

## **What's New? Accreditation survey results**

Our Accreditation Communication and Engagement Team invited Lane employees to participate in a survey to gauge awareness about the accreditation process. During fall inservice on Sept. 26, all participants were asked if Lane is regionally accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) as part of the check-in process. At least 77 percent of employees who responded to the question correctly answered that NWCCU is our accreditor. The single question was in addition to the separate survey that was given during fall in-service in the lobby and also sent out to employees by email in October.

Overall, most survey respondents were aware of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) accreditation process. However, the survey also pointed to some areas where additional awareness is needed and we've highlighted those below.

There were 105 respondents to the long survey with employees invited to participate and take the survey prior to the morning session of Fall In-Service on Sept. 26 and employees also received an invitation to participate by email in October.

While the majority of respondents knew that accreditation is an external, peer-review process and promotes continuous improvement, only about 50 percent of respondents were aware that employers may review whether a prospective job candidate holds a degree or certificate from an accredited institution. For students, choosing a program at an accredited institution could help them stand out as a job candidate.

The majority of respondents (92 percent) knew that accreditation is about institutional effectiveness, but fewer made the connections to student learning (70 percent) and student achievement (68 percent). Even fewer (62 percent) linked accreditation's importance to an evaluation of whether an institution has sufficient resources to fulfill its mission.

Additionally, other aspects of the college's effectiveness are reviewed, including how the institution aligns its resources, as well as the qualifications of its faculty and staff, and how the institution defines and upholds academic freedom. Only 35 percent of respondents identified academic freedom as part of the accreditation review process. Two [NWCCU standards](#) directly address academic freedom and Lane outlines its policies for academic freedom in [COPPS](#) and [Board of Education Policy 620](#) on Freedom of Inquiry and Expression.

Only 16 percent of respondents knew that [the NWCCU evaluation team would visit campus](#) in 2021. Evaluators will meet with campus leadership and other key stakeholders, but they also may ask anyone on campus questions. An open forum is also planned where evaluators share a summary of their evaluation.

Everyone who took the survey knew that there is a strong connection between student financial aid and accreditation. At least 62 percent of Lane students rely on financial aid and the [U.S. Department of Education](#) only administers federal student financial aid to students who attend accredited institutions.

The survey also asked how employees would like to receive information about the accreditation process with the majority preferring the ability to review a [website](#), infographics, forums and even video to learn more about Lane's accreditation process.

It's the Accreditation Communication and Engagement Team's goal to raise awareness about the process and our 2021 NWCCU site visit. So, over the next year, expect to learn more than you ever wanted to know about accreditation and your role in continuous improvement at Lane.