

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY ITEM SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: President Sabah Randhawa on behalf of Provost Brent Carbajal

DATE: February 10, 2017

SUBJECT: **Accreditation: A Primer and Exploration**

PURPOSE: Discussion Item

Purpose of Submittal:

In this interactive session, Brent Carbajal, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Steve VanderStaay, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Western's Accreditation Liaison Officer, will describe requirements for regional accreditation and campus preparations for the onsite, comprehensive evaluation March 27-29.

Background:

Accreditation is a process of peer-review wherein a university is evaluated against a set of agreed upon Standards. Western is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). Accreditation affirms the transferability of our degrees and credits among other regionally-accredited universities, and the eligibility of students and faculty for federal grants and assistance.

Western's 7-year accreditation concludes in March when a team of 10-12 evaluators will visit the campus for the onsite evaluation. This evaluation is "comprehensive" in that it includes all facets of campus operations including our finances, facilities, civil rights protections, staff evaluation procedures, degree programs, and so on. The year-7 evaluation includes a particular focus on assessment and continuous-improvement processes, and evaluation of our performance relative to the indicators of "mission fulfillment" established 7 years ago.

Trustees will leave the meeting with an understanding of our accreditation cycle, the standards that concern Board processes, and the kinds of questions they may be asked by evaluators.

Strategic Questions:

- 1) With respect to mission fulfillment, what achievements are Board members most proud of? Where do they see continued room for improvement?