



March 26, 2018

Last Week's WSCUC Team Visit

To the University community:

I want to express my deep appreciation to everyone who helped support the visit by the WASC Senior College and University Commission team last week. This visit was the culmination of years of preparation, and I particularly want to thank our Accreditation Liaison Officers, Jena Burges, Mary Glenn, and Rock Braithwaite, for their leadership and hard work in planning and executing this process.

In their exit meeting with our community, the WSCUC team members complimented HSU on a well-written self-study report, and they offered five commendations and seven recommendations. My brief summary of these items is below, but these represent my interpretation; the actual report will almost certainly state these topics differently.

The commendations:

- Our programs are aligned with our stated priorities and institutional values; student commitment to environmental responsibility and social justice was particularly noteworthy.
- The academic programs actively engage students.
- Interdisciplinary programs include an alignment with cultural perspectives (the Klamath Connection was noted as a wonderful example of this).
- The Office of Institutional Effectiveness is doing a great job of collecting, analyzing, and presenting data that are valuable in making decisions.
- The strategic planning process clearly established student success as a priority and is a valuable guide for resource allocation.

The recommendations:

- HSU needs to be doing more to serve our diverse population of students with appropriate funding and staffing for the programs that serve them.
- The admission efforts need to incorporate more information about the challenges, as well as the opportunities, for students considering HSU (i.e.,

present the realities of limited housing, safety concerns, racism in the community, etc.).

- The University leadership needs to improve communications on campus and incorporate change management processes.
- Student learning outcomes need to be assessed regularly, consistently, and comprehensively.
- HSU needs to be doing more to serve the diverse population of students by providing appropriate academic and student support services (i.e., more funding and more staff). This is similar to the first recommendation, but it is connected to a different criterion for review.
- HSU needs to prioritize hiring more faculty of color and training current faculty and staff in “cultural competency” (the team’s phrase).
- HSU must create a sustainable budget, stabilize enrollment, and raise more money – from public and private sources – to augment state funding.

With the exception of the second recommendation, all of these are already part of the University’s strategic plan, and I am confident that, as a community, we can address these goals.

We will receive a draft of the team’s report in a few weeks, and the formal decision about reaffirmation of accreditation will come this summer, after the Commission meets in late June. That is when we will learn when our next self-study report and visit will be scheduled. In the meantime, we clearly need to continue our focus on supporting the success of all our students, comprehensively assessing our student learning outcomes, and stabilizing our fiscal situation and our enrollment.

More information is available on the [HSU Self Study for Reaffirmation website](#).

Again, thank you for your engagement in this important process of reflection, self-assessment, and continuous improvement.

Sincerely,

Lisa A. Rossbacher, Ph.D.
President

