



**NWCCU**  
NORTHWEST COMMISSION ON  
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES



# Idaho Legislature DEI Working Group

Co-Chairs Rep. Judy Boyle & Sen. Todd Lakey

## Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

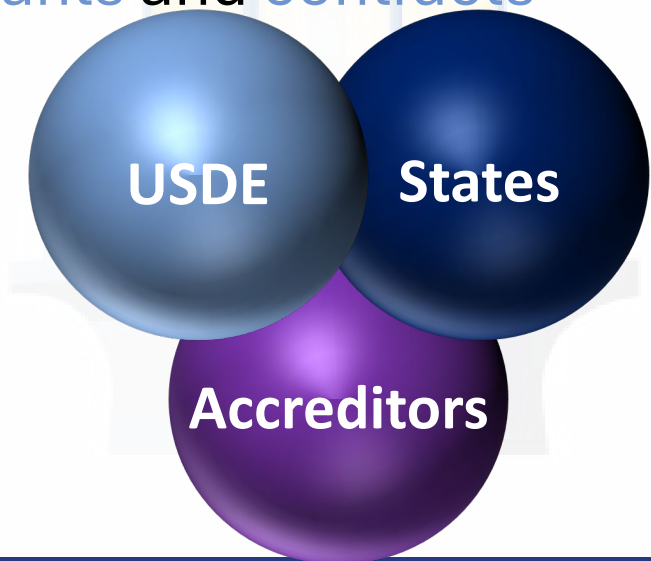
**Sonny Ramaswamy**

President



# Accreditation

- American invention in late 1800s to ensure educational **quality** and **accountability**
- NWCCU established in **1917** and continues to **evolve** with **state** and **federal laws** and **regulations**
- NWCCU is **recognized** by the US Department of Education, part of **Triad**
- NWCCU **honors the mission** of its 160+ member institutions
- Educational **quality**, **stability**, and **sustainability** are assessed by **volunteer peer evaluators** against **Standards**, **Eligibility Requirements**, and **Policies**
- Accredited institutions qualify for **Federal Title IV funds** and **grants** and **contracts**
- Institutional **reputation**
- Purpose
  - Student achievement, learning, and success
  - Quality assurance
  - Continuous improvement
  - Core competencies
  - Accountability



# NWCCU's Mission

The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities accredits institutions of higher education by applying **data- and evidence-informed standards and processes** to support **continuous improvements** and promote equitable **student achievement and success**

## NWCCU's Vision

To be the **premier accreditor** whose member institutions foster **access, belonging, and success of every student**

- Student achievement, learning, success
  - Core Competencies
- Closing achievement gaps
- Disaggregated data- and evidence-informed
- Educational quality
- Institutional effectiveness
- Critical peer review
- Accountability and transparency
- Research and engagement
- Continuous improvement
- Analytical self-assessment

## Questions from Idaho Legislative DEI Working Group

- Does NWCCU require colleges and universities as part of its accreditation requirements to teach classes, or to establish programs or initiatives, that might touch on these DEI concerns?
  - No
- Whether the NWCCU requires, as a prerequisite for accreditation, any institutions to implement any course requirement that would cause a student to be treated differently because of race, sex, or other characteristic?
  - No
- How do certain sections of the NWCCU 2020 Standards work in practice in regard to potentially requiring institutions to adopt DEI related initiatives or programs? (Especially whether there is a specific scoring sheet for institutions where DEI initiatives or programs would increase or decrease an institution's overall score for accreditation purposes.)
  - No. There is no scoring sheet used to determine an “accreditation score” for DEI initiatives
  - Peer evaluators focus on student learning, achievement, institutional mission, planning, resources, and sustainability

## ***Standard One – Student Success and Institutional Mission and Effectiveness***

*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*

- Inclusive planning in the Standard refers to the institutional planning process and allocation of resources that must include demonstrable efforts to seek input broadly from various stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, administrators, alumni, Board members, donors, and other relevant constituents

*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 qualitative reasoning, critical analysis and logical thinking, problem solving, and/or information literacy*

- Students that graduate or complete degrees, certificates, microcredentials, or other academic credentials are going to have to **seek jobs** in an increasingly **globally competitive environment**
- GenEd Core Competencies are **lifelong skills** and **transferable**
- NWCCU **does not mandate curricula** as part of its Standards
- Many institutions **elect to incorporate global and cultural awareness outcomes and experiences** (e.g., study abroad, foreign language requirements, etc.)

*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)*

The phrase, "institutionally meaningful categories," refers to institutions may select any categorization of data that is meaningful to them. For example, some institutions may use Socioeconomic, First Generation, Pell eligible, Veterans, Part-Time Students, Working Students, Student Parents, or Church Members/Non-Members categories. NWCCU does not force any institution to use a specific category to disaggregate data. This is in line with NWCCU's commitment to honor the mission of the institution

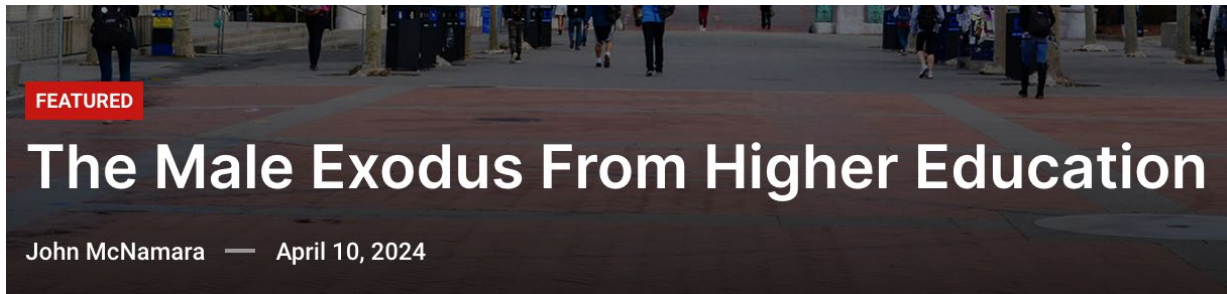
Equity gaps refers to achievement gaps we see amongst groups identified by institutions

# Achievement Gap Headlines

**The Pell Divide: How Four-Year Institutions are Failing to Graduate Low- and Moderate-Income Students**

**First-Generation College Graduates Lag Behind Their Peers on Key Economic Outcomes**

**Drop-Out Rates among First-Generation Undergraduate Students in the United States**



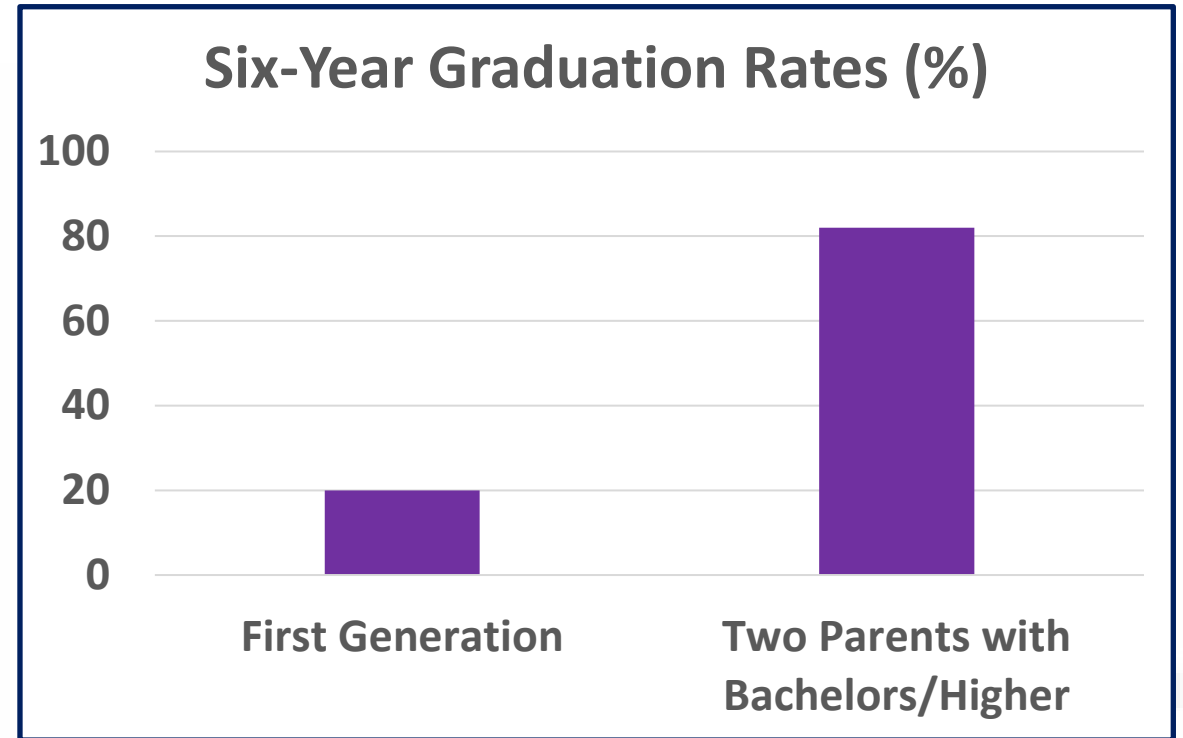
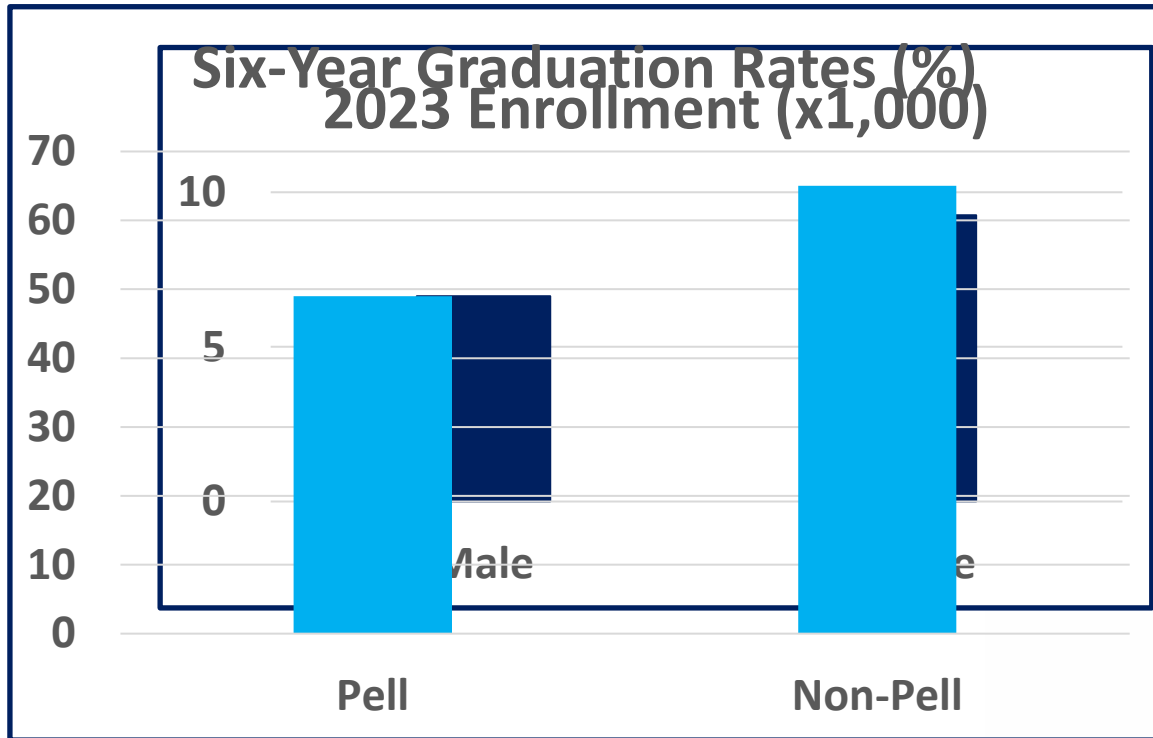
October 18, 2024

ACCESS & AFFORDABILITY

Why are fewer white students attending college?



# Pell/First Generation Divide



*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 intent here is that the institution, aligned with its mission, is providing evidence for **student outcomes data**, such as **completion or graduation rates**, to ensure **every student is achieving his/her specific educational goals and aspirations**



# Idaho Statistics

Institution	UG Enrollment	% on Pell	% First Gen
Boise State University	23,543	25	41
Idaho State University	7,257	39	40
University of Idaho	9,269	27	60
Lewis & Clark State College	3,789	41	65
		<b>~2,200</b>	<b>~13,500</b>

## ***Standard Two – Governance, Resources, and Capacity***

*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*

NWCCU peer evaluators and commissioners review institutional outcomes that rely on disaggregated data to determine if universities and colleges are meeting their specific and unique missions to ensure all students are achieving their educational aspirations and goals

Does the NWCCU require a member institution to teach classes that encourage ideas/ideologies that promote the differential treatment of different groups?

No. NWCCU honors the mission of the institution

Note: NWCCU does not require nor prescribe specific curricula or course content, because those decisions are the purview of institutions and their faculty (per Standard 1.C.5), aligned with the institution's unique mission

Higher education and accreditation

... are a **journey**

Student success and achievement

... are the **destination**