Year One Review Report
Oregon Health and Science University
Portland, Oregon
Spring, 2011

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Introduction

On behalf of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, the Evaluation Committee conducted a review of the Standard One Report of the Oregon Health and Sciences University (OHSU). The committee reviewed the reports from the Regular Interim Report conducted in April, 2010, the Commission recommendations to the Oregon Health and Sciences University in its letter dated August 3, 2010, the OHSU Standard One Report, the institutional catalog and the website.

The OHSU Standard One Report reflects significant focus and planning by the institution in developing core themes that are supported by a robust rationale. OHSU has expressed the complexity and comprehensiveness of its mission through its core themes planning and has established extensive measures of its achievement. The objectives flow logically from the core themes and measurable indicators of achievement are clearly articulated. OHSU provided responses as requested by the Commission to the NWCCU recommendations following the Regular Interim Report in 2010. The evaluators compliment OHSU for the clarity and thoughtfulness of its report.

Since the request to write an executive summary of Eligibility Requirements 2 and 3 was a late addition to the guidelines for this report, the institution is encouraged to follow the guidelines released 3/2/11 in its next report to the NWCCU.

Standard 1.A Mission

Oregon Health and Sciences University has five schools in Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy, two hospitals, clinics, research institutes, Office of Rural Health Education Center, and the Area Health Education Center. It offers fifty educational programs leading to degrees and certificates in three Portland campuses and statewide. OHSU partners with other state public colleges and university in Pharmacy, Public Health, Nursing, Health Administration, Medical Physics, Clinical Laboratory Sciences and Advanced Paramedic Education. Seventy percent of its over 2,700 students are in graduate or professional education programs. Undergraduates enter as transfers with all required general education completed prior to matriculation. In addition, the university received $391 million in research funding in fiscal year 2010.

The current mission statement for OHSU was approved by the Board of Directors in February, 2005. It is published in the catalog, the website and various other university documents. The mission statement guided the development of the OHSU Vision 2020 approved in November, 2007 and the subsequent strategic planning processes for the university. In addition, unit level mission statements are aligned with the OHSU mission.

As part of its multifaceted public mission, OHSU strives for excellence in education, research and scholarship, clinical practice and community service. Through its dynamic interdisciplinary environment, OHSU stimulates the spirit of inquiry, initiative, and cooperation among students, faculty and staff.

Setting the example for integrity, compassion and leadership, OHSU strives to:
• *Educate tomorrow’s health professionals, scientists, engineers and managers in top-tier programs that prepare them for a lifetime of learning, leadership and contribution.*

• *Explore new basic, clinical and applied research frontiers in health and biomedical sciences, environmental and biomedical engineering and information sciences, and translate these discoveries, wherever possible, into applications in the health and commercial sectors.*

• *Deliver excellence in health care, emphasizing the creation and implementation of new knowledge and cutting-edge technologies.*

• *Lead and advocate for programs that improve health for all Oregonians, and extend OHSU’s education, research and healthcare missions through community service, partnerships and outreach.*

The institution characterizes its mission statement as:

A *problem-focused statement aimed at specific outcomes.* The problems are increasing educational attainment in health professions and biomedical scientists to meet Oregon’s workforce needs; increasing research activity to find better ways to deliver health care more affordably to individuals and populations; improving the quality and safety of clinical care outcomes; and adopting of evidence-based health care in our clinical settings around the state.

Thus mission fulfillment by the university will be measured by tracking progress in attaining desired outcomes that are longer term and process indicators that enable the identified outcomes. OHSU has identified 45 indicators of mission fulfillment grouped by core theme. Acceptable thresholds of mission fulfillment for twenty percent of the indicators are identified in the report. OHSU needs to complete the process of determining acceptable thresholds for all the indicators of mission fulfillment. The university may wish to consider concentrating its evaluation of mission fulfillment on fewer, more summative indicators or developing an approach for a summative evaluation of mission fulfillment with its numerous indicators.

**Standard 1.B Core Themes**

Through an extensive institutional process involving many university stakeholders and including the use of a web based tool for institution wide input, Oregon Health and Sciences University identified four core themes that are essential elements of the mission statement. These are:

- Learning Community
- Interprofessional Education
- Leadership in Healthcare and Policy
- Clinical and Translational Research

The core themes are manifestations of the mission statement and encompass the education, research and scholarship, clinical practice and public service elements of the mission. OHSU thoughtfully expressed the rationale for its core themes and linked each one to an essential element in its mission. The evaluators compliment the university for the strong rationale underlying its choice of core themes.
Addendum

Review of Responses to Recommendations in Regular Interim Report, 2010
[The Recommendations in this section refer to Standards in force when the Recommendations were written in 2010]

Recommendation 1 - While OHSU has laid the foundation for the effective assessment of educational programs through the development of policies and templates for student learning objectives and assessment, the implementation of an institutional process of assessment and improvement has not been achieved. The Assessment Council has been instrumental in the progress that has been made to date, but appears to lack the authority to ensure that student learning outcomes meet an institutional standard and that the assessment of outcomes is leading to programmatic and institutional improvement. It was not clear during the visit whether the decentralized process of outcome assessment and improvement at the School and academic program level meets the needs of the institution. The answer to this question is essential to ensuring compliance with Policy 2.2 Educational Assessment. The Committee recommends that OHSU provide clear authority and responsibility to those accountable for ensuring that educational program planning is based on regular and continuous assessment of programs to meet the needs of the institution (Standard 2.B, Policy 2.2).

Response - OHSU modified the charter and processes of the Assessment Council to centralize authority for review and approval of program level assessment plans. Based on institutional standards and criteria, the Assessment Council initially reviews and approves the student learning outcomes and assessment plans for all degree and certificate programs. When the student learning outcomes and assessment plans do not initially meet standards, technical assistance is provided by the Office of Academic Affairs and Educational Technology. Each school is required to annually report results of the assessments and provide evidence that results are used to improve performance.

Recommendation 2 – OHSU should ensure that all of its academic programs have student learning outcomes, assess the achievement of the outcomes, and use the assessments to program improvement. In particular, the Committee recommends that OHSU complete the development of a process of periodic review for all graduate programs and implement the process during the 2010 academic year (Standard 2.B).

Response- In 2010, OHSU adopted a policy requiring the review of all academic programs on a five year cycle. The stated purpose of the process is continuous quality improvement and input for institutional planning and resource allocation. Guidelines and timelines were developed to implement this review and evaluation process. Academic Program Review is the responsibility of the Provost and the Dean of the school. While programs are responsible for preparing self evaluation reports, the Assessment Council has authority to review the program self evaluation reports, request additional information as needed and prepare an evaluative report for the Provost and the program faculty. Reports include recommendations and implications for program and institutional planning.
For each core theme the university defined objectives and indicators of achievement. In general, OHSU has developed meaningful, assessable and verifiable indicators. While most indicators of achievement are direct measures of the objective, some are either more indirect measures or the meaningful connection is less clear to the evaluator. For core theme objective 1, the indicators are direct measures for the objective “to meet standards for learning outcomes of academic programs and the university”. However in core theme objective 1.2, the indicators related to graduates completing experiences in rural and underserved areas or graduates produced annually are not direct measures of the objective “supporting degree seeking students so they progress and graduate within an appropriate time frame”. The other indicators such as median time to degree and completion rates are direct measures of achievement of this objective. Further review and refinement will ensure all the indicators of achievement are meaningful measures of the objectives. Additionally, OHSU may wish to focus on fewer indicators.
Commendations and Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The institution should articulate the acceptable threshold or extent of mission fulfillment for all identified indicators in the Standard One report. Standard 1.A.2

Recommendation 2: OHSU should review and refine its indicators of achievement to ensure that the indicators are meaningful, direct measures of the objective. Standard 1.B.1