



February 27, 2023

Dr. Julie White
Chancellor and CEO
Pierce College
1601 39th Avenue S.E.
Puyallup, WA 98374-2222

Dear Chancellor White:

Attached please find the Fall 2022 Policies, Regulations, and Financial Review (PRFR) Evaluation Committee's review of Pierce College. The attached review documents areas where the institution was found to be in compliance with the NWCCU Standards for Accreditation and where additional opportunities for improvement exist. Please note that the Year Seven Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness (EIE) Evaluation Team will receive a copy of this report, as will the NWCCU Board of Commissioners at your EIE evaluation by the Commission in roughly one year's time.

NWCCU asks that you address any areas of needed improvement that the PRFR Evaluation Committee has noted as findings in this report in your EIE self-evaluation. Please feel free to reach out to your NWCCU Staff Liaison if you have further questions.

Findings: None

Future Evaluations

- Year 7 - Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness Fall 2023

Thank you for your commitment to the process of peer evaluation and continuous quality improvement. If you have questions about any of the information in this letter, please contact your staff liaison, Dr. Ed Harri, at eharri@nwccu.org.

Sincerely,

Ron Larsen
Senior Vice President

cc: Dr. Allison Sieving, Dean of Business and Social Sciences



Peer Evaluation for: Pierce College

Standard 2: Governance, Resources, and Capacity

The institution articulates its commitment to a structure of governance that is inclusive in its planning and decision-making. Through its planning, operational activities, and allocation of resources, the institution demonstrates a commitment to student learning and achievement in an environment respectful of meaningful discourse.

Standard 2.A.1

The institution demonstrates an effective governance structure, with a board(s) or other governing body(ies) composed predominantly of members with no contractual, employment relationship, or personal financial interest with the institution. Such members shall also possess clearly defined authority, roles, and responsibilities. Institutions that are part of a complex system with multiple boards, a centralized board, or related entities shall have, with respect to such boards, written and clearly defined contractual authority, roles, and responsibilities for all entities. In addition, authority and responsibility between the system and the institution is clearly delineated in a written contract, described on its website and in its public documents, and provides the NWCCU accredited institution with sufficient autonomy to fulfill its mission.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Institutional governance policies and procedures ✓
- System governance policies and procedures (if applicable) ✓
- Multiple board governing policies and procedures (if applicable) ✗
- Board's calendar for reviewing institutional and board policies and procedures ✓
- Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation referencing governance structure ✓

Rationale: Pierce College is rigorously regulated by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. There was ample evidence to demonstrate that the Pierce College Board of Trustees is also highly engaged with its legislative role with the College. The Board of Trustees has delegated the needed administrative authority to the Executive Team so that it can carry out the day-to-day operations of the College.

Standard 2.A.2

The institution has an effective system of leadership, staffed by qualified administrators, with appropriate levels of authority, responsibility, and accountability who are charged with planning, organizing, and managing the institution and assessing its achievements and effectiveness.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Leadership organizational chart ✓
- Curriculum vitae of executive leadership ✓

Rationale: Pierce College has experienced some turnover in its Executive Team; however, the positions are actively being filled as they occur to ensure smooth ongoing operations of the College. All required supporting documentation was provided and provides evidence of compliance with this standard.

Standard 2.A.3

The institution employs an appropriately qualified chief executive officer with full-time responsibility to the institution. The chief executive may serve as an ex officio member of the governing board(s) but may not serve as its chair.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Curriculum vitae of President/CEO ✓

Rationale: The Chancellor of Pierce College is appropriately qualified for this significant leadership position. All supporting documentation was provided.

Standard 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.



Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Institutional governance policies and procedures (see 2.A.1) ✓

Rationale: Pierce College has several layers of leadership, all of which ensure inclusive input into the creation of policy and administration of the College.

Standard 2.B.1

Within the context of its mission and values, the institution adheres to the principles of academic freedom and independence that protect its constituencies from inappropriate internal and external influences, pressures, and harassment.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Academic freedom policies and procedures ✓

Rationale: Pierce College has clearly stated Academic Freedom policies that are codified in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) state statute, Board Policy, and in the labor-management agreement established between the Pierce College Federation of Teachers and the Pierce College District.

Standard 2.B.2

Within the context of its mission and values, the institution defines and actively promotes an environment that supports independent thought in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. It affirms the freedom of faculty, staff, administrators, and students to share their scholarship and reasoned conclusions with others. While the institution and individuals within the institution may hold to a particular personal, social, or religious philosophy, its constituencies are intellectually free to test and examine all knowledge and theories, thought, reason, and perspectives of truth. Individuals within the institution allow others the freedom to do the same.

Team Verification: Compliant

Rationale: Pierce College has established a Civility Policy, Student Rights and Responsibilities/Student Code of Conduct, and Racial Affinity Groups to promote collegiality among its stakeholders as they deal with disparate viewpoints.

Standard 2.C.1

The institution's transfer-of-credit policy maintains the integrity of its programs and facilitates the efficient mobility of students desirous of the completion of their educational credits, credentials, or degrees in furtherance of their academic goals.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Transfer of credit policies procedures ✓

Rationale: Pierce College provided ample evidence that it has clearly established and published transfer policies and practices.

Standard 2.C.2

The institution's policies and procedures related to student rights and responsibilities should include, but not be limited to, provisions related to academic honesty, conduct, appeals, grievances, and accommodations for persons with disabilities.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

Documentation of student's rights and responsibilities policies and procedures, which include:

- Academic honesty ✓
- Appeals, grievances ✓
- Accommodations for persons with disabilities ✓

Rationale: Pierce College demonstrated that it has clearly stated policies and processes for the Student Code of Conduct, Access and Disability Services, Student Complaints, and Remediation of Complaints

Standard 2.C.3

The institution's academic and administrative policies and procedures should include admission and placement policies that guide the enrollment of students in courses and programs through an evaluation of prerequisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to ensure a reasonable probability of student success at a level commensurate with the institution's expectations. Such policies should also include a policy regarding continuation in and termination from its educational programs, including its appeal and re-admission policy.



Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Policies and procedures for recruiting, admitting, and placing students ✓
- Policies/procedures related to continuation and termination from educational programs including appeal process and readmission policies/procedures ✓

Rationale: Pierce College has thorough and clearly explained policies and processes for admissions, student advising, placement, continuation, and termination of programs.

Standard 2.C.4

The institution's policies and procedures regarding the secure retention of student records must include provisions related to confidentiality, release, and the reliable backup and retrievability of such records.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Policies/procedures regarding secure retention of student records, i.e., back-up, confidentiality, release, protection from cybersecurity issues or other emergencies ✓

Rationale: Pierce College follows the Washington State Records Retention Schedules, ensures the safety and security of records, and publishes and follows the strictures enumerated in FERPA.

Standard 2.D.1

The institution represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently through its announcements, statements, and publications. It communicates its academic intentions, programs, and services to students and to the public and demonstrates that its academic programs can be completed in a timely fashion. It regularly reviews its publications to ensure accuracy and integrity in all representations about its mission, programs, and services.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Policies/procedures/ for reviewing published materials (print or websites) that assures institutional integrity ✓

Rationale: Pierce College has policies that address all of the requirements enumerated in this standard.

Standard 2.D.2

The institution advocates, subscribes to, and exemplifies high ethical standards in its management and operations, including in its dealings with the public, NWCCU, and external organizations, including the fair and equitable treatment of students, faculty, administrators, staff, and other stakeholders and constituencies. The institution ensures that complaints and grievances are addressed in a fair, equitable, and timely manner.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Policies/procedures for reviewing internal and external complaints and grievances ✓

Rationale: As a member of the Washington State Community and Technical Colleges system, Pierce College is closely regulated at the State, System, and Board levels to ensure adherence to high ethical and legal standards, all of which are aligned with the standards established by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

Standard 2.D.3

The institution adheres to clearly defined policies that prohibit conflicts of interest on the part of members of the governing board(s), administration, faculty, and staff.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Policies/procedures prohibiting conflict of interests among employees and board members ✓

Rationale: Pierce College has a robust and rigorous set of documents that clearly explain the requirements at the state and local level the requirements for conflicts of interest and other ethical standards that apply to the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and staff.

Standard 2.E.1

The institution utilizes relevant audit processes and regular reporting to demonstrate financial stability, including sufficient cash flow and reserves to achieve and fulfill its mission



Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Policies/procedures that articulate the oversight and management of financial resources ✓
- Latest external financial audit including management letter ✓
- Cash flow balance sheets ✓
- Audited financial statements ✓
- Tuition and fees, educational, and auxiliary revenue for undergraduate and graduate enrollments ✓
- Significant contracts/grants ✓
- Endowment and giving reports ✓
- Investment revenue ✓

Rationale: Pierce College undergoes numerous arduous audits and is demonstrating its compliance with all of the entities that conduct those audits. In the report, it was disclosed of a backlog in audits from the office of the state auditor., while we attribute this to the pandemic, we appreciate Pierce's acknowledgment of the issue.

Standard 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.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Policies / procedures for planning and monitoring of operating and capital budgets, reserves, investments, fundraising, cash management, debt management, transfers and borrowing between funds ✓

Rationale: Pierce College has a well-established process for planning budgets in a manner that is inclusive of stakeholders and ensures the College's solvency both in the present and for the foreseeable future.

Standard 2.E.3

Financial resources are managed transparently in accordance with policies approved by the institution's governing board(s), governance structure(s), and applicable state and federal laws.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Description of internal financial controls ✓
- Board approved financial policies, state financial policies, or system financial policies ✓

Rationale: Pierce College is to be complimented for its exceptional stewardship and management of, and accountability for, its multi-faceted resources and budgets.

Standard 2.F.1

Faculty, staff, and administrators are apprised of their conditions of employment, work assignments, rights and responsibilities, and criteria and procedures for evaluation, retention, promotion, and termination.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Human resource policies / procedures ✓
- Policies/procedures related to teaching, scholarship, service, and artistic creation ✓
- Policies/procedures for apprising employees of working conditions, rights and responsibilities, evaluation, retention, promotion, and termination ✓

Rationale: All required documents were furnished by the institution and the committee has found them to be in compliance with this standard.

Standard 2.F.2

The institution provides faculty, staff, and administrators with appropriate opportunities and support for professional growth and development.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Employee professional development policies/procedures ✓



Rationale: Pierce College provided evidence that it provides faculty, staff, and administrators with appropriate opportunities and support for professional growth and development.

Standard 2.F.3

Consistent with its mission, programs, and services, the institution employs faculty, staff, and administrators sufficient in role, number, and qualifications to achieve its organizational responsibilities, educational objectives, establish and oversee academic policies, and ensure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Documentation about engagement and responsibilities specified for faculty and staff, as appropriate ✓
- Personnel hiring policy/procedures ✓
- Academic organizational chart ✓
- Administrator/staff /faculty evaluation policies/procedures ✓

Rationale: Pierce College has experienced a reduction in force because of the impacts of COVID. However, it still has a robust cadre of faculty, staff, and administrators to effectively carry out its essential functions.

Standard 2.F.4

Faculty, staff, and administrators are evaluated regularly and systematically in alignment with institutional mission and goals, educational objectives, and policies and procedures. Evaluations are based on written criteria that are published, easily accessible, and clearly communicated. Evaluations are applied equitably, fairly, and consistently in relation to responsibilities and duties. Personnel are assessed for effectiveness and are provided feedback and encouragement for improvement.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Administrator/staff/faculty evaluation policies/procedures ✓

Rationale: Pierce College provided adequate documentation regarding employee evaluations.

Standard 2.G.1

Consistent with the nature of its educational programs and methods of delivery, and with a particular focus on equity and closure of equity gaps in achievement, the institution creates and maintains effective learning environments with appropriate programs and services to support student learning and success.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Listing of programs and services supporting student learning needs ✓

Rationale: Pierce College is to be complimented for its development of a visionary and highly diverse set of innovative programs to provide a broad spectrum of academic support to students.

Standard 2.G.2

The institution publishes in a catalog, or provides in a manner available to students and other stakeholders, current and accurate information that includes: institutional mission; admission requirements and procedures; grading policy; information on academic programs and courses, including degree and program completion requirements, expected learning outcomes, required course sequences, and projected timelines to completion based on normal student progress and the frequency of course offerings; names, titles, degrees held, and conferring institutions for administrators and full-time faculty; rules and regulations for conduct, rights, and responsibilities; tuition, fees, and other program costs; refund policies and procedures for students who withdraw from enrollment; opportunities and requirements for financial aid; and the academic calendar.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

Catalog (and/or other publications) that provides information regarding:

- Institutional mission ✓
- Admission requirements and procedures ✓
- Grading policy ✓
- Information on academic programs and courses, including degree and program completion requirements, expected learning outcomes, required course sequences, and projected timelines to completion ✓
- Names, titles, degrees held, and conferring institutions for administrators and full-time faculty ✓
- Rules and regulations for conduct, rights, and responsibilities ✓
- Tuition, fees, and other program costs ✓



- Refund policies and procedures for students who withdraw from enrollment ✓
- Opportunities and requirements for financial aid ✓
- The academic calendar ✓

Rationale: Pierce College's catalog meets the requirements enumerated in this standard.

Standard 2.G.3

Publications and other written materials that describe educational programs include accurate information on national and/or state legal eligibility requirements for licensure or entry into an occupation or profession for which education and training are offered. Descriptions of unique requirements for employment and advancement in the occupation or profession shall be included in such materials.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

Samples of publications and other written materials that describe:

- Accurate information on national and/or state legal eligibility requirements for licensure or entry into an occupation or profession for which education and training are offered ✓
- Descriptions of unique requirements for employment and advancement in the occupation or profession shall be included in such materials ✓

Rationale: Pierce College publishes materials that relate to special programs with specific licensure requirements and employment expectations and opportunities.

Standard 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.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Published financial aid policies/procedures including information about categories of financial assistance ✓
- Information to students regarding repayment obligations ✓
- Policies / procedures for monitoring student loan programs ✓

Rationale: Pierce College demonstrates its clear awareness of and compliance with the detailed financial aid requirements mandated by the U.S. Department of Education (U.S.D.E.).

Standard 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.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Published financial aid policies/procedures including information about categories of financial assistance ✓
- Information to students regarding repayment obligations ✓
- Policies / procedures for monitoring student loan programs ✓
- Loan default rate published on website ✓

Rationale: This standard is covered in the U.S.D.E. requirements.

Standard 2.G.6

The institution designs, maintains, and evaluates a systematic and effective program of academic advisement to support student development and success. Personnel responsible for advising students are knowledgeable of the curriculum, program and graduation requirements, and are adequately prepared to successfully fulfill their responsibilities. Advising requirements and responsibilities of advisors are defined, published, and made available to students.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Description of advising program, staffing, and advising publications (Student handbook or Catalog; links to webpages – please note specific pages or areas) ✓
- Systematic evaluation of advising ✓
- Professional development policies / procedures for advisors ✓



Rationale: Pierce College has a well-developed plan for ensuring effective advising of students. The overall value placed on professional development as an institution is clear and evident in their work with advising and supporting students.

Standard 2.G.7

The institution maintains an effective identity verification process for students 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.

Note: Institutions should refer to NWCCU Distance Education Policy for guidance and definitions related to the required evidence.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Policies/procedures for ensuring identity verification for students enrolling in distance education courses ✓

Rationale: The national trend toward the burgeoning use of distance education makes it even more imperative that effective measures be implemented to ensure the students' integrity of this modality of education. The evidence provided in this PRFR report was limited in detailing how these expectations of this standard are achieved.

Standard 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.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

- Procedures for assessing adequacy of library collections ✓
- Library planning committee and procedures for planning and collection development ✓
- Library instruction plan; policies/procedures related to the use of library and information resources ✓
- Library staffing information; policies/procedures that explains faculty/library partnership for assuring library and information resources are integrated into the learning process ✓

Rationale: The Library Director and staff are to be complimented for this assiduous attention to detail to ensure the effective provision of information resources to the College.

Standard 2.I.1

Consistent with its mission, the institution creates and maintains physical facilities and technology infrastructure that are accessible, safe, secure, and sufficient in quantity and quality to ensure healthful learning and working environments that support and sustain the institution's mission, academic programs, and services.

Team Verification: Compliant

Evidence:

Facilities master plan, including:

- Equipment replacement policies/procedures ✓
- Procedures for assessing sufficiency of physical facilities ✓
- Policies and procedures for ensuring accessible, safe, and secure facilities ✓
- Policies/procedures for the use, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste ✓
- Technology master plan and planning processes ✓

Rationale: Pierce College has done a marvelous job of providing physical facilities and technological infrastructure to provide a high-quality, current, and safe learning environment.

Concluding Comments

Pierce College is a remarkable member of the Washington State Community and Technical Colleges. The evidence provided for Standard Two was thorough and well articulated. The resource links were most helpful. Great work on putting together this report!