



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20202

October 31, 2016

Sandra E. Elman, President  
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities  
8060 165th Avenue, NE, Suite 100  
Redmond, WA 98052  
[selman@nwccu.org](mailto:selman@nwccu.org)

Dear Ms. Elman,

I am writing to inform you of my decision on the renewal of the recognition of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). Department of Education staff and the National Advisory Council on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) have each made recommendations to me. These recommendations were made under Sections 114 and 496 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), as amended, and pursuant to relevant statutory and regulatory provisions.

Both the staff and NACIQI recommended that I accept the compliance report and continue the Department's recognition of NWCCU as a nationally recognized accrediting agency for one and one-half years.

As required, I considered the full record, which included the agency's compliance report (as set forth in the Final Staff analysis) and the transcript of the NACIQI hearing on August 23, 2016.

Under the applicable law and regulations, and the record before me, I am satisfied that accreditation by NWCCU is a required element in enabling the institutions the agency accredits to establish eligibility to participate in programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education under the HEA, and I concur with the recommendations of Department staff and NACIQI. Accordingly, I renew the Department's recognition of NWCCU as a nationally recognized accrediting agency with the scope of recognition as detailed below for one and one-half years from the date of this letter.

**Scope of recognition:** The accreditation and preaccreditation ("Candidacy status") of postsecondary degree-granting educational institutions in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington, and the accreditation of programs offered via distance education within these institutions.

[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

We appreciate the work of NWCCU to improve the quality and success of U.S. postsecondary education. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emma Vadehra', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Emma Vadehra  
Chief of Staff