



8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC  
Canada V5A 1S6

TEL: 778.782.3925  
FAX: 778.782.5876

vpacad@sfu.ca  
www.sfu.ca/vpacademic

**MEMORANDUM**

---

**ATTENTION** Senate **DATE** March 20, 2013  
**FROM** Jon Driver, Vice-President, Academic and **PAGES** 1/1  
Provost, and Chair, SCUP  
**RE:** NWCCU Accreditation 2012 Progress Report (SCUP 13-18)

---

At its March 13, 2013 meeting, SCUP reviewed the progress report concerning SFU's accreditation with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). The report is attached for the information of Senate.



8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC  
Canada V5A 1S6

TEL: 778.782.3925  
FAX: 778.782.5876

vpacad@sfu.ca  
www.sfu.ca/vpacademic

MEMORANDUM

---

ATTENTION Senate Committee on University Priorities      DATE March 4, 2013  
FROM Jon Driver      PAGES 1/1  
Vice President, Academic and Provost  
RE: NWCCU Accreditation 2012 Progress Report

---

The attached document is a progress report concerning SFU's accreditation with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). The Report has been produced for information purposes for internal SFU stakeholders.

The contents of the Report include:

1. Timeline of key dates associated with accreditation for the year 2012
2. Next Steps
  - a. Current plan
  - b. Potential accelerated plan

# Institutional Accreditation with the NWCCU 2012 Progress Report

February 27, 2013

# 2012 Progress Report – Institutional Accreditation with the NWCCU

---

## Progress to Date:

- January 2012: SFU received candidacy status from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU).
- May 2012: Senate approved the principles that will guide the development of the learning outcomes and assessment process.
- June 2012: SFU submitted its 2012 NWCCU Annual Report.
- August 2012: NCAA approved SFU Athletics as its first internationally based institution. Approval was granted based on SFU's candidacy status with the NWCCU.
- September 2012: SFU submitted the Year One Self-Evaluation Report to the NWCCU.

### Contents of Report (abbreviated below):

- *Institutional changes since NWCCU visit (October 2011)*
- *Response to recommendations made by the NWCCU after their site visit*
- ***Chapter One: Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations***
  - ***Standard 1.A Mission***
    - *SFU's vision/mission statement*
    - *Interpretation of 'mission fulfillment'*
    - *Articulation of an acceptable threshold, extent, or degree of mission fulfillment*
  - ***Standard 1.B Core Themes***
    - *Brief description, objectives, and performance indicators of the Three Core Themes:*
      - ✓ *Engaging Students*
      - ✓ *Engaging Research*
      - ✓ *Engaging Communities*

### [Year One Self-Evaluation Report](#)

October 2012: NWCCU provided SFU with its Peer-Evaluation Report (response to SFU’s Year One Report).

Quoting the Peer-Evaluation Report:

*“The Report was straightforward, easy to read, and provided an introduction to SFU. The information appeared to be complete and accurate, addressed each component of Standard One, and provided information the evaluation committee needed to provide its review.”*

- **Commendation:** *“Simon Fraser University has developed a University Planning Framework based on the Vision/Mission, core themes, and strategic goals, providing a consistent and integrated implementation and assessment structure in support of mission attainment.”*
- **Recommendation:** *“While the university has identified core themes, outcomes, and indicators of achievement, the evaluation committee found unevenness in the indicators of achievement in relationship to the goals, stated strategies, and outcomes. The evaluation committee recommends that outcomes and indicators of achievement be aligned to provide evidence consistent with the goals and strategies for all core themes on mission fulfillment (Standard 1.B.2).”*

### [NWCCU’s Peer-Evaluation Report](#)

December 2012: SFU responded to the NWCCU’s evaluation of the Year One Report. The response thanked the NWCCU for their efforts and briefly addressed the evaluators’ reservations regarding SFU’s “indicators of achievement” by stating: *“The University Planning Framework is being updated annually and the indicators revised and developed accordingly.”*

February 2013: **NWCCU Board** advised that:  
*“In continuing candidacy, the Commission requests that the University address Recommendation 1 of the Fall 2012 Year One Mission and Core Themes Peer-Evaluation Report in its Fall 2014*

*Year Three Resources and Capacity Self-Evaluation Report. . . . In taking this action, the Commission finds that Recommendation 1 of the Fall 2012 Year One Mission and Core Themes Peer-Evaluation Report is an area where Simon Fraser University is substantially in compliance with Commission criteria for accreditation, but in need of improvement.”*

## Next Steps:

### 1. Current Plan

April 2013-Jul 2014	Year Three Report drafting
Aug 2014	Submission of <b>Year Three Report</b> <b>Contents of Year Three Report</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter One: Update</li> <li>• Chapter Two: Resources and Capacity</li> </ul>
Oct 2014	NWCCU visit to assess
April 2015-Jul 2016	Year Seven Report drafting
Sep 2015-Mar 2016	Core Theme assessment
Aug 2016	Submission of <b>Year Seven Report</b> <b>Contents of Year Seven Report:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter One and Two: Update</li> <li>• Chapter Three: Institutional Planning</li> <li>• Chapter Four: Core Theme Planning, Assessment, and Improvement</li> <li>• Chapter Five: Mission Fulfillment, Adaptation, Sustainability</li> </ul>
Oct 2016	NWCCU visit to assess
Jan 2017	<b>Accreditation granted</b>

### 2. Accelerated Plan

It may be possible for SFU to forego the Year Three Report in 2014 and submit a Year Seven Report in 2014 or 2015, which would ultimately allow the university to become accredited by the

NWCCU two years or one year sooner than is currently planned. This would depend on the NWCCU president granting permission.

Letter to SFU from NWCCU January 31, 2012 states:

*“Simon Fraser University may apply for initial accreditation at any time within the next five years, but may do so only after consultation with the President of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. If accreditation is not achieved by the end of the five-year period, the institution will be removed from the list of candidate institutions and must wait a minimum of two years before resubmitting an Application for Consideration to the Commission.”*

**a. Implications of Accelerated Plan**

- Higher workload for Accreditation Team.
- Earlier assessment of performance in Core Themes (Theme Teams).
  - Chapters 1 and 2 will be updated. Chapter 3 will be new. Chapters 4 and 5, which also will be new, require assessment and analysis. This would mean that “Theme Teams” would need to be appointed/established to assess and produce written reports on institutional performance in the 3 core themes:
    - Engaging Students
    - Engaging Research
    - Engaging Communities

**b. Benefits of Accelerated Plan**

- Early recognition and enhancement of reputation.
  - Would be another accolade for SFU and can help to enhance the university’s reputation.
  - Early accreditation and an enhanced SFU reputation can be used as a good marketing tool, particularly to attract international students.
- Allows for extra time if needed.
  - The NWCCU gives an institution 5 years from its acceptance of candidacy to complete its accreditation. If by some chance SFU does not attain accreditation via the accelerated plan, the university would still have 1 or 2 years (depending on whether the final Report was submitted in 2015 or 2014) to ensure that accreditation takes place.

**c. Risks**

- An early report submission might not be able to reflect the full maturation of the implementation of SFU’s Vision/Mission. (low)
- The NWCCU may not be able to accommodate an accelerated report submission. (unknown)