

## NWCCU POLICIES | COMMISSIONER QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (“NWCCU”, or “Commission”) is an independent non-governmental regional accrediting organization that provides institutional accreditation for both public and private institutions of higher education in seven states (Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington) and in regions outside of the U.S.

NWCCU is recognized by the **United States Department of Education**, and by the **Council for Higher Education Accreditation**. The Commission is established as a nonprofit corporation in Washington State, and is recognized as a 501(c)(3) organization by the Internal Revenue Service by virtue of its charitable activities.

The Board of Commissioners of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities comprises up to twenty-six Commissioners. Commissioners are elected by the region’s member institutions for staggered three-year terms, and may serve up to two terms. Commissioners serve two roles: 1) as Directors of the non-profit corporation with attending governance duties and fiduciary responsibilities, and 2) as members of the Commission’s decision-making body for accreditation evaluations. Commissioners serve without compensation for their services, and are reimbursed for expenses associated with NWCCU business. Officers of the corporation are elected by the Board of Commissioners and may serve as Commissioners beyond the two-term limit while serving as an officer.

A majority of Commissioners represent institutions accredited by NWCCU. Up to two persons from institutions located outside the Northwest region may serve as Commissioners, but must be actively employed by an academic institution accredited by an organization recognized by the United States Department of Education. One-seventh (1/7th) of the Commissioners must be persons representing the general public who shall not be, or have a familial relationship with, a current employee, consultant, owner, shareholder or member of the governing board of an institution accredited by NWCCU, an applicant for accreditation by NWCCU, or an institution recognized for accreditation by the United States Department of Education. The Commission seeks a balance by type and geographical location of institutions and by position, gender, and ethnicity of individuals. Commission meetings are typically held in January and June each year. Commission Standing Committees meet at least semi-annually to facilitate the Commission’s work.

### **Commissioner Qualifications**

Commissioners typically include administrators and faculty members from institutions of higher education. Public Commissioners typically have experience with higher education, federal or state government, and/or non-profit organizations. Commissioners possess:

1. Commitment to peer based voluntary accreditation;
2. Experience with or understanding of US higher education and accreditation;
3. Appreciation and knowledge of best practices in higher education;
4. Open-mindedness to various ways of designing and delivering higher education;
5. Professional knowledge or experience in academic institutional governance, finance, student services, academic programming, or alternative educational delivery methods;
6. Fairness and cultural sensitivity in exercising judgment;

7. Background and skills in organizing and managing complex processes; and
8. A baccalaureate degree or higher educational background.

Experience responding to or participating in the peer review process is desirable. A Commissioner, other than a Public Representative, whose institution has been sanctioned by NWCCU, or another Regional Accreditor, must step down. Such Commissioner may be reinstated once the sanction has been removed so long as said Commissioner's term has not expired.

### **Commissioner Responsibilities**

Commissioners provide leadership, oversight, and decisions on Commission functions, including:

1. Attending most, if not all, Commission meetings;
2. Performing duties of a director as described in the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act and other applicable laws;
3. Participating in new Commissioner orientation, as well as developing a deep understanding of NWCCU Standards and practices;
4. Helping establish and interpret Commission bylaws, policy, and criteria for accreditation;
5. Reviewing reports from Evaluation Committees and using best judgment to decide issues related to and including accreditation;
6. Approving Commission's budgets and providing fiscal and fiduciary oversight over Commission functions;
7. Maintaining confidentiality and completing accurate records of Commission reviews and decisions;
8. Ensuring compliance with legal and financial reporting requirements and adhering to core Board of Director roles and responsibilities as stated in the Commission's bylaws and policies;
9. Adopting and adhering to strict conflict of interest requirements;
10. Strengthening the Commission by recruiting, training and mentoring new Commissioners;
11. Ensuring legal and ethical integrity and maintaining accountability;
12. Enhancing the Commission's public standing by promoting the efforts of the Commission at various forums; and
13. Hiring and evaluating the president.

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