthen the faculty cadre through

professional development and continuing to recruit excellent instructors.

3. Pursue new means for connecting with prospective students.
4. Explore options for improving physical facilities.
5. Seek approval for an online master's-level degree program.

As an institution, we are grateful for the areas of achievement indicated in this report, and committed to pursuing improvement in the areas identified for growth. Our staff, faculty, students and board are deeply invested in the institution's central mission and we look forward to working together toward increasing mission fulfillment in the years to come.

CORE THEMES FINDINGS FROM THE NWCCU SELF-STUDY

- Under **Teaching and Learning**, indicators demonstrate that we are consistently exceeding benchmarks for student learning, ministry roles, and placement. We will address vocational, professional competencies and the faculty development process for improvement.
- Under **Student Success**, indicators demonstrate that we exceed benchmarks as outlined in faculty, student and alumni reports, as well as student credit loads. We met expectations for matriculation rates and retention rates. We almost met expectations in a few areas outlined by student reports, and in student completion rates. We will address prospective applicants for improvement.
- Under **Resourceful Stewardship**, we met expectations for both staff and faculty satisfaction and overall satisfaction with campus facilities. We almost met expectations in regards to financial and technological resources. We will address faculty and staff prospering in their current roles for improvement.
- Finally, under **Community Collaboration**, indicators demonstrate that we exceed expectations for continuing education and lifelong learning, as offered through our distance education courses and continuing education opportunities. Partnership education is an area for improvement, as we increase participation in programs such as those offered by the Center for Leadership Development.