

## Snow College’s Accreditation Strategic Plan

The goal of accreditation is to ensure that institutions of higher education meet acceptable levels of quality. In the United States, higher education accreditation uses federal, state, and non-government agencies (known as the Triad) for quality assurance and satisfy one of the three main elements of the Higher Education Act’s (HEA’s) federal student aid program. For students to receive federal financial aid from the U.S. Department of Education for postsecondary education, the institution must be accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency. Accrediting agencies are private educational associations that develop quality standard-based evaluation criteria and conduct peer evaluations to assess whether those criteria are met. Snow College’s accrediting agency is the regionally-based Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU).

Since 1953, Snow College has been fully accredited and reaffirms this status according to a seven-year cycle in which every institution is reviewed by NWCCU staff, teams of peer evaluators, and the Board of Commissioners to confirm the institution is working to fulfill its mission, addressing previously identified problems, continuously improving, offering high-quality education, and supporting student success and closing equity gaps. The following table outlines NWCCU’s evaluation, re-accreditation process, and Snow College’s timeline position.

Evaluation/Review	NWCCU Time Period	Snow College Timeline
<b>Mid-Cycle Review</b>	Year 3 (report and visit)	October 2023
<b>Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review (PRFR)- Standards 2</b>	Year 6 (no visit)	Spring or Fall 2026
<b>Self-Study, Comprehensive Evaluation, and Commission Decision- Standards 1</b>	Year 7	Spring or Fall 2027

In addition, all institutions are required to submit an annual report to the Commission. This report is due by August 1 of each year. It is completed by Snow College’s Accreditation Liaison Officer in coordination with Academic Affairs and parties to accurately all programs, instruction at other domestic and international sites, and programs offered using competency-based instruction.

This new cycle allows institutions to address accreditation as an avenue for continuous improvement, not a point-in-time compliance exercise. Snow College’s Accreditation Committee formally captures this sentiment by coordinating, collaborating, and communicating the college’s constant efforts toward mission fulfillment and institutional excellence.

The following individuals have been nominated to serve on Snow College’s Accreditation Committee, effective May 2023. Their selection intentionally involves areas of expertise directly related to NWCCU Standards and aims to provide a leadership opportunity on overall institutional knowledge and quality assurance excellence.

- Dr. Beckie Hermansen, Institutional Research and Accreditation Liaison Officer
- Melanie Jenkins, Provost (representing Academic Programs and Services)
- Cody Branch, VP of Student Services and Enrollment Management (representing Student Support Services)
- Becky Callister, Director of Career and Technical Education (representing Technical Education and the Richfield campus)

- Jake Dettinger, Controller/Finance Director (representing Finance and Campus Facilities/Infrastructure)
- Landon Peterson, Academic Advising (representing Staff and addressing an outstanding recommendation)
- Heather Holland, English Faculty (representing Faculty)
- Lyndsay Chaney, Biology Faculty (representing Academic Affairs and Assessment)

Outside of the chair, the committee has representation from two executives, three staff members, and two faculty members.

### **Responsibilities:**

Committee members will be expected to (1) become familiar with NWCCU's standards, including added standards for Distance Education delivery required by the Department of Education; (2) immediately assist with Snow College's Mid-Cycle Report and site visit preparations; (3) provide internal leadership for institutional improvement leading up to the Year Six PRFR report and Year Seven Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness; (4) regularly report and provide feedback to the President, Cabinet, Board of Trustees, and college community on Snow College's strategic plan and mission fulfillment progress. The committee is expected to meet monthly (in person) with additional meetings held in person or virtually as needed.

### **Timeline:**

- May 2023:
  - Committee designed and nominated.
  - Initial meeting convened for introductions and training on standards.
  - Outline and assignments of Mid-Cycle Report draft
- June 2023
  - Review and edit Mid-Cycle Report draft.
- July 2023
  - Finalize Mid-Cycle Report
  - Report to Board of Trustees on Report and mission fulfillment progress
- August 2023
  - Provide Mid-Cycle and mission progress information to constituents.
  - Prepare for the October site visit.
- September 2023
  - Finish preparations for the October site visit
  - Communicate site visit schedule to constituents.
- October 2023
  - Mid-Cycle site visit
  - Review the evaluator report and make plans for improvement.
- November 2023
  - Attend NWCCU Annual Conference (if possible)
  - Identify actions/initiatives or other needed areas of improvement and evidence gathering associated with Standards 1 and 2
- December 2023
  - Provide an updated report to the Board of Trustees (if not at this meeting, then the January meeting).