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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Senate
FROM Jon Driver, Vice-President, Academic and Provost
RE: Accreditation Update
DATE February 17, 2011
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For information:

Attached is the update of progress being made in following the process of accreditation by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

Attach
c: G. Nicholls



Accreditation Update

Update to the SFU Board of Governors

A high level report of SFU's progress being made in following the process of accreditation by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU).

Glynn Nicholls
1/6/2011

Update to Board of Governors

January 2011

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Update is to provide a high level report of progress being made in following the process of accreditation by the *Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities* (NWCCU). The NWCCU approved SFU's request for 'Applicant' status in 2009 and, in order to pursue the process to full accreditation, a project under the sponsorship of the Vice President Academic was developed to undertake the work involved. The Accreditation Project Charter was approved by the Steering Committee (President, Vice Presidents and Deans) in November 2009.

The Project has three deliverables:

- The delivery of a comprehensive and professionally presented Self Study Report, including all necessary supporting documentation.
- The coordination of all aspects relating to the successful site visit to SFU by the NWCCU evaluators.
- The production of SFU's formal response to the NWCCU Evaluation Report subsequent to their site visit to SFU.

2. PROJECT RESOURCES & STRUCTURE

The Project has been resourced through the Vice President Academic using revenues derived from the Fraser International College (FIC).

The Project is structured as follows:

- Project Steering Committee (President, Vice Presidents and Deans)
- Project Sponsor (Jon Driver)
- Project Team
 - Project Manager (Glynn Nicholls)
 - Primary Author (KC Bell)
 - Authors (Lynda Erickson, Michelle Hunt)
 - Project Assistant (Louise Paquette)

Three project team members have attended a workshop in Seattle run by the NWCCU.

The Project Team meets bi-weekly and agenda and minutes are kept.

Quarterly reports covering activities have been provided to the Project Sponsor.

3. PROGRESS TO DATE

3.1 Communication

Early in the process the Vice President of NWCCU visited SFU and explained the accreditation process requirements and elaborated on the accreditation standards to the Steering Committee, the Project Team and SFU's Chairs and Directors. More recently the President of NWCCU had a telephone conversation with Andrew Petter and Jon Driver as her visit to SFU was cancelled due to bad weather.

An accreditation web page has been established and a number of presentations made to faculty and staff explaining the process being followed. Press releases on SFU's accreditation aspirations and the benefits that will accrue have been released and these have been followed by interviews with local newspapers, Maclean's and the student paper. The first issue of the VPA newsletter ViewPointAcademic (insert in SFU News) issued in November 2010 was devoted to the accreditation process.

The Provincial government has been advised of our plans to seek accreditation.

3.2 Self Study – progress and process

Chapter 1 - Mission, Core Themes and Expectations

SFU's Values and Commitments statement has been adapted to include a SFU Mission, from which four core themes have been derived on which the self study is being based. These Themes correlate well with the themes identified in the Three Year Academic Plan.

These Core Themes are:

- Teaching & Learning
- Research
- Student Experience
- Community & Citizenship

The framing of each of the core themes has been drafted and is currently being reviewed by four Theme Teams who are undertaking the assessment of SFU's performance with regard to each of these themes.

The expectations required in the NWCCU Standards refer to planned institutional goals and objectives. For this purpose the goals have been derived from the Planning Framework (2011), the Three Year Academic Plan (2010 – 2013) and the SFU Strategic Research Plan (2010 – 2015). This chapter will continue to be redrafted as the theme assessments in Chapter 4 and the evaluation of Mission Fulfillment in Chapter 5 are drafted.

Chapter 2 - Resources & Capacity

This chapter forms more than 50% of the self study report and includes the following: Governance, Human Resources, Education Resources, Student Support, Library and Information Resources, Finance and the Physical and Technological Infrastructure.

Draft 1 of this chapter is complete.

Chapter 3 - Institutional Planning

Parts of the various SFU planning processes, including Academic Planning, Enrollment Planning, Research Planning and Budgeting, have been described and documented. These documents are being woven into a single draft for consideration by the Steering Committee.

Chapter 4 - Core Theme Planning Assessment & Implementation

The intention in Chapter 4 is to describe the SFU performance in achieving the goals of each of the Core Themes.

In order to do this, four of the Theme Teams that were initially established to assist in the implementation of the Academic Plan were asked to assess SFU's performance in their particular theme. Each Theme Team has between 4 and 7 people with appropriate knowledge, direct experience and skill in the particular theme area.

These teams are currently undertaking this assessment task using the goals, objectives and indicators identified in the Planning Framework, the Academic Plan and the Research Plan. The Teams may also use any other qualitative or quantitative measure or indicator to assist in their assessment. This process, together with the process described for Chapter 5, is shown in the attached flow chart. To ensure consistency, the Office of Institutional Research & Planning (IRP) is tasked to provide the data required.

This assessment must be completed by mid-March 2011. The documents produced by the Theme Teams will constitute much of the text to be used in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 - Mission Fulfillment, Adaptation & Sustainability

In this Chapter a broad assessment of how well SFU is achieving its Mission will be made.

The process of determining this assessment will be done by consolidating the assessments of the Core Themes and then determining an overall evaluation of institutional performance¹.

As with the Core Theme assessments, performance at the institutional level will be categorized into one of three classes, namely:

- **OUTSTANDING** – Progress has been greater than expected.
- **SATISFACTORY** - Progress has been as expected.
- **IMPROVEMENT NEEDED** - Progress has been less than expected.

This assessment will be reviewed and approved by the Steering Committee (President, Vice Presidents and Deans).

¹ See Mission Fulfillment flow chart attached.

A number of recommended improvements will follow from the assessments of the Core Themes and the mission fulfillment evaluation and these will be included in Chapter 5 under 'adaptation and sustainability'. These recommendations where appropriate will be built into the next cycle of planning, implementation and evaluation of all of SFU's activities.

3.3 Document Management & Design

A file classification plan has been developed by the University Archivist and all documentation is being managed by using DocuShare (Xerox) content management software.

The Communication Services Division of Student Services has suggested a document design which has been agreed with the Project Team. They will produce and print the final document and have committed to the required time line.

4. KEY DATES

The following key dates apply.

ACTIVITY	DATE
Complete Assessment of Core Themes by Theme Teams	Mid March 2011
Complete Self Study Draft 2 (Reviewed by Vice Presidents)	End April 2011
Approval of Draft 3 (Reviewed by Steering Committee & Board of Governors)	May to July 2011
Submission of Self Study to NWCCU	August 2011
Host the NWCCU Site Visit	12 -14 October 2011
NWCCU Board Meeting & decision re 'candidate' status	January 2012
Respond to the Evaluators Report	November/December 2011
NWCCU Board meeting – decision re 'Candidate' status	January 2012

'Mission Fulfillment' process flow chart

