Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (Year 7)

Peer-Evaluation Report

University of Puget Sound

Tacoma, Washington

April 23-25, 2025

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A confidential report of findings prepared for the

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

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I.   Introduction

The University of Puget Sound (Puget Sound) is an independent, residential, predominantly undergraduate liberal arts college founded in 1888 and located in Tacoma, Washington. With a student population generally averaging 1900, Puget Sound also offers graduate degrees in Public Health, Master of Education in Counseling, Master of Arts in Teaching, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy. Governed by a wholly independent Board of Trustees, Puget Sound honors its Methodist founders on the basis of shared values of, access, academic freedom, social justice stewardship, and global engagement.

A four-person peer evaluation team (Team) conducted a Year Seven Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (EIE) visit to the University from April 23-25, 2025, in response to the *Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report* submitted to NWCCU on February 26, 2025. The comprehensive visit covered Standard One, and elements from Standard Two identified as needing follow-ups from Mid-Cycle Peer Evaluation Report. There were no outstanding recommendations to address.

Institutional Context: The University was a participant in an NWCCU institutional Demonstration Project and has not gone through a comprehensive review since 2009. The current President and CEO, Dr. Isiaah Crawford, arrived in 2016 at an institution with a stable enrollment of approximately 2600 students. Through a highly collaborative process, the University created a ten-year strategic plan entitled "Leadership for a Changing World," that was approved by the Board of Trustees in 2018. With the onset of Covid, the University's enrollment and incoming revenue declined sharply over the period 2020-2022, whereupon the President commissioned a "Comprehensive Academic, Administrative, and Auxiliary Program Review" as a top-to-bottom review of university functions to identify areas where change was needed, and cost reductions could be made.

Concurrent with the Program Review, the University completed a Strategic Enrollment Plan that was adopted by the Board of Trustees in October 2021 and reset enrollment goals to 2,300. At the conclusion of the Program Review, the President presented an evolved set of recommendations to the Board as "A Sound Future: Response, Recovery, and Renewal", an operational plan. The Team found that under the steady guidance of the President and the Board of Trustees, Puget Sound has moved forward on implementation of the strategies and initiatives created in A Sound Future to bolster student success and to reach its long-term enrollment goals. As experienced by the Team, the culture at Puget Sound is one of collaboration, openness, positivity, and steady determination to make the needed changes to ensure a bright institutional future.

II.   Assessment of Self-Evaluation and Support Materials

The University's Self-Evaluation and Support Materials were made available to the Team in a timely manner on February 26, 2025. Reviewing the original submission of the Puget Sound Support Materials as one long, continuous document, the Team requested that

they be separated and saved in separate folders for each sub-standard within Standard 1. That request was accomplished by the institution within one working day, a feat for which the Team was grateful.

The Team reviewed their assigned sections of the Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report and provided the team chair with a list of additional documentation requests, broken down by sub-standard. That 8-page list of additional requested information and documentation was transmitted to Puget Sound on April 2, 2025, with the request that the Team be provided with requested additional information and documentation by no later April 16, 2025, when the additional documentation and requests were posted to the Box account, in many cases supported by further explanatory narrative from the University.

III. Visit Summary

The Team conducted an in-depth analysis of the EIE report, reviewing all the supporting evidence provided. Each team member was assigned several elements of NWCCU Standard 1, with one team member reviewing the two outstanding PRFR findings from the midcycle visit. Team members prepared a robust analysis and follow-up questions of all elements reviewed, using the NWCCU evaluation rubrics as appropriate to help calibrate the current level of compliance. In addition, team members provided eight pages of additional documentation needed before the visit, to which the University responded in a timely manner.

Three pre-visit meetings were held via Zoom to organize the team effort by assignment of individual team members to elements within Standard 1 and the two PRFR findings from Standard 2, and to conduct an overall discussion of questions brought up by team members, needs for further documentation, and agreement on approach. A fourth team meeting took place the evening immediately before the visit to review preliminary team findings on each measure, to further refine questions on areas of concern for follow-up during the visit, and to identify preliminary compliments, commendations, and recommendations. Since team members brought with them extensive backgrounds in institutional effectiveness and evaluation, the analysis was deep and penetrating with a focus not only on compliance but on formative suggestions for the University.

The site visit included two full days of appointments with individuals who provided further information about each of the areas reviewed, starting with the President, Board of Trustees, administrators, and key committees. As required by NWCCU, open forums were conducted separately with faculty, staff, and students. The staff forum was particularly well attended, with 28 participants. During the visit, the Team also had access to public comments received prior to the site visit.

IV. Topics Addressed as an Addendum to the Self-Evaluation Report

Two addenda were provided with the self-study. Addendum A describes Puget Sound's progress on PRFR findings related to Standards 2.G.4 and 2.G.5. Addendum B describes distance education practices at the University. A summary of the progress described in Addendum A is described below under Standard 2.G.4 and 2.G.5. A summary of distance education efforts is included below under Standard 2.G.7.

V. **Standard 1: Student Success and Institutional Mission and Effectiveness**
   a. Standard 1.A: Institutional Mission
      i. 1.A.1

1.A.1 The institution's mission statement defines its broad educational purposes and its commitment to student learning and achievement.

The institution's mission statement promotes a community of lifelong learners with a value for teaching and student engagement. In 2018, the University enacted a ten-year plan entitled "Leadership for a Changing World" designed to inform key stakeholders in the priorities of the institution. Following a comprehensive program review coming out of the pandemic, the university adopted a set of strategies entitled "A Sound Future: Response, Recovery, and Renewal" as a way to return to financial equilibrium and further operationalize the strategic plan. Divisional and departmental plans all reference mission goals in clear and meaningful ways.

   b. Standard 1.B: Improving Institutional Effectiveness
      i. 1.B.1

1.B.1 The institution demonstrates a continuous process to assess institutional effectiveness, including student learning and achievement and support services. The institution uses an ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning process to inform and refine its effectiveness, assign resources, and improve student learning and achievement.

The Team reviewed evidence provided by the University that demonstrates a clear framework that ties mission priorities to strategic goals at the institutional level as well as informing department level goal setting. It is obvious that there has been a lot of effort in constructing and maintaining the model of planning. To quote a Puget Sound leader, Puget Sound is "planful." Evidence provided by the University indicates that there is a clear understanding of the goals, initiatives necessary to accomplish goals, who is accountable for the goal, how these goals are measured, and the status of progress toward the goals. There are numerous examples of paying attention to student achievement and success while evaluating effectiveness and assigning resources. Examples of this orientation to student success and institutional efficiency can be found in the 2023-24 Divisional Goals-Strategic Plan Update, the Budget Task Force, the campus development plan, the IT response plan to online learning, and the DEI-B planning documents. However, based on the evidence provided in the EIE and during the site visit, Puget Sound struggles to close the loop with planning. While the plans are dense and detailed, it is not clear where planning at the unit level informs the campus as a whole.

Concern: While there is evidence of an emerging systematic process, it does not fully integrate student learning into the process. There is limited evidence of systematic consideration or use of results for ongoing improvements.

      ii. 1.B.2

1.B.2 The institution sets and articulates 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.

The University of Puget Sound has a meaningful mission statement. The University has established five goals reflecting an informed definition of mission fulfillment at Puget Sound. As part of its existing framework for mission fulfillment and institutional effectiveness, the University maintains a well- established cohort of regional and national peer institutions for purposes of ongoing comparison.

Compliment: Puget Sound is using regional and national peer groups to effectively target programming and make changes to support student achievement and success. Some examples provided in the self-study and articulated at the visit include the PS2 program to support scholar athletes and the efforts to improve retention and graduation rates in comparison to peers.

iii. 1.B.3

1.B.3 The institution provides evidence that its planning process is inclusive and offers opportunities for comment by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.

The University has an integrated strategic planning process that is designed to include many stakeholders. The instinct for inclusive feedback is demonstrated by the representational membership on presidential initiatives, the Budget Task Force, Campus Development Plan, and DEI-B leadership, among other instances.

Compliment: The Team noted examples of inclusiveness within the institutional decision-making framework that allowed for input from faculty and students regarding the allocation of resources. The Budget Task Force in particular operates with representation from faculty, staff, and students in recommending where and how to invest budget surplus.

iv. 1.B.4

1.B.4 The institution monitors its internal and external environments to identify current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations. Through its governance system it considers such findings to assess its strategic position, define its future direction, and review and revise, as necessary, its mission, planning, intended outcomes of its programs and services, and indicators of achievement of its goals.

The Team was provided with several different examples by various offices and individuals who monitor current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations of internal and external environments. Strong evidence was provided in the slides included in the Budget Task Force Open Session as well as the summary report from the collaboration with Gray Decision Intelligence. The Team was encouraged to hear that Puget Sound recognizes a desire to improve its relationship with local external stakeholders and the surrounding community.

Compliment: The Team appreciated the level of detail and informative quality of the

presentations by the Budget Task Force Open Sessions and the 2024 Chairs Meeting Program Review.

c. Standard 1.C: Student Learning
  i. 1.C.1
    1.C.1 The institution offers programs with appropriate content and rigor that are consistent with its mission, culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes that lead to collegiate-level degrees, certificates, or credentials and include designators consistent with program content in recognized fields of study.

    The programs at the University of Puget Sound reflect a strong alignment with the mission and with appropriate content and rigor for their respective levels in recognized fields of study. Furthermore, these program offerings continue to evolve to meet emerging disciplinary trends as evident by the highly developed system of curricular review, the new programs developed in the past seven years under the guidance of highly qualified faculty, and the continued participation in programmatic accreditation when available. Examples included as part of the self-study were the proposals for the Master's program in Public Health, proposals for interdisciplinary minors in Biophysics and in Crime, Law, and Justice Studies, and programmatic accreditation reports for Music, Chemistry, and Public Health.

    Compliment: Of particular note is the Freedom Education Project Puget Sound program. Through successfully providing education opportunities to students who are incarcerated, the FEPPS program puts into action the university's mission to prepare graduates "to meet the highest tests of democratic citizenship" and "liberate each person's fullest intellectual and human potential to assist in the unfolding of creative and useful lives." The program's curricular structure and requirements fit with the on-campus approach to the breadth of the Liberal Arts, and it has rightfully earned the University praise from both external audiences and the students themselves. The fact that there has already been a student who has completed a degree at Puget Sound after their involvement in the program is a testament to the enthusiasm for the program on the part of faculty and students.

  ii. 1.C.2
    1.C.2 The institution awards credit, degrees, certificates, or credentials for programs that are based upon student learning and learning outcomes that offer an appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing, and synthesis of learning.

    Programs at the University of Puget Sound offer an appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing, and synthesis of learning based on the curricular examples and student learning outcomes included in the self-study. There does not appear to be a defined curricular differentiation between the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Music, and Bachelor of Science degree beyond specific major requirements based on the self-study and included materials, but the visit confirmed that such curricular differentiation is ensured through advising. Credit is awarded based on a recognizable course structure and the equivalence calculation between a Puget Sound unit and either semester or quarter credit hours is a

notable effort to align the institution's offerings with its peer institutions regardless of external calendar systems.

iii. 1.C.3

1.C.3 The institution identifies and publishes expected program and degree learning outcomes for all degrees, certificates, and credentials. Information on expected student learning outcomes for all courses is provided to enrolled students.

The University of Puget Sound identifies and publishes the expected program and degree learning outcomes for its degrees, certificates, and credentials. However, in some instances programmatic student learning outcomes are not consistently identified across the different programs within the catalog. For example, the learning outcomes of African American Studies, Economics, and Greek are presented as narratives while Biology and English feature a bulleted list. As Puget Sound continues to implement curriculum management software, the Team encourages them to revisit their programmatic learning outcomes to provide more consistency and measurability. At the course level, enrolled students have access to the course learning outcomes via course syllabi, but consistency in the catalog would benefit both enrolled and prospective students as they decide between different programs, and it would also provide more coherence and consistent messaging for the public.

iv. 1.C.4

1.C.4 The institution's admission and completion or graduation requirements are clearly defined, widely published, and easily accessible to students and the public.

The Puget Sound website is straightforward when it comes to admission requirements. The admissions pages of the website offer clear timelines, checklists, and guides for how to apply as a First-Year Student, Transfer Student or Graduate Student and helpfully provide links to financial aid opportunities and special programs offered at the university. The specific pages dedicated to students who are applying for international study also appear to be well-designed with an immediate link to the Language Partner Program before even getting into the checklists and other guides. Similarly, the graduation requirements are equally available on the public website's Curriculum & Requirements page and departmental or program web pages as well as in the catalog. For enrolled students, the curriculum guides serve as an excellent student-facing resource to help communicate graduation requirements and it appears as though the portal allows real-time degree-planning and what-if scenarios to current students.

v. 1.C.5

1.C.5 The institution engages in an effective system of assessment to evaluate the quality of learning in its programs. The institution recognizes the central role of

faculty to establish curricula, assess student learning, and improve instructional programs.

The University of Puget Sound has a highly developed and well-organized system of curricular review to evaluate the quality of learning in its programs. The seven-year cycles of review allow faculty to regularly reflect on trends in their disciplines, sequencing of student learning, and the actual structure of their program. Of particular note is the involvement of faculty comprising the Curriculum Committee and their attention to helping their colleagues improve. The Curriculum Committee reports included in the self-study for History (2021) and English (2023) show a laudable investment of time and energy on the part of the committee members to review the programs.

While the self-study directs readers to a <u>Curriculum Assessment page</u> that mentions "departments and programs should engage in an annual assessment of their expected learning outcomes," the exhibits included from the Curriculum Committee all focus on seven-year curricular reviews. Furthermore, the reviews themselves do not offer any sort of year-over-year comparison of student learning outcomes assessment that would suggest that the annual process is fully implemented in any of the departments. The prompts of the review include a consideration of the success of the program and the learning outcomes and what evidence informs their responses, but the programs tend to answer those prompts by pointing to student enrollment numbers. The review itself does not actually appear to ask programs about the extent to which students are learning and achieving the stated learning outcomes in line with what is suggested on the Curriculum Assessment page.

Although prior to the period of this self-study, the inclusion of assessment examples relating to the Writing Across the Curriculum program helps illustrate the established history of systematic program assessment at Puget Sound. During the campus visit, the Team learned that another assessment of Writing Across the Curriculum is scheduled for summer of 2025. Based on the previous examples provided for this self-study, this summer assessment effort will likely yield useful data on the institutional learning outcome on communicating clearly and effectively in writing. As an ongoing process with a longstanding history, this effort could also serve as a model for a cyclical analysis of student learning for other institutional outcomes.

In addition to Writing Across the Curriculum, other existing efforts that may serve as productive examples of student learning when approaching the mid-cycle reporting may include Experiential Learning, the Core Curriculum, and Student Affairs.

Concern: There is no systematic approach for faculty to assess the quality of student learning in the individual programs.

vi. 1.C.6
1.C.6 Consistent with its mission, the institution establishes and assesses, across all associate and bachelor level programs or within a General Education curriculum,

institutional learning outcomes and/or core competencies. Examples of such learning outcomes and competencies include, but are not limited to, effective communication skills, global awareness, cultural sensitivity, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and logical thinking, problem solving, and/or information literacy.

As the self-study notes, Puget Sound "cannot provide direct measures of learning assessment at the institutional level." Echoing the concern expressed by the Mid-Cycle reviewers in 2021, the assessment examples cited in this self-study continue to be "dependent on indirect assessment methodology" and while there is clear emphasis on continually improving offerings through a variety of approaches, they are not yet "anchored by direct assessment." It is encouraging to see that discussions are already underway in this regard at the program and departmental level and the outcomes matrix included as an exhibit is certainly an ambitious start to a solid system of assessment. The key over the next few years will be to actually devise and implement a system whereby faculty can assess specific instances of student learning in a meaningful way that will help inform changes and improvements to both the general education courses and overall structure.

While the newly revitalized Core Curriculum offers students an exciting set of general education requirements, Puget Sound needs to spend further time mapping its institutional outcomes to the new core components and considering how faculty can effectively assess those outcomes. Even among the pre-2019 assessment samples included, there appears to be a heavy emphasis on student self-evaluation through surveys rather than any direct measures of student learning by faculty themselves.

The review of the KNOW graduation requirement and associated 2024 report offers a helpful glimpse as to the general education assessment practice during the time period under consideration, but here again it relies heavily on student self-evaluation and less on direct measures of student learning by faculty.

 That being said, the self-study does indeed provide examples of how assessment of written communication and information literacy specifically is conducted at the program level through the curricular reviews that they have included as examples for other standards.

Compliment: The Logger Experiential Commitment and the implementation of an experiential learning requirement for graduation in the 2022-23 academic year is a marvelous example of the mission focus on "the integration of learning." The examples included in the self-study included an impressive range of student internship, research, study abroad, and community-based learning experiences that helped showcase incredible student achievement over the past six years. Puget Sound is right to be proud of this commitment and incorporating it into the structure of the Core Curriculum is an excellent decision. The next step for this requirement will be to develop a way to consistently measure student experiential learning across these many opportunities.

Concern: There is no systematic approach to assessing institutional learning outcomes. There appear to be multiple avenues using existing structures to implement this through a focus on Core Curriculum outcomes or mapping to programmatic outcomes (or a combination of the two) and the Team does not prescribe one approach over another but encourages the university to find what best aligns with its mission.

vii. 1.C.7

1.C.7 The institution uses the results of its assessment efforts to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices to continuously improve student learning outcomes.

Academic and learning support programs in both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs operate under a well-developed system of annual review and assessment. Based on the examples included with the self-study, there is a clear emphasis on continuous improvement as programs review their own operations and departmental goals each year to provide better support to students and other campus partners. As noted in the self-study, the inclusion of Curriculum Committee members, as well as the IR Director on the Academic Leadership Team helps ensure that people familiar with curricular review are appropriately placed to inform academic and learning-support planning.

Compliment: The Puget Sound Performance Success program is a terrific example of an academic and co-curricular support program specifically tailored to a group of Puget Sound students. While none of the data provided in the self-study indicated that student athlete outcomes are significantly different than those of non-athletes, recognizing the additional demands of athletic participation and helping students navigate curricular challenges to achieve success is commendable.

Concern: While it is clear that there is annual assessment being done at an institutional level, if individual departments are not providing assessment of student learning to the Curriculum Committee each year, then learning-support practices cannot be adjusted according to assessment of learning outcomes for specific disciplines that are in-between curricular reviews.

viii. 1.C.8

1.C.8 Transfer credit and credit for prior learning is accepted according to clearly defined, widely published, and easily accessible policies that provide adequate safeguards to ensure academic quality. In accepting transfer credit, the receiving institution ensures that such credit accepted is appropriate for its programs and comparable in nature, content, academic rigor, and quality.

The University of Puget Sound maintains transparent, accessible, and rigorously applied transfer credit policies. The policies are documented in the university Bulletin and on the website, including detailed descriptions of evaluation procedures, procedures for evaluating and awarding credit for prior learning, and transfer rights and responsibilities. Oversight by the Academic Standards Committee ensures academic rigor and comparability in transferred coursework. Credit is granted when it aligns with the

academic standards of the University's curriculum, and proactive efforts support access and equity. These practices demonstrate adequate safeguards and a well-structured system for upholding academic quality in transfer evaluations. The policies and review processes in place reflect a commitment to maintaining academic standards and transparency, including the unit equivalence calculation noted in 1.C.2. Notably, Puget Sound has taken deliberate steps to streamline the transfer process for students entering the institution from community colleges. Overall, the institution demonstrates alignment between its mission, curriculum, and transfer credit policies, with appropriate safeguards to ensure academic integrity across programs.

ix. 1.C.9

1.C.9 The institution's graduate programs are consistent with its mission, are in keeping with the expectations of its respective disciplines and professions, and are described through nomenclature that is appropriate to the levels of graduate and professional degrees offered. The graduate programs differ from undergraduate programs by requiring, among other things, greater: depth of study; demands on student intellectual or creative capacities; knowledge of the literature of the field; and ongoing student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression, and/or relevant professional practice.

The University's graduate programs align with the institution's mission by emphasizing interdisciplinary learning, professional engagement, and academic rigor. Evidence provided in response to the Team's request includes program review documentation, annual reports, and self-studies submitted for accreditation reviews. Differences between graduate and undergraduate programs are evident through advanced coursework, experiential learning elements, and higher expectations for research and creative output. Graduate program mission statements align with scholarly expectations and professional depth. Programs are also reviewed on a regular cycle, and those assessments are used to support ongoing improvement. The University's graduate programs hold external accreditation that require systematic program assessment. The MPH program in particular may provide informative practices as potential models for undergraduate program assessment.

d. Standard 1.D: Student Achievement
   i. 1.D.1

1.D.1 Consistent with its mission, the institution recruits and admits students with the potential to benefit from its educational programs. It orients students toy ensure they understand the requirements related to their programs of study and receive timely, useful, and accurate information and advice about relevant academic requirements, including graduation and transfer policies.

Admissions and orientation processes at Puget Sound are guided by institutional policies that align with its mission. Undergraduate admissions are managed centrally, with requirements and processes clearly outlined on the university's website and in university publications. For graduate and professional programs, admissions are co-managed by the

Office of Admission and the graduate programs. Requirements vary appropriately by program, reflecting disciplinary expectations and professional standards. Institutional admissions procedures focus on ensuring academic preparedness and successful integration into the campus community.

According to the EIE report and supporting documents, Puget Sound offers a comprehensive orientation program that includes academic advising, student success coaching, peer advising, and access to resource materials. Faculty advising is integrated into the orientation process and advising tools and course registration support are provided in a timely manner. Orientation materials are tailored by academic level and include checklists, core curriculum planning sheets, and health professions advising materials.

While advising and orientation resources are clearly in place, the Team was unable to determine whether these supports are being equitably accessed and experienced across student populations. The University is encouraged to assess the implementation and equity of its advising and orientation programs to ensure all students are fully aware of and able to benefit from available academic and student support services.

ii. 1.D.2
1.D.2 Consistent with its mission and in the context of and in comparison with regional and national peer institutions, the institution establishes and shares widely a set of indicators for student achievement including, but not limited to, persistence, completion, retention, and postgraduation success. Such indicators of student achievement should be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic status, first generation college student, and any other institutionally meaningful categories that may help promote student achievement and close barriers to academic excellence and success (equity gaps).

Puget Sound has developed a set of student achievement indicators that include first-year retention rates, graduation rates, and post-graduation outcomes. These indicators are monitored and updated regularly and are disseminated by internal dashboards and Sound Reports. In addition, achievement data are disaggregated by race and ethnicity, first-generation status, and gender, and are used to inform institutional initiatives such as the Student Success Plan (SSP), Strategic Enrollment Plan, and ongoing work by the Student Success Team. The institution has demonstrated an awareness of equity gaps, including grade disparities by sociodemographic characteristics, and has initiated efforts to monitor and address them. However, while disaggregation by some categories is available, socioeconomic status (SES) and Pell eligibility are not consistently tracked due to data limitations. Moreover, questions from the evaluation team regarding analytic methods, such as whether support service utilization or course modality are factored into analyses of achievement disparities, were not addressed in detail. It is unclear whether advanced analyses are used to better understand factors that contribute to achievement gaps.

The development of a data warehouse and expanded analytic capacity are underway, and the University has benchmarked indicators of student achievement against selected peer institutions. Clear examples of how these metrics are being used to guide resource allocation or redesign academic interventions are emerging. The University is encouraged to continuously review its capacity to analyze and interpret student success data across multiple dimensions to better inform equity-focused decision-making and continuous improvement efforts.

iii. 1.D.3

1.D.3 The institution's disaggregated indicators of student achievement should be widely published and available on the institution's website. Such disaggregated indicators should be aligned with meaningful, institutionally identified indicators benchmarked against indicators for peer institutions at the regional and national levels and be used for continuous improvement to inform planning, decision making, and allocation of resources.

Puget Sound has taken steps to increase transparency in student achievement data by developing internal dashboards and Sound Reports that disaggregate data by race/ethnicity, gender, first generation status, and first time in college (FTIC). The Office of Institutional Research website includes access to the Common Data Set and IPEDS Data Feedback Reports, which present disaggregated enrollment and graduation data. These data are shared with internal stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and leadership teams, and are used to inform strategic planning and equity-focused initiatives. Although the institution noted the use of internal surveys to inform programmatic changes and provided data benchmarked against peer institutions. Additionally, for internal surveys, it appears that multivariate analyses (e.g., examining outcomes across intersecting identity groups (e.g., Pell recipients by both gender and race) are not currently available.

Multivariate analyses for internal planning could strengthen the institution's ability to assess and address disparities in student outcomes. As analytic capacity grows, the institution may consider sharing selected findings with external audiences to increase transparency and equity-focused accountability.

iv. 1.D.4

1.D.4 The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing indicators of student achievement are transparent and are used to inform and implement strategies and allocate resources to mitigate perceived gaps in achievement and equity.

The institution has established several mechanisms to align student achievement data with decision-making and resource allocation, including the Budget Task Force (BTF), Gray Decision Intelligence (DI) analyses, and presidential budget recommendations. It appears that resource allocation decisions are to some extent informed by data but are not always accompanied by detailed documentation or meeting minutes linking specific data findings

to budgetary outcomes. As mentioned in response to Standard 1.B.1, the institution would benefit from more explicit documentation of data-informed decision-making processes, in this case with regard to indicators of student achievement.

Concern: Indicators of student achievement are not systematically connected to strategies and resource allocations.

VI. Standard 2: Governance, Resources, and Capacity

The following elements from Standard 2 were specifically reviewed during the visit as either PRFR findings, items included in the self-evaluation report addenda, or as areas of interest resulting from meetings during the visit.

e. Standard 2.A: Governance
   i. 2.A.4
   2.A.4 The institution's decision-making structures and processes, which are documented and publicly available, must include provisions for the consideration of the views of faculty, staff, administrators, and students on matters in which each has a direct and reasonable interest.

   Both the self-study and the review visit confirmed a culture of collaboration around decision-making structures and processes. In meeting with board members, faculty, staff, and students, the review team found stakeholder satisfaction with how the University of Puget Sound is being administered and with their involvement in its operations.

f. Standard 2.E: Financial Resources
   i. *2.E.2*
   2.E.2 Financial planning includes meaningful opportunities for participation by stakeholders and ensures appropriate available funds, realistic development of financial resources, and comprehensive risk management to ensure short term financial health and long-term financial stability and sustainability.

   The self-study and review visit discussions reflected that the Board of Trustees has approved multi-year draws from the university's quasi-endowment through FY 2027 to support operations while the university works to achieve financial equilibrium. Continued attention to the draw-down is important, especially if enrollment does not rebound as projected by 2027-28.

g. Standard 2.G: Student Support Resources
   i. 2.G.4
   2.G.4 The institution provides an effective and accountable program of financial aid consistent with its mission, student needs, and institutional resources. Information

regarding the categories of financial assistance (such as scholarships, grants, and loans) is published and made available to prospective and enrolled students.

ii. 2.G.5

2.G.5 Students receiving financial assistance are informed of any repayment obligations. The institution regularly monitors its student loan programs and publicizes the institution's loan default rate on its website.

The University has addressed the previously lacking 2.G.4 and 2.G.5 PRFR findings. There is information regarding the repayment obligations and there are sufficient policies/procedures to monitor student lending. There are clear and accessible financial aid policies/procedure about financial assistance options and the student loan default rate is searchable and accessible on the website.

iii. 2.G.7

2.G.7 The institution maintains an effective identity verification process for students, including those enrolled in distance education courses and programs, to establish that the student enrolled in such a course or program is the same person whose achievements are evaluated and credentialed. The institution ensures that the identity verification process for distance education students protects student privacy and that students are informed, in writing at the time of enrollment, of current and projected charges associated with the identity verification process.

While the University of Puget Sound does not offer any distance education programs, the institution is authorized to offer distance education. Addendum B, provided with the self-study, describes practices for regular and substantive interaction and verifying student identity. The Team found no concerns in the materials provided or during the visit related to distance education.

h. Standard 2.H: Library and Information Resources
   i. 2.H.1

   2.H.1 Consistent with its mission, the institution employs qualified personnel and provides access to library and information resources with a level of currency, depth, and breadth sufficient to support and sustain the institution's mission, programs, and services.

   The Team found Library practices to be supportive of a culture of assessment and evaluation. Indirect assessment methods in use include the annual administration of the Measuring Information Service Outcomes (MISO) Survey which has been used to make changes in use of resources, seating, and other aspects of the Library. The Threshold Achievement Test (TATIL) is a direct measure of student learning designed to measure information literacy education outcomes, planned for implementation and benchmarking with other Oberlin Group libraries. The Library uses IPEDS and ACRL data to benchmark its levels of service and resources with other institutions nationally.

VII. Summary

The peer evaluation team appreciates the outstanding hospitality, openness, collegiality, and engagement in the accreditation process found at Puget Sound. The University shows a clear commitment to students and improving the student experience with a robust and inclusive planning process. While the Team saw an emerging assessment process, the campus community recognizes systematic assessment of student learning and measuring the results of strategic initiatives as clear areas for further growth and development.

VIII. Commendations and Recommendations
Commendations

ii. Commendation 1:
The peer evaluation team commends the University of Puget Sound for its culture of highly collaborative decision-making structures and processes. This inclusive planning environment was evident in meetings with students, faculty, staff, administration, and members of the Board of Trustees.

iii. Commendation 2:
The peer evaluation team commends the University of Puget Sound for implementing experiential learning as a degree requirement. The Logger Experiential Commitment ensures that all undergraduate students have at least one high-impact practice as part of their Puget Sound journey.

iv. Commendation 3:
The peer evaluation team commends the University of Puget Sound for the Freedom Education Project Puget Sound. This effort to provide an opportunity for incarcerated students to earn a degree through the University of Puget Sound is an outstanding application of the university's mission.

Recommendations

v. Recommendation 1:

The peer evaluation team recommends that the University of Puget Sound establish a systematic process for assessing institutional effectiveness that includes meaningful indicators of student learning and achievement to inform strategies for improvement and resource allocation. (Standard(s) 1.B.1; 1.D.4)

vi. Recommendation 2:
The peer evaluation team recommends that the University of Puget Sound develop and implement a system to directly measure program learning outcomes and use those assessment results to improve programs and learning-support practices. (Standard(s) 1.C.5; 1.C.7)

vii. Recommendation 3:

The peer evaluation team recommends that the University of Puget Sound systematize their approach to assessing institutional learning outcomes in a manner that aligns with their curriculum and degree requirements. (Standard 1.C.6)