



March 1, 2024

Dr. Richard Bailey  
President  
Southern Oregon University  
1250 Siskiyou Blvd.  
Ashland, OR 97520

Dear President Bailey:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) at its meeting on January 30-February 2, 2024, concerning the Fall 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness of Southern Oregon University.

### **Accreditation**

Reaffirm Accreditation

### **Status of Previous Recommendations Addressed in this Evaluation**

- Finding Type 1: Fall 2022 Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review - Fulfilled

### **Commendations**

The Commission commends Southern Oregon University for:

1. The work of the General Education Task Force in the planning and development of the new General Education model, which is innovative, thoughtful, and student-centered.
2. Prioritizing student access and success amidst the pandemic, wildfires, financial constraints, and other challenges.
3. Faculty and staff for their resiliency and commitment to the institution and its students.
4. President Bailey for taking bold, transparent action to address financial health and management.

### **Recommendations Substantially in Compliance but in Need of Improvement**

The Commission recommends that Southern Oregon University:

- Recommendation 1: Fall 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Demonstrate a continuous process to assess institutional effectiveness, including student learning, student achievement, and support services by creating an ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning process to inform and refine its effectiveness, assign resources, and improve student learning and achievement. (2020 Standard(s) 1.B.1)
- Recommendation 2: Fall 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Set and articulate meaningful goals, objectives, and indicators of its goals to define mission fulfillment and to improve its effectiveness in the context of and in comparison with regional and national peer institutions. (2020 Standard(s) 1.B.2)
- Recommendation 5: Fall 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Fully demonstrate that the results of its assessment efforts are systematically used to inform academic and learning-support planning practices to continuously improve student learning outcomes and student support services. (2020 Standard(s) 1.C.5; 1.C.7)
- Recommendation 6: Fall 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Publish in the catalog, or provides in a manner available to students and other stakeholders, expected student learning outcomes. (2020 Standard(s) 2.G.2;1.C.3)
- Recommendation 7: Fall 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Create a Regular and Substantive Interaction policy to maintain effective learning environments with appropriate programs and services to support student learning and success. (2020 Standard(s) 2.G.1)

### Recommendations Out of Compliance

The Commission finds that the following Recommendations are areas where Southern Oregon University is out of compliance with the NWCCU Standards for Accreditation. According to U.S. Department of Education Regulation 34 CFR 602.20 and Commission Policy, the Commission requires that Southern Oregon University take appropriate action to ensure these Recommendations are addressed and resolved within the prescribed four-year period.

The Commission recommends that Southern Oregon University:

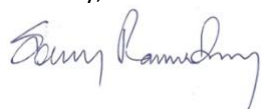
- Recommendation 3: Fall 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Benchmark their disaggregated student achievement indicators against student achievement indicators from regional and national peer institutions. (2020 Standard(s) 1.D.2)
- Recommendation 4: Fall 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Use their benchmarked student achievement indicators to inform the creation of student achievement goals for the institution and to pursue continuous improvement efforts in planning, decision making, and allocation of resources to mitigate perceived gaps in achievement and equity. (2020 Standard(s) 1.D.3;1.D.4)

### Future Evaluations

- Ad Hoc Report Fall 2025
  - Recommendation 3: Fall 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness
  - Recommendation 4: Fall 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness
  - Recommendation 6: Fall 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness
  - Recommendation 7: Fall 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness
- Mid-Cycle Review Fall 2026
  - Recommendation 5: Fall 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness
- Ad Hoc Report with Visit Fall 2028
  - Recommendation 1: Fall 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness
  - Recommendation 2: Fall 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness
- Year 6 - Standard 2 - Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review Fall 2029
- Year 7 - Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness Fall 2030

NWCCU is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while contributing to public accountability, and we thank you for your continued support of this process. If you have questions about any of the information in this letter, please contact your staff liaison, Dr. Gita Bangera, at [gbangera@nwccu.org](mailto:gbangera@nwccu.org).

Sincerely,



Sonny Ramaswamy  
President

cc: Dr. Dan DeNeui, Associate Provost  
Mr. Daniel P. Santos, Chair, SOU Board of Trustees  
Dr. Lindsay Couzens, Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Effectiveness, University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
Mr. Ben Cannon, Executive Director, Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission