

University of Utah 2015 Year Seven Self-Evaluation Accreditation Report  
Submitted to  
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)  
September 1, 2015

**Relevant Websites:**

**U accreditation:** <http://accreditation.utah.edu>

**Complete 2015 Report:** <http://accreditation.utah.edu/2015-year-7-report/UU-Accreditation-Report-2015.pdf>

**University Mission Statement:** <http://president.utah.edu/news-events/university-mission-statement/>

**University Performance Dashboards:** <http://dashboards.utah.edu>

**NWCCU address:** <http://www.nwccu.org>

**Send feedback to:** [accreditation-2015@utah.edu](mailto:accreditation-2015@utah.edu)

### **Executive Summary**

**The University of Utah (U)**, founded in 1850, is a comprehensive, world-renowned, public research university and a member of the Pac-12 athletic conference. The University of Utah ranks among the world's top 70 research universities (Center for World University Ranking, 2015). The U offers over 100 undergraduate majors, and more than 90 graduate degree programs, including professional programs in medicine, dentistry, nursing, law, and business. Numerous minors and certificates are also offered, as well as interdisciplinary degree programs designed to prepare students for a 21st century world. Total student enrollment exceeds 31,000.

**The 2015 Year Seven Self-Evaluation Accreditation Report** was developed to fulfill the requirements for maintaining the U's ongoing accreditation status. The University of Utah has been continuously accredited by NWCCU ([www.nwccu.org](http://www.nwccu.org)) since 1933. This comprehensive report requires extensive review and documentation of 24 eligibility requirements for maintaining accreditation status, and documentation of the University's adherence to five major standards of performance. The self-evaluation required more than a year of preparation, documentation, evaluation, and writing. The Year Seven Self-Evaluation Accreditation Report committee, co-chaired by Chief Accreditation Liaison Officer and Dean of the Graduate School David Kieda and Senior Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Undergraduate Studies Martha Bradley-Evans, included more than 30 key individuals from across campus. Dozens of additional individuals from the broader campus were asked to submit data, paragraphs, and narratives developing the Four Goals and responses to the questions embedded in the five standards. In parallel with the self-evaluation, a series of five town hall meetings were held across campus to establish open dialog with faculty, staff, administrators, and students regarding the community's interpretation and input on the University's success in implementing the Four Big Goals. The U's last full accreditation review was in 2006.

**NWCCU Accreditation** is granted when the U demonstrates that it has organized its faculty, staff, resources, policies, and operational principles to fully support fulfillment of the University Mission. In the Year Seven Self-Evaluation Accreditation Report, mission fulfillment is embodied as fulfillment of the Four Big Goals of the University (*Promote Student Success to transform Lives, Develop and transfer new Knowledge, Engage Communities to Improve Health and Quality of Life, Ensure Long-Term Viability of the University*). Quantitative and composite metrics and standards are used to assess the quality of mission fulfillment associated with each of the Four Big Goals, and consequently, the University Mission.

**The 2015 Year Seven Self-Evaluation Accreditation Report finds the U has dramatically improved its national and international stature** since the last NWCCU accreditation review in 2006. Quantitative *student success* indicators, such as first-year retention rates (increasing from 72.9% to 89%) and six-year graduation rates (increasing from 50.5% to 62.2%) demonstrate remarkable, sustained improvements. Research, patent, and technology transfer indicators place the U as a clearly recognizable top-five research innovation institution in the nation. Health care indicators show an ongoing, sustained record of national prominence and leadership as well as exceptional patient care and satisfaction. Community engagement and outreach is also highlighted as a key strength of the U in this report. In 2013, more than 1.6 million individuals participated in outreach, museum, cultural, and athletic events associated with the U (in addition to the broad viewer/listener base of KUED/KUER), compared to a Salt Lake County population of 1.08 million residents. The U is found to place mid-ranking of all Pac-12 institutions in most quantitative measures, and is above mid-ranking in several.

**The 2015 Year Seven Self-Evaluation Accreditation Report also highlights significant progress towards ensuring the long-term viability of the University.** The institution's ability to keep tuition and fees at 73.3% of the median of peer Pac-12 (public) institutions, the exceptionally low student debt upon graduation (\$13k, which is 37% of national average), the low student loan default rate (3.9% compared to 13.7% national average), the substantial increases in the number of alumni donors and donation amounts to the U, and a 32% reduction in the University's energy utilization per square foot since 2011 are all indicators of this viability.

**The 2015 Year Seven Self-Evaluation Accreditation Report summary** has demonstrated that the U has continued to fulfill its institutional mission, and is on a dynamic course of strengthening its existing programs and expanding its contribution to its students, the community, the nation, and the global community. We have established stronger expectations for the quality of the education we offer our students, and have set higher standards for our expectations of student success. We have set high expectations for our research, cultural events, public outreach, and broader impact of the University on the community. As demonstrated in this report, we have made excellent progress in realizing and exceeding these aspirations. The University of Utah is inventive, competitive, and is on the move.