

REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM

For Reaffirmation of Accreditation

To Southern California University of Health Sciences

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Vivian Sanchez, Chair

Chancellor, University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences

Stephanie Juillerat, Assistant Chair

Associate Provost of Faculty Affairs, Faculty Emeritus, Azusa Pacific University, Retired

Celeste Villanueva, Assistant Vice President, Academic Affairs, Samuel Merritt University

Steven Jacobson, Vice Provost and Dean of Student Affairs, Touro University California

Robert Allison, VP for Business and Finance, Vanguard University of Southern California,

Retired

Barbara Gross Davis, Vice President, WSCUC

The team evaluated the institution under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective evaluation for consideration and action by the institution and by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC). The formal action concerning the institution's status is taken by the Commission and is described in a letter from the Commission to the institution. This report and the Commission letter are made available to the public by publication on the WSCUC website.

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Section I - Overview and Context

A. Description of Institution and Accreditation History

The Southern California University of Health Sciences (SCU) has a long history marked by significant evolution. Beginning in 1911 as the Los Angeles College of Chiropractic, it has grown and evolved from a single purpose college to a multi-faceted health sciences university. Located in a former high school facility in a residential area in Whittier, California, SCU is not a traditional college campus. However, it has been able to grow in size and, at the time of the institutional self-study report, served 1170 degree and certificate seeking students across four professional programs, two graduate programs, one bachelor of science degree completion program, two undergraduate certificate programs, and two graduate certificate programs. At the time of the visit, the institution had added a doctor of occupational therapy and was designing a doctor of physical therapy program. Other programs were due to begin in the near future.

SCU has a strong vision of interprofessional education which it has embraced since its inception. The importance of integrative healthcare permeates SCU and is at the heart of its institutional strategic priorities (see component 3 for a further discussion of this commitment).

According to the institution's distance education report, "SCU has offered distance education programs since 2020; nearly all of SCU's distance education programs launched during the pandemic when "everything was online," whether a formal distance program or not. As the emergency waiver draws to a close in 2023, all

SCU courses in all programs are presently returned to published delivery methods.” However, at the time of the visit, the team heard from some students and faculty an interest in returning to the classroom, but it had yet to happen. The team also heard from some administrators that a decision had not yet been made regarding which courses would return to a face-to-face modality. The team suggests that a plan for course modality be clearly communicated in a timely manner to help the community understand next steps for distance education.

At the time of the review, the total mix of distance education programs at SCU included four non-degree certificates and four degree programs at the bachelors, masters, and doctoral level. Two programs were reviewed by the team: Master of Science in Medical Sciences (MSMS) and Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences (BSHS), and the distance education report form can be found in appendix B. Additionally, team members met with the Online Education Department.

B. Description of Team’s Review Process

The team engaged in a thorough review of all the provided materials, including additional materials requested after the Offsite Review and during the visit. In addition to the document review, the team members interviewed 21 different groups and individuals, which, in most cases, validated and clarified the written documents. The team was able to explore its lines of inquiry, as well as other areas related to this report. There were no emails addressed to the team in the confidential email. To finalize this report, the team engaged in substantive dialogue to ensure that it reached consensus on its findings.

C. Institution's Reaccreditation Report and Update: Quality and Rigor of the Report and Supporting Evidence

The SCU self study report was comprehensive, well-organized, and transparent. The institution described both strengths and areas for growth in a manner that was thoughtful and reflective. When additional documents were requested by the team, the institution produced the requested information promptly. Claims made in the report were substantiated with evidence.

According to the institutional report, the reaffirmation process began in fall 2020 with the appointment of a Steering Committee. In addition to the work of the Steering Committee, members of the community were involved in online discussions, workshops, meetings, and a series of community feedback sessions. A representative panel from the Steering Committee read and responded to the written report based on feedback from the community. When the team visited the campus and asked various groups about their level of involvement with the self-study process, it appeared as though most individuals were aware of the purpose of the visit. However, the level of involvement in preparing for, writing, or reading the report varied by those who were directly engaged and those who were peripherally connected. There was a general understanding of the process within the SCU community (note: due to time constraints, the team did not meet with the Steering Committee).

Section II - Evaluation of Institutional Essays

A. Component 1: Response to Previous Commission Actions

Since SCU's last comprehensive visit in 2017 for reaffirmation of accreditation, SCU had two additional interactions with WSCUC: a Special Visit in 2019 and an Interim Report in 2021. The 2017 Commission Action Letter reaffirmed SCU's

accreditation for a period of six years and included five recommendations related to financial sustainability; program review; professional accreditation; assessment; and faculty workload, compensation, and evaluation. The Commission scheduled a Special Visit for March 2019 to address three of the five recommendations: financial sustainability, program review, and professional accreditation. The 2019 Commission Action Letter commended SCU for its interprofessional education model, for launching the physician assistant program, for addressing issues related to programmatic accreditation, for establishing program review processes and infrastructure, and for acting urgently to pursue strategies to achieve financial sustainability. The Commission scheduled a March 2021 Interim Report to address financial sustainability and program review. The 2021 Interim Report Committee Action Letter commended SCU for the quality of the report, for its financial performance, and for its program review protocols and procedures. The Commission recommended that SCU address as part of its reaffirmation self study report the status of the physician assistant program placed on probation by the programmatic accreditor, progress in meeting the program review schedule, and continued impact of COVID-19.

The team received a written and verbal update on the physician assistant (PA) program indicating it had been granted Accreditation-Continued status by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. with zero areas of noncompliance. The team met with multiple individuals from the PA program and determined that it was a viable program. Additionally, the institution provided a summary of how it was able to maintain safety, employment, progress

toward graduation, quality educational experience, and new work scenarios during COVID-19.

According to its COVID-19 summary, SCU successfully grew enrollment, launched programs, improved financial standing, maintained retention, stayed safe, maintained employment, and more. SCU's sense of humor and determination – as well as kindness (another mission trait) – carried the institution through the pandemic.

SCU had additional interaction with WSCUC through the Substantive Change process. Between June 2020 and September 2021, SCU received approval for three new online programs (Master of Science in Medical Science (MSMS), Bachelor of Science in Health Science (BSHS), Master of Science in Human Genetics and Genomics (MSHGG), reclassification of two existing programs to distance education (Ayurveda Wellness Educator Certificate and Ayurveda Practitioner Certificate) and authorization to add two additional certificate programs (Health Education and Human Genetics and Genomics). The team was able to interact with representatives from each of these programs during the visit and determined that they were viable.

B. Component 2: Compliance: Review under WSCUC Standards and Compliance with Federal Requirements

SCU provided the necessary documentation for the team to review and make informed judgments about compliance with the WSCUC Standards of Accreditation (Standards). In addition to reviewing the Compliance with the Standards worksheet, which contained links to evidence, the team validated SCU's claims in its visit. While many of the CFRs are addressed throughout the discussion of the components, relevant findings related to the Standards and their CFRs are addressed below.

Compliance with Standard 1

Institutional Purposes

Southern California University (SCU) has a clearly defined mission, vision, and set of values (MVV), established in 2011 and reaffirmed in 2018 when the institution completed its Refreshed Institutional Plan to 2023. The mission and values drive their educational offerings and decision making. Based on consistent, shared language that was infused throughout SCU's self-study and associated material, corroborated by conversations the team had with all stakeholder groups during the accreditation visit, the same language authentically represented the MVV as a unifying belief, providing an overall perception of an institution fully committed to graduate, undergraduate, and certificate programs that produced integrative healthcare practitioners who embody interprofessional practice. As such, the team commended SCU for a strong commitment across all levels to SCU's mission and values, which includes a consistent emphasis on interprofessional practice and education and whole person care. (CFRs 1.1, 1.2, and 1.5)

SCU published educational objectives at the institutional and program levels online via the SCU website and university catalog. Course level objectives were readily available for review and analysis. A review of syllabi indicated that course outcomes were mapped to program outcomes, and the method of assessment was identified so that students knew how their achievement would be measured. Additionally, the institution collected and published, reviewed, and used disaggregated data on retention and graduation rates, as well as

completion/average time to completion rates on its website. See component 5 for more detailed discussion. (CFR 1.2)

Integrity and Transparency

SCU's academic freedom statement was found in the university catalog, as well as the faculty and employee handbooks; specific policies related to academic freedom and grievance policies to guide faculty were housed in the faculty handbook. The statement declared that academic freedom, defined as "the ability to teach and learn, examine and question," is enjoyed by students, faculty, and employees. The SCU value of inclusivity was woven into the statement as follows: "...the University encourages judgment and restraint in sharing ideas—as well as the provision of respect for others' ideas—consistent with our mission and values and in a spirit of kindness and good humor." (CFR 1.3)

A Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Policy overview was included in the SCU self-study as exhibit CFR1.4a. This document delineated several concrete actions since the last WSCUC interaction that reflected the institution's commitment to a diverse and inclusive culture, including the establishment of the President's Task Force on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in December 2021. The charge to the task force was to: 1) identify and document evidence of SCU's *existing* commitment to DEI; 2) identify what, if any, groups of prospective students may be underserved by the institution, based on data; 3) recommend a university-wide policy statement on DEI for consideration by the board of regents; and 4) make broadly stated recommendations for goals or objectives to fulfill elements of the aforementioned policy statement on DEI, as applicable. The timeline for completion of the full charge was met by the task force. The recommended DEI

Statement was adopted by SCU and was published on their website. During the accreditation visit, team members reviewed a copy of the final DEI Task Force Report, dated January 12, 2023, and met with principal members of the task force. Based on the timely completion of their charge, the members' comprehensive responses to the team's lines of inquiry, including provision of evidence of fiscal investments by SCU leadership in response to content in the DEI Report, the institution has demonstrated a robust commitment to a culture of DEI. The team recognized this commitment and recommended that SCU further advance diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, informed by the recommendations of the DEI Task Force. (CFR 1.4)

SCU's Power Business Intelligence (Power BI) Dashboards, accessible via the website, provided further evidence of the institution's commitment to diversity of race and ethnicity of the student body and the faculty. The following excerpt from the DEI Task Force Report provided evidence of student diversity (pp 8-9):

Overall, the percentage of ethnic minority students is increasing from 51.88% in 2020 - 2021, 56.96% in 2021 - 2022, to 59.46% for the fall term, 2022. In the 2020 - 2021 and 2021 – 2022 academic years, our largest representation was Hispanic students, increasing annually from 24.84% to 28.62%, respectively, and most recently in fall term 2022 to 32.99%. Asian Students represented 19.77% of the student body in 2020 – 2021, 18.96% in 2021 – 2022, and 18.54% in fall term 2022. (CFR 1.4)

With education as the primary purpose of SCU, their board of regents (board) did not experience or allow interference in decision making or educational function by

external bodies including governmental, religious, or corporate entities. In October, 2021, the SCU board adopted a resolution to evaluate its compliance with the WSCUC Board Governing Policy—no required action from this evaluation process was reported. (CFR 1.5)

SCU had published and readily available policies on student grievances and complaints and refunds (see appendix A). The institution clearly defined the different types of academic credit, as well as the meaning of credit awarded on the transcript. The institution also demonstrated that academic programs could be completed in a timely fashion and that all students were treated fairly and equitably through their established policies. These policies can be found in the university catalog. SCU made their Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) research, ethics, and compliance training modules more accessible to SCU faculty and students and posted updated Institutional Review Board (IRB) materials on their website. (CFR 1.6)

Based on the materials provided to the team and the conversations during the visit, SCU appeared to utilize sound business practices and operated with integrity. Multiple policies existed for managing complaints, including a bias response process called “Report It.” The institution also had a student complaint policy and process that was reviewed and verified by the team (see appendix A). As indicated in standard three and component seven, SCU’s finances were regularly audited by qualified independent auditors. Less apparent to the team at the visit were processes for evaluating the effectiveness of its business practices or administrative offices. The team suggested that in addition to assessing student

learning, programmatic effectiveness, and co-curricular programming, the institution should regularly assess its performance in the administrative domain.

(CFR 1.7)

SCU was open and honest in its many interactions with WSCUC and used the accreditation process to candidly assess strengths and weaknesses. As such, the team commended SCU for its thoughtful and transparent self-reflection, which led to significant advancements in key areas identified by the Commission since the last interaction with WSCUC. (CFR 1.8)

Conclusion. The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to determine compliance with the Standard.

Compliance with Standard 2

Teaching and Learning

SCU had a strong emphasis on supporting the teaching by faculty and the learning by students at the university. It had created six goals to assist it in moving it forward, including the goal to “[a]dvance patient-centered, whole-person, integrative health care education” (Goal 1). This educational goal had worked to guide the university to successfully create a thoughtful approach to developing its teaching and learning practices. A thorough review of the university's institutional report, the lines of inquiry information, appendices, course syllabi, faculty evaluations, the faculty policies, and interviews/comments from students, faculty, and staff received during the visit confirmed the university's commitment to provide an integrative and interprofessional education that effectively educated students towards a unified approach to patient care,

consistent with SCU's educational goals. Since the last WSCUC accreditation site visit, the university improved its efforts in adhering to industry standards and receiving professional accreditation for its different academic programs. It had clearly defined degree requirements which were included in the university's degree curriculum maps which outlined expectations for students. (CFR 2.2)

The meaning, quality, and integrity of the degree was upheld through the establishment and leadership of the SCU Assessment and Learning Council (ALC), which collaborated with administration and faculty to create strategic university learning outcomes (ULOs), effective program learning outcomes (PLOs), and operational student learning outcomes (SLO). ULOs were established by the university, PLOs were jointly created by the university and faculty, and SLOs were developed by faculty as part of their syllabi. A review of course syllabi showed clear connections between PLOs and SLOs. The university also started the process of creating new syllabi templates, utilizing software to systemize course changes and approvals and working to ensure alignment and consistency to ensure and assess student learning. (CFRs 2.3 and 2.6)

The SCU faculty, which included 88 adjuncts, 15 administrative, 10 associate, and 86 university/SCU health faculty, was responsible for the content, standards, and degree level. Faculty not only created program curricula but also actively participated in the assessment of student learning (see components 4 and 6). With an active participation by faculty across all levels of the university, as well as with the various committees of the faculty senate, faculty were responsible for the curricular decision-making processes of the university. (CFRs 2.1 and 2.4)

Scholarship and Creative Activity

SCU worked to actively support faculty in scholarship, research, and creative activities. For instance, by focusing on a research agenda of integrative healthcare, health equity, and health policy, the university recently completed a large grant from the National Institutes of Health to research the value of back pain treatment in older adults. The institution also hired a director of research and three staff who dedicated their time to advance faculty research on campus as well as find partner institutions that had better research infrastructure (e.g., labs and equipment). According to the director of research, the institution had a 5-year plan to grow its research capacity, including involving students in research initiatives. While faculty were not required to publish their work, scholarship activity was required for advancement and promotion. Faculty research was also encouraged through financial support from the Faculty Development Committee (FDC) of the faculty senate to make presentations at research conferences. Similarly, teaching skills were supported by the Center for Faculty Development and Excellence with a three-day pre-term training session for all faculty at the start of each term. (CFRs 2.8, 2.9, and 3.3)

Student Learning and Success

Since the last WSCUC team visit, the university focused its efforts to support student learning and success. The investment in an institutional research (IR) infrastructure, the development of tools to track, review, and use disaggregated data, an emphasis on identifying barriers to student success, and a strong student services team improved the students' time-to-degree completion. The IR infrastructure led the university to create data dashboards to enhance its tracking of institutional goals, as

well as strategically guiding its recruitment and admissions processes. In addition, SCU used end-of-course surveys and ExamSoft to monitor student achievement and success. While the team found SCU had made strong progress in moving toward a data-driven institution guided by sophisticated data analytics, it encouraged the university to continue aggressively using data to examine student learning achievement and success. (CFRs 2.10 and 2.12)

A review of student support service areas highlighted a comprehensive cadre of services focused on academic support and learning resources. These services were guided by a co-curricular assessment plan that focused on the three core values of professionalism, integrative and whole-person health, and inclusivity. SCU's co-curricular programs aligned with their academic programs and were designed to support students' personal and professional development, consistent with SCU's purpose of graduating health professionals and providing professional degree programs. Students reported strong satisfaction with the services offered by the university, including at new student orientation where 90% of students stated that they found the orientation sessions helpful. (CFRs 2.11 and 2.13)

Conclusion. The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to determine compliance with the Standard.

Compliance with Standard 3

Faculty and Staff

The institution relied upon well-qualified faculty to deliver its academic programs. For fall 2021 the institution reported having 199 faculty, of which 88 were adjunct. For the same period, the student headcount was 1170 degree seeking students and 679 accelerated science learning students. The student-to-faculty ratio varied by program but appeared reasonable and met the needs of the institution. Over 85% of full-time faculty had terminal degrees, most of which were in the areas that they served (e.g., Doctor of Occupational Therapy for occupational therapy program, and Doctor of Chiropractic for chiropractic program). These programs were supplemented by faculty with Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees for basic sciences. New program planning was planned through the Program Launch Planning Committee (PLP), and the staffing for new programs was well thought out in advance. The staffing report indicated that the institution employed 162 staff, of which 120 were full-time, to support the institution. As such, the team concluded that the institution had sufficient and qualified staff and faculty to fulfill its educational mission. (CFR 3.1)

Not only were faculty and staff qualified for the work in which they engaged, the team experienced an exceptionally high level of optimism and collaboration in its interactions with the faculty and staff groups it interviewed. The commitment of both faculty and staff to student success was more than evident, as was the commitment of the staff to the success of the faculty. Creating a positive student experience was a recurring theme across many of the groups the team interviewed, and the genuine collaboration was admirable. As such, the team was happy to commend SCU for its

responsive and dedicated staff who care deeply about the success of faculty, students, and the institution as a whole. (CFR 3.1)

The university publicized its non-discrimination statement in numerous locations, as well as numerous statements regarding its commitment to human diversity. The most recent records available to the team reported the following racial and ethnic breakdown: (CFRs 1.4 and 3.1)

SCHUS Faculty and Staff Demographics, Table 3.1					
Total Faculty	Full-Time	Female	Minortized*	URM	Terminal Degree
199	53	88	88	32	169
100%	27%	44%	44%	16%	85%
Total Staff					
162	120	107	83	Not reported	N/A

*All, except non-Latino white

To evaluate the climate and morale of its employees, the institution regularly surveyed employees through the Great Colleges to Work For instrument. As a result of the last survey, the institution was recognized for excellence in a number of areas. The team found the faculty and staff generally very satisfied with their employment, as

evidenced by a very low incidence of employee complaints, low turnover rate, and numerous positive comments heard by the team during the visit. (CFR 3.1)

Faculty and staff recruiting policies were described in various policies. For faculty members, the recruitment of new faculty was designed to ensure the hiring of capable and qualified faculty who shared a commitment to the university's mission, vision, and values. The hiring process was managed in the spirit of shared governance and included a faculty-appointed committee. The human resource department ensured that all legal and ethical policies were followed, and the approval for faculty hires was vested with the provost. The search processes for staff usually included search committees for the more senior positions, and only several managerial levels of interview for less senior positions. (CFR 3.2)

Faculty evaluations were conducted annually, beginning the first year of employment and were required for all full-time faculty. The faculty handbook explicitly laid out the purposes and criteria of the annual appraisal process: to ensure that faculty members understood their responsibilities, to ensure high professional standards and expertise in their areas of specialty, and to develop their strengths and professional development. The evaluations covered the individual's major area of responsibilities as outlined in a letter of appointment, employment agreement, and/or by their supervisor. The evaluation included a teaching component for both classroom and clinical settings. Scholarly activity was evaluated as a part of the rank and promotion process and was evaluated by the faculty senate's Professional Personnel Committee (PPC). The faculty handbook also included a list of expected service activities in which full-time faculty should participate. SCU is not an institution that awards tenure, rather SCU uses a

Fixed Term Renewable Agreement (FTRA) process that extended from two to five years. These awards may be made after one year of “successful service.” However, no five-year term may be awarded without at least one previous FTRA for a three-year term. (CFRs 2.9 and 3.2)

As described by its documents and in conversation with the faculty senate, the Faculty Performance Review (FPR) process began with the faculty member’s supervisor and included a self-review. After the review had been conducted at this level, it was referred to the PPC which was composed of full-time faculty members who reviewed all FPRs for consistency, completeness, and fairness of evaluations. The PPC could request additional information regarding individual evaluations if the evaluation was incomplete or appeared unjustly harsh. Once PPC reached a decision, it was forwarded to the provost for final approval. Staff evaluations were also conducted on an annual basis and were viewed primarily as part of a formative process. The director of people and culture, as well as staff from human resources, reported that the completion rate for staff was very high. (CFR 3.2)

At the time of the visit, the team learned about SCU’s expectation that faculty and staff participate in training and development opportunities. All full-time faculty received an annual allotment of \$1,750 that could be used for professional development activities, upon approval of the Faculty Development Committee (FDC), a standing faculty senate committee. These awards may be used for professional meetings and development opportunities. (CFR 3.3)

In addition to monetary awards, various virtual training opportunities were offered by the institution each year, some being mandated because they were compulsory

training required by the State of California. Additionally, faculty were offered a 3-day, pre-term training series through the Center for Faculty Development and Excellence which was established in 2020. The center's mission was to better prepare faculty for their respective roles and offered numerous development opportunities, such as workshops in the use of Zoom, active learning, optimizing the learning management system (Canvas), reducing barriers in learning, the use of Echo 360, learning analytics, and use of Exam ID and Exam Monitor. The institution offered a robust menu of development opportunities and the faculty community, deans, and program directors indicated they were quite satisfied with the opportunities faculty had for professional development. The only concern the team heard related to faculty development was that some of the pre-term training for faculty was geared toward newer faculty, and more senior faculty felt that some of the training was redundant for them. The team encourages the institution to consider varying levels of training needed by employees when training is planned. (CFR 3.3)

Staff, likewise, could attend training provided by the institution or participate in external opportunities funded by their departments. In addition to synchronous, virtual training, on-demand training was available for all staff through an online, on-demand repository of training topics provided by the human resources office. The team was impressed by the level of the opportunities afforded employees for professional development, both through internal and external opportunities. (CFR 3.3)

Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources

At the time of the visit, the institution had substantially improved its financial strength during the past three years. SCU engaged an audit firm to complete an annual

audit of its financial statements each year and had received a clean audit opinion for at least each of the last four years. (CFR 3.4) See component 7 for a thorough discussion of financial sustainability which includes the current and anticipated facilities of the organization. (CFRs 3.4 and 3.5)

SCU also improved its financial planning processes as was evidenced by a newly introduced segment profitability report and the 10-year modeling approach which allowed administration and the board to manage financial sustainability more effectively by understanding key drivers, required investments, and associated results. During the visit, an update to the 10-year forecast was presented and in specific circumstances, the new version did not align with the evolving new program launch assumptions and facilities strategies. This was especially evident with the nursing program where the team was informed that launching these degrees were on hold due to state regulatory delays while the financial forecast included both a launch and the corresponding high contribution to financial profitability. The team recommended that SCU refine the financial plans and create feasible scenarios to enable future decisions. (CFR 3.4)

Online library resources were provided for the campus community with access to LWW Health library, Access Medicine, EBSCO, ProQuest Ebook Central, RZ Digital Library, EBSCO Discover Research database, Academic Search Complete, Science Direct, and a physical library of 14,000 volumes. Faculty comments suggested that the institution provided sufficient library resources for its existing programs, and a process was in place to ensure new programs were adequately resourced with library holdings and/or online access. (CFR 3.5)

The institution outsourced its IT system in 2019, and the change had significantly improved the IT support functions on campus, as indicated by survey data regarding IT support issues. The institution used Jenzabar for its Student Information System, Interfolio for its faculty information system, Weave to support the assessment and monitoring of learning, and Canvas for its learning management system. The outsourcing of all functions related to information technology to another entity did present an enterprise risk issue to the continued campus operations, and the team suggests that the institution consider creating an alternative plan should the current outsourced entities falter due to issues outside the control of the institution's leadership. (CFR 3.5)

Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes

The leadership of SCU had been drawn from both internal and external recruitment and was evaluated annually. The team was impressed with the improvements that had been made since the last reaffirmation visit, largely due to the leadership of the president and his leadership team. Conversations with faculty and staff groups confirmed the effectiveness of the leadership team and the board. The institution's leadership and personnel appeared to operate with high levels of integrity, professional competence, and accountability, as evidenced by financial audits, external surveys, and the competent addition of new high bar to entry academic programs. (CFRs 1.7 and 3.6)

The university created clear decision-making processes that enabled the organization to make decisions in a timely, thoughtful manner. This clearer, organizational decision making began with the board of regents (the board) when it

reorganized itself into more focused strategic committees. Internally, the university also reduced the number of committees, created written charters, and made decision making pathways clearer. An example was the formation of the Program Launch Planning Committee (PLP). The PLP was composed of key constituents from the campus community and routinely evaluated ideas for new programs. Members of the community, departments, or other committees may recommend new programs, but the pathway was clearly through the PLP. It provided a rigorous evaluation of proposed new programs, and if it saw real value, took the recommendation to the president's cabinet for further vetting. Most PLP-endorsed programs brought to the cabinet were approved and referred by the president to the board for review and approval. Academic decision processes were clearly defined in the various faculty handbooks and committee charters. The team found decision-making processes clear and understood within the institution. The chief executive officer (CEO) was clearly responsible to the board and supervised and evaluated the institutional officers that reported to him. (CFR 3.7)

As indicated above, the institution employed a full-time CEO and chief financial officer (CFO), and both were qualified for their respective roles. The CEO had served the institution for many years and was praised by the board and the campus community for his leadership, fairness, and concern for the institution's future. Likewise, the CFO had served the institution for over a decade and was respected for his service to the university. (CFR 3.8)

In addition to its internal leadership structure, SCU had an independent, self-perpetuating governing board, the board of regents (the board). The board utilized five standing committees and two task forces to accomplish its mission: Executive

Committee; Governance Committee; Audit, Risk, and Compliance Committee; Mission, Academic, and Student Affairs Committee; Business Infrastructure Committee; Real Estate Task Force; and Partnership Task Force. The board reviewed the performance of the CEO annually and reviewed and approved the performance goals established by the CEO for the president himself and for the organization. The board also approved the annual budget, long-range plans, changes to mission and vision statements, and oversaw the investment performance of the university's investments. Board member nominations were developed by the Governance Committee of the board. According to conversations with the board, they had been very focused on finding members with the right kind of expertise to help move the institution forward. The board had a carefully drafted set of by-laws and board manual that described the role of the governing body, its operating rules and expectations of member regents, and a code of ethics that prohibited conflict of interests in decision making. An annual conflict of interest disclaimer was required of all regents. The board was awarded the prestigious John W. Nason award for innovation and exemplary leadership by the Association of Governing Boards in 2022. The team was very impressed with the board and its intimate understanding of the major issues facing the organization. As such, the team commended the board for its active engagement in defining and advancing the strategic direction of the institution. (CFR 3.9)

Faculty governance structures were well proscribed within the faculty handbook and faculty senate by-laws. The faculty governing structure was the faculty senate which had elected members from each college. The leadership positions of the faculty senate were then elected by the newly elected senators at its organizational meeting

each fall. The senate president appointed members of each standing committee: the Faculty Executive Committee, the Instructional Programs Committee (IPC), Acupuncture Competency Examinations Committee (ACE), Clinical Education and Assessment Committee, Faculty Development Committee (FDC), Integrative Competency Exam Committee, Physician's Assistant Competency and Examinations Committee (PACE), and the Professional Personnel Committee (PPC). The president of the senate, with the approval of the faculty executive committee, appointed faculty members to university-wide committees. The president of the senate was a member of the board's Mission, Academic and Student Affairs Committee. Through its committees and activities, the faculty exercised leadership in the care, development, and management of the curriculum of existing and proposed programs. The team found the leadership of the senate generally satisfied with the relationship between the faculty and the administration. (CFR 3.10)

Conclusion. The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to determine compliance with the Standard.

Compliance with Standard 4

Quality Assurance Processes

SCU had taken important steps to increase its use of data for institutional decision-making, in particular as it related to assessment of student learning and programmatic effectiveness. The Office of Institutional and Academic Insights (IAI) was designed to be the central office for data collection, analysis, and distribution and housed the institutional research functions of the university. Conversations with this

office indicated a strong commitment to making data accessible to all constituents. See component 6 for further discussion. (CFRs 4.1 and 4.2)

Institutional Learning and Improvement

SCU made significant progress in its approach to gathering data and utilizing this information to undertake ongoing assessment of performance resulting in curricular changes and improved student learning and success. Budgets were aligned to fund identified areas of improvement. Additional data was needed from external sources, specifically information from alumni and employers to enhance educational programs. The team found that SCU was committed to continuous improvement, addressing data gaps and advancing areas where assessment efforts were in their initial phases. (CFRs 4.4 and 4.5) Details are provided in components 4, 5 and 6.

SCU engaged multiple internal constituencies in its planning processes. In conversation with staff, administrators, and the board, the team determined that budgeting and long-range planning were inclusive processes. To meet organizational growth objectives, participant engagement was ongoing as market factors changed, new initiatives were introduced, and priorities were modified. (CFR 4.6)

The budgeting process adopted in 2020 started with pre-enrollment planning during which all budget holders were required to complete an external market assessment of the educational environment and competitors and use insights to directly correlate into strategic priorities and budget requests. Pre-enrollment planning also included an internal analysis using data from accreditation reports, assessment plans, program reviews, and student feedback and gauged performance using established KPIs. Insights, identified opportunities, and highlighted areas of improvement from the

external and internal assessment processes translated into enrollment projections and specific funding needs. (CFR 4.6)

The Program Launch Planning Committee (PLP) provided the team evidence of the approach used at SCU to systematically and collaboratively assess market conditions, higher education trends, and competitive offerings. The PLP had broad representation including academics, marketing, finance, and operations. Based on market information, the PLP reviewed new program proposals, planned new program launches, secured necessary funding, and monitored performance. The committee assessed the environment and through regularly scheduled meetings and informal communications, recommended pertinent strategic adjustments. (CFR 4.7)

Conclusion. The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to determine compliance with the Standard.

Federal Requirements

SCU provided sufficient materials and links to evidence in order for the team to complete the Federal Compliance forms, which can be found in appendix A. Additionally, a review of SCU's distance education programs was conducted, also provided in appendix B.

G. Component 3: Degree Programs: Meaning, Quality and Integrity of the Degrees

SCU degrees achieved meaning by being grounded in the model of interprofessional education (IPE). Both eastern and western medical approaches were valued as treatment approaches for patient care, and each SCU student was expected to graduate with not just an understanding of IPE but a strong commitment to it in their

future practice as a professional. At the heart of the SCU Model of Interprofessional Education Framework was a commitment to integrative, whole-person healthcare. As such, all programs included this emphasis in their curriculum, as well as in the university's co-curricular programming. To illustrate its commitment to IPE, the institution added an assistant dean of interprofessional education, created an Interprofessional Education (IPE) Department, and established an Interprofessional Education Council. The IPE Department offered 21 IPE courses that were shared among programs; another 60+ courses had IPE components. Discussions with faculty and staff from the IPE Department and the IPE Council verified the institution's commitment to ensuring that every program embraced the model. Additionally, clinics were organized and managed so that students from different programs worked together on patient care. Conversations with the faculty indicated that SCU's greatest strength was its interprofessional approach to whole person care. (CFR 1.1)

In addition to course-related exposure to IPE, students could enhance their classroom experiences by engaging in integrative health-related seminars, workshops, and service. SCU also had student organizations that aligned with their mission, vision, and values. As mentioned earlier, the student services professionals designed three co-curricular objectives to support SCU's commitment to integrative, whole-person health. (CFR 2.11)

While a strong commitment to IPE was evident, at the time of the visit, programs (both academic and co-curricular) were in varied stages of developing methods for assessing student achievement of IPE outcomes and IPEC competencies. Some programs developed attitudinal surveys or structured interviews to ensure that students

expressed an understanding of the competencies, and some clinical programs developed methods to observe students practicing certain competencies, but a number of programs had just begun to map IPEC competencies to PLOs and ULOs, thus not yet achieving a solid assessment plan with direct evidence. Syllabi from courses offered by the IPE Department were not consistent in stating and mapping IPE outcomes to assessment methods. While the institution has designed some indirect measures to assess achievement of the co-curricular outcomes, the assessment plan was not yet robust. As such, the team recommended that SCU maintain positive momentum in assessment by mapping IPEC competencies to other outcomes and collecting direct evidence of student achievement of those competencies. (CFR 2.3)

The quality and integrity of an SCU degree was maintained by the institution in multiple ways. Accredited programs benchmarked student performance against external standards set by accreditors, associations, and licensing bodies. To assess student learning (which is evidence of a high-quality program), all programs created course-related student learning outcomes (SLOs) which mapped to program learning outcomes (PLOs) (both IPE-specific and program-specific) which mapped to university learning outcomes (ULOs). Each program annually assessed at least two PLOs and produced an annual assessment report that was reviewed by the Assessment and Learning Council (ALC). The members of the ALC, which represented itself to the team as a community of practice, worked collaboratively with each other to ensure that best practices in assessment of student learning were utilized, thus ensuring high-quality programs. Programmatic quality was also assessed through program review (discussed in component 6). (CFR 4.4)

Other mechanisms for ensuring academic quality existed. Curricularly, quality was assessed and evaluated through several mechanisms. At the time of the visit, SCU had engaged in the first phase of a targeted course redesign called the Big Leap, which involved redesigning courses to enhance the student experience. According to conversations with the Online Education Department and the Center for Faculty Development and Excellence, the institution made significant progress in the course redesign, with 90% of courses expected to be “uplifted” by August 2023. Other phases of the Big Leap had yet to be accomplished, but staff from these offices indicated that the administration had provided significant support toward their efforts. In addition to the course redesign efforts, SCU also had mechanisms in place to review curriculum for quality. Specifically, the Instructional Programs Committee reviewed all new and revised courses for academic quality and integrity. (CFRs 2.3 and 2.4)

In addition to assessing student learning and curricular design as measures of quality and integrity, SCU also invested in the development and evaluation of its faculty to teach effectively and assess programmatic effectiveness. The Online Education Department and the Center for Faculty Development and Excellence provided training and assistance to faculty in course design, course outcome mapping, online technology use (e.g., Canvas), and Quality Matters training. At the time of the visit, 95% of faculty had been trained in Quality Matters. See standard 3 for more discussion about faculty development and evaluation. (CFR 3.3)

D. Component 4: Educational Quality: Student Learning, Core Competencies, and Standards of Performance at Graduation

As noted throughout this report, since the previous WSCUC reaffirmation, SCU had improved their systematic approach to assessment of student learning. During the

team visit, there was ample evidence that the improvements were largely due to the interprofessional, collaborative work of the Office of Institutional and Academic Insights (IAI) and the Assessment and Learning Council (ALC), a sizeable group that met at least monthly and modeled a community of practice through established peer support systems and regular learning activities related to assessment. The ALC was primarily responsible for reviewing the university learning outcomes (ULOs) established in 2014 and updating them such that the ULOs could be distinguished from PLOs and were aligned to each program's PLOs and, ultimately, to SLOs. Professional degree programs that were required to demonstrate outcome alignment with standards of the specialty's accrediting entity had accomplished this. Programs' alignment with IPEC competencies and measurement thereof are discussed in component 3. Of note was the fact that the three co-curricular learning outcomes established by student services (professionalism, inclusivity, integrative and whole-person health) were also woven into assessment plans, and members of the student service office were engaged as active members of ALC. Evidence of outcome alignment was in the form of a spreadsheet-type curriculum mapping tool completed by each program, which included a description of the types of assessment methods used to assess WSCUC core competencies. Use of the educational software platform, Weave, was in the beginning stages of use to further systematize assessment and to make linkages to evidence of learning. (CFRs 2.2, 2.2a, 2.2b, 2.3, 2.11, and 4.4)

In terms of assessment methods, established programs with a heavy clinical component implemented signature end-of-program assignments like Objective Structured Clinical Exams (OSCEs) using Standardized Patients, comprehensive

examinations (with a demonstration and oral component), and end-of-program self-reflection essays. Furthermore, in conversations with clinical directors and coordinators, the team learned that summative-level evaluations were submitted by clinical affiliate faculty, based on direct observation by practice experts of student delivery of actual patient/client care. The academic assessment components of the professional degree programs, as well as those programs without a clinical component (BSHS, MSHS, MSHGG), were described in the self-study/exhibits and confirmed as valid during meetings with the ALC, members of the Accreditation Coordinating Council, and deans and program directors. During these meetings, team members were able to explore the nature of signature assignments with program leaders who had a heavy reliance on such assessment methods and were satisfied that clear efforts were made to ensure that assessment methods were commensurate with the level of the program offered. Increased use of rubrics across all programs was described in the self-study and corroborated during discussions with the ALC and deans and program directors. (CFRs 2.4 and 2.6)

In addition to ensuring outcomes were mapped and aligned and that assessment methods were appropriate, the team also explored the degree to which programs had benchmarks against which to judge student performance. Interestingly, most programs selected a benchmark of 80% of students achieving outcomes at 80%, resulting in high levels of student achievement. When questioned about the uniformity of the 80/80 model, members of the ALC referenced professional accreditation standards. High levels of student success were attributed to the rigorous tracking of student performance across courses and the early intervention that routinely took place for

students who were not performing well. As mentioned earlier, the use of comprehensive exams, licensure pass rates, clinical assessment, and capstone courses ensured that students could meet rigorous standards for graduation. (CFRs 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, and 2.5)

For students not meeting benchmarks, the SCU self-study described how the institution identified achievement gaps at multiple levels: student, cohort, and program and in multiple ways given the five program types: certificate, bachelor, graduate, first professional masters, first professional doctorate. Based on discussions with several stakeholder groups (ALC, IAI, clinical directors and coordinators), team members were able to hear enough examples as to how individual student achievement gaps were identified to corroborate what was in the self-study. Program directors, in particular, were able to identify how student performance was tracked in their programs and when deficiencies appeared, students were immediately provided an Academic Development Plan. Faculty also reported tracking student performance in Canvas. SCU was commended for collaboration across departments to address achievement gaps and provide academic support throughout the student experience, resulting in improved outcomes. (CFRs 2.6, 2.10, and 2.13)

An identified area for improvement was the collaboration between the academic programs and student services to ensure that students were connected early and often to tailored tutoring services and counseling/advising services when indicators of faltering performance were noted. The student support program recently developed by the Doctor of Chiropractic program and led by LACC's director of academic support could serve as a strong model to use in other programs. (CFR 2.10)

E. Component 5: Student Success: Student Learning, Retention, and Graduation

Promoting Student Success

The mission of SCU is to “educate students as competent, caring, and successful integrative healthcare practitioners and professionals.” It is through this mission that the university was able to focus on providing an interprofessional academic approach that taught both western and eastern medical practices, offered students alternative pathways to accessing medical education, and provided opportunities for multiple medical career paths. During the visit, the team found that throughout all of SCU’s academic programs, promoting student success had been a hallmark and focal point of the institution. (CFR 1.2)

Utilizing a partnership model between the academic program and student advising, students’ successful completion through their program was closely monitored. By using student Academic Development Plans, as well as the support of student services, students who were at-risk were identified and provided assistance, including faculty-led, individual, and group tutoring. This commitment was illustrated by the 20 different tutoring groups offered by the university with over 7,000 hours of tutoring per term. In addition, students who were in academic programs leading to licensure or certification programs were offered test preparation support to students. (CFRs 2.10 and 2.12)

While the university had data dashboards to monitor many of their goals (e.g., enrollment and financial goals) and many of the administrative offices at the university utilized student satisfaction surveys, the team found that these offices did not consistently establish measurable goals or targets for their areas. (CFRs 2.13 and 4.3)

Retention and Completion

SCU had a history of strong student retention rates. From 2015-2021, the fall-to-fall institutional retention rate was over 91% and was even higher during the 2019-2020 academic year, with 96% of students returning the following year. While many of the university's academic programs reflected these percentages, certain programs such as Accelerated Sciences were lower due to their enrollment of students-at-large and students registering for single courses. After evaluating student success ratios between 2016-2020, SCU found no differences by race, ethnicity, or gender. Graduation rates were strong with well over 90% of students graduating by the end of their academic program with no statistically significant differences between race or ethnicity. Students taking licensure exams also had strong pass rates with most programs having at least 90% of students passing the exam the first time. The exception to this was the Doctorate of Chiropractic students who passed with 86% within six months of graduation (note: this rate meets professional standards). SCU students also maintained a low default rate between 3.1% and 4.3%. (CFRs 1.2 and 2.10)

Student Success Initiatives

Co-curricular activities were centered around three core values of professionalism, integrative and whole-person health, and inclusivity. There were 19 student clubs that focused on a variety of different themes including health, culture, and engagement with the community. While the majority of students (92%) were familiar with the clubs and organizations, only 25% participated in them. Involvement with the SCU Associated Student Body (ASB) was strong, with the organization offering many different programs and activities. Members of ASB reported positive and personal

interactions with student service offices and that they took advantage of the services they provided. They also appreciated the open lines of communication with the president, the administration, and the student service offices via email, individual meetings, and university Town Hall meetings. (CFRs 2.10 and 2.11) With the end of the pandemic, the team found a high level of student excitement in returning back to campus and that they were looking forward to more activities and services being offered on campus. After speaking with SCU staff, it was apparent that many within the student services and other administrative offices were primarily working off campus and there were no apparent plans or timeline for many of them to return back to their on-campus offices. While many operational services continued to be successfully offered to students on-line, the team found a disconnect between student expectations of what programs, services, and activities would be offered on-campus in the future and what the university would provide due to staff working remotely. The team suggests that the university clearly communicate with students on what on-campus services and activities will be offered in the future.

The team found a strong spirit of collaboration between departments and staff at SCU. This was confirmed with discussions with the student services staff and conversation with members of the SCU ASB. Both groups reported that the university fostered an environment of teamwork by continually trying to improve their customer service and assistance to the students. This focus was evident in the partnership created between the admissions and the financial aid offices. These offices worked together to create a seamless entrance into the university with staff personally reaching out to each new student to ensure they had all their paperwork and important items

completed prior to the start of their academic year. The members of the ASB appreciated this environment of collaboration and reported high satisfaction with the services they received from the student services and other administrative offices at the university.(CFR 2.13)

The university had taken steps to enhance student success by implementing a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force (DEI Task Force) (see standard 1). As part of their report to the president, the DEI Task Force identified three areas in which success could be enhanced for students from underrepresented populations. These included increased assistance in academic support, financial aid, and internal and external community environment (e.g., feeling of inclusion of support and mentors). While recommendations had been made to the president and some diversity training had been offered (i.e. LGBTQIA Diversity training), work was still needed on the implementation of the task force's report. As such, the team recommended that SCU continue its efforts to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives informed by the recommendations of the DEI Task Force to better support those students, staff, and faculty who were from underrepresented communities. (CFR 1.4)

F. Component 6: Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program Review, Assessment, Use of Data and Evidence

Assessment and Program Review

As noted in WSCUC's 2021 Interim Report Committee Action Letter and confirmed through document review and multiple conversations by team members at the time of the visit, SCU made significant improvement in its assessment and program review processes. As reported during interviews with the Assessment and Learning Council, the Office of Institutional and Academic Insights, and members of the

Accreditation Coordinating Council, each program had undergone a substantial curricular review and mapped its SLOs to PLOs to ULOs, designed assessment methods, and collected evidence of student learning. Additionally, the institution implemented the use of Weave and expanded its use of ExamSoft as tools to assist with both formative and summative assessment. The faculty also referenced the use of a course mapping tool which helped to map ULOs to PLOs to SLOs. (CFR 2.4) A review of syllabi by members of the team confirmed that both online and face-to-face courses had learning outcomes mapped to assessment methods. (CFRs 2.3 and 4.3)

To ensure an ongoing commitment to assessing student learning, programs evaluated at least two PLOs per year and submitted an annual assessment report of the findings which were reviewed via a rubric by the ALC. In order to improve and encourage best practices in assessment, feedback was provided to the program representative on the council which could be taken back to the program faculty. The team was able to confirm that assessment was a part of the culture at SCU, and curricular changes and improvements had resulted from this process. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, and 4.4)

In addition to better tools and processes, faculty also received training in assessment practices through the Center for Faculty Development and Excellence and the Online Education Department (see standard 3). (CFR 3.3) As indicated in component 3, many programs were still in the beginning stages of mapping and assessing IPEC competencies. Likewise, SCU had only recently begun to update its University Learning Outcomes to make them more relevant, so the mapping and assessing of those outcomes were not fully developed. However, it was apparent to the

team that SCU had built a culture of assessment and a commitment to continuous improvement, and the team was confident that SCU would continue to move the needle forward on these remaining tasks. (CFR 4.4)

Similar to its assessment practices, SCU developed an improved program review process that included a mid-cycle report. Each program review that was reviewed by the team included, at minimum, an overview of the program and its requirements; descriptions of its faculty, courses, and program learning outcomes; student demographics; success indicators such as graduation, retention, and licensure pass rates; a SWOT analysis; and a report from an external reviewer. While PLOs were listed and mapped in the program reviews, missing from the reviewed reports was a comprehensive analysis of student learning across all PLOs. Some programs reported on the two PLOs that had been most recently assessed, but there did not appear to be a comprehensive review of student performance across all PLOs. This proven practice allows a program to review the entire curriculum at one moment in time and might be considered as the next step for best practices in program review. (CFR 2.7)

SCU also improved its program review process by developing a crosswalk with professionally accredited programs. This crosswalk scheduled program reviews in coordination with professional accreditation and reduced faculty work by only requiring of the internal review process any information that had not already been submitted as part of the professional accreditation. This streamlined approach was praised by the faculty. (CFR 2.7)

Upon completion of the program review report, each program presented its findings to the Accreditation Coordinating Council which also reviewed reports and

provided feedback to the originating program. The provost also reviewed program review findings through a memorandum of understanding, thus resulting in a closing of the loop. In discussions at the visit, different faculty groups provided examples of how the program review process had resulted in curricular improvements, as well as budget acquisitions needed by the program. (CFRs 2.7 and 4.4)

Given the progress made by SCU since the 2017 visit, the team was pleased to commend the dedication of faculty and staff to continuous improvement, illustrated by the Big Leap (see component 3), implementation of annual assessment processes, and regularly scheduled program reviews. (CFRs 2.7 and 4.4)

Use of Data and Evidence

Along with improvements in assessment and program review, SCU made solid progress in how it collected and utilized data for these and other processes. According to its report, SCU successfully deployed numerous software programs and tools to enhance its continuous improvement efforts, and it added a Data Governance Committee. At the visit the team heard about many of the tools and technologies mentioned in the report and how they had improved data collection and analysis. For example, the addition of Interfolio helped with the collection and storage of faculty data for annual performance reviews and promotion decisions. Likewise, faculty used Weave, an assessment tool, to collect and analyze assessment data. Faculty were trained on and utilized Canvas, the learning management system, to manage the material in their courses, even if the course was not fully online. Other tools recently added included Salesforce, Jenzebar J1, Prophix, EXXAT, Curiculog, and Acalog. (CFR 4.3)

The data hub of the institution was the Office of Institutional and Academic Insights (IAI). Discussions with this office indicated that SCU was progressing on the implementation of its data warehouse, with eight Business Intelligence (BI) dashboards that tracked student data metrics such as enrollment, demographics, retention, and graduation, disaggregated by year, term, division, and major. These dashboards were available for viewing to the SCU community, and programs could track at any time how their programs were performing. In addition to the dashboards, the IAI planned to better utilize its Learning Management System (Canvas) to pull student data and create dashboards. To facilitate the use of data in decision-making, members from the IAI participated on various councils, including the Data Governance Committee, the Accreditation Coordinating Council, and the Assessment and Learning Council. This cross representation seemed to create a healthy synergy for the various assessment and program review tasks. (CFR 4.3)

In addition to providing student data metrics that served as key performance indicators, other data had been collected for decision-making. In order to better assess the campus environment, the student services team had begun use of the Thriving Quotient and was exploring a new alternative to the student experience survey to better assess their co-curricular learning objectives of professionalism, integrative health, and inclusivity. In addition, each administrative department asked students to complete a survey to assess their services, and student services collected survey data to assess the performance and student satisfaction of the university's co-curricular activities. (CFR 4.3)

The team, as a result of nearly all stakeholder meetings, concluded that there was an institution-wide commitment to improvement based on the collection of evidence. As a result, the team commended SCU for the significant investment in personnel, technology, and processes that enabled the institution to capture and analyze data for improvement and informed decision-making. (CFR 4.3)

Despite these gains, areas of growth were identified in the self study report and elaborated upon during the visit. The IAI discussed its desire to increase the use of predictive analytics to identify performance gaps and to help faculty more easily access data. The physician assistant program was in the beginning stages of using predictive analytics, but most programs had yet to find ways to use data beyond grades to target intervention efforts. The IAI also wished to better acquire the employment information of its graduates. Additionally, the use of external data sources (e.g., advisory boards, alumni, employers) was not consistent. Some programs referenced the use of advisory boards as part of its program review process, but given the systematic improvements in many of its processes and SCU's mission, collecting data from sources outside the institution could enhance its continuous improvement efforts and support the market relevance of healthcare degrees and graduates. Thus, the team recommended that SCU further develop the acquisition of external data and actively engage external stakeholders to inform program review and other continuous improvement processes. (CFRs 2.7 and 4.5)

G. Component 7: Sustainability: Financial Viability, Preparing for the Changing Higher Education Environment

Improved financial sustainability had been at the forefront of SCU's plans and operations for a number of years. A major effort to diversify revenue was underway through introducing new programs in order to both increase and diversify tuition revenue streams, beyond the one legacy program, the Doctor of Chiropractic. This diversification was successful in more than doubling revenue in the past four years and provided a concurrent significant improvement in SCU's financial well-being. The institution was successful in bringing in new programs that were in demand to the market, as evidenced by the revenue growth since 2019 from \$21.6 million to \$45.6 million in 2022. The growth in revenue, for the most part, resulted in a concurrent increase in net assets each of the past three years, through favorably influenced by one time government funds and loan forgiveness. The primary reserve ratio improved as a result from a low of 0.26 in 2018-19 to 0.61 in 2021-22. Most of the increase was attributable to the new programs. Given these improvements, the team commended the institution for its substantive progress in strengthening its financial position over the past three years.

(CFR 3.4)

SCU key financial results are illustrated below; net assets have increased for each of the past three years:

Year	EOY Net Assets	Increase in Net Assets	Liquidity
2019	\$21,296,255	(\$3,209,219)	\$23,119,876
2020	\$24,255,484	\$2,959,229	\$20,363,972
2021	\$35,000,067	\$10,744,583 ^a	\$24,351,492
2022	\$37,023,679	\$2,023,612	\$26,578,458

a. The self study notes that 2021 include \$3.2M in Paycheck Protection Program loan forgiveness and \$2.7M investment gain which increased results above that achieved by normal operations. As per audited financial statements, 2022 included Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) of \$1.37M.

The institution continues to be focused on its financial sustainability and planned to further diversify its tuition revenue by increasing the number of program offerings. Additional planned program offerings included, but not limited to, a Doctor of Physical Therapy, Doctor of Medical Science, and the Bachelor of Science in Registered Nursing. The institution's overall revenue diversification goal was to initially lower reliance on tuition to 60%, but this was revised to a more achievable goal of 90%, from its current 92%. A review of the financial information and conversations during the site visit confirmed the continued dependence SCU has on the launch of additional new programs to increase revenue and provide greater financial stability. The team was concerned that the reliance on student generated income remained high and recommended that SCU continue to increase its enrollment and diversify additional revenue streams to achieve financial sustainability. (CFR 3.4)

In addition to improved financial performance, improved planning and budgeting practices were instituted, including more informative financial performance reporting at the program level, improved budgeting processes, and the inclusion of contingency budgets both at the divisional and institutional level. The institution was in the process of creating a contribution margin model for its programs and only the manner on how to allocate support costs in an accurate and reasonable manner remained. (CFR 3.4)

The institution stated in its institutional report that it was planning on a new build-to-suit campus that would improve the learning environment for students and faculty and provide better transportation access to and from the campus. The current campus was situated on a 1960s style California high school, single level, and spread out over a large physical footprint. The size, approximately 175,000 square feet, appeared to be of adequate size, but the age and style of the buildings presented their own difficulties. The following was stated in the institutional report:

Key Challenge: Aging campus facilities/deferred maintenance.

Response: Relocation to a new campus (anticipated) that will incorporate “next generation” design for max flexibility.

The campus had undergone some modifications since moving into the facility but was generally believed by the leadership to be outdated and difficult to modify for its current and future programs and even with modifications still resided in the middle of a single-family residential housing area, with difficult and distant freeway access. However, the anticipated build of a new campus was shelved as a result of: 1) unacceptable terms for the sale of the current campus; 2) the decreasing costs of existing buildings in the greater Los Angeles metro area; and 3) the increasing costs of

new construction and the concurrent supply chain issues surrounding new construction. Increased vacancies in existing buildings had caused lease costs to lower, and the resulting value of existing buildings to drop in value as well. At the time of the visit, other options were being evaluated, with an actual move somewhere in the future. Meanwhile the current campus that had identified a deferred maintenance backlog of approximately \$10,780,000, and the dilemma of how much to invest in the current campus in light of a desired move, was a focal point of budgeting discussions for the administration and board. The deferred maintenance backlog and projected expenditures are described below:

Current Deferred Maintenance Backlog \$12,400,000 and Planned Future Expenditures					
Backlog (2022-23)	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
\$10,779,471	\$177,675	\$1,078,820	\$1,196,380	\$300,000	\$300,000

The institution also developed a long-term financial plan that included deferred maintenance expenditures but were likely insufficient in out-years to fully fund the required deferred maintenance costs if it were to remain in the existing facility for a longer term than anticipated, and the cost of the move to either a leased or purchased new facility was not included in the plan the team reviewed. In order to bring more clarity to discussions about the campus relocation and the future new program revenues and costs, the team recommended that the institution continue to refine financial plans

that enable future decisions regarding the viability of new program launches, partnerships, and potential relocation alternatives. (CFR 3.4)

The continued use of the existing campus may require major improvements as anticipated new programs will require additional labs and equipment, existing labs will likely need to be refreshed, and new equipment purchased from time to time, so the team recommended that the institution continue to enhance facilities and equipment that will advance student learning and satisfaction as well as business continuity. (CFR 3.5)

H. Component 9: Reflection and Plans for Improvement

As indicated throughout this report, SCU engaged in a reflective self-assessment, both in writing and in conversations with the team. It identified areas of strength and areas for growth, based primarily on evidence and by responding to the changing dynamics of its growth plan. As the organization moved through the second phase of a three-phase institutional development plan, SCU gained clarity in its strategic direction and fortified its organizational capabilities which strengthened its foundation and improved financial solvency. The organization continued moving through its development plan realizing the need to address critical strategic and operational elements to ensure long term financial sustainability. During the visit, SCU provided evidence that it had taken effective initial steps in that direction.

SCU was focused on expanding enrollment through organic means. As existing program growth would be insufficient to hit targeted student counts, the need to diversify into additional new programs and new geographies was deemed necessary. To choose the appropriate course of action, the organization had processes to proactively identify market trends and with agility adjust its direction as deemed necessary. As of the site

visit, new programs were launched. It was premature to determine their success and the benefits they could provide in bolstering the organization. Additional new programs were in development and launch plans were being reprioritized due to external market factors. Considering the timing of regulatory approvals for new programs and corresponding high levels of investments, viability continued to be evaluated and closely planned.

SCU indicated that it could continue its approach to expand organically through its own efforts, but it believed that partnerships would expedite this programmatic growth and necessary diversification. The sense of urgency for completing these partnerships, a critical second element to the plan, was depicted in the self-study and through various conversations. However, SCU most recently shifted its focus from potential mergers or acquisitions to creating affiliations that facilitated programmatic expansions so that overall institutional control was maintained by the board and university leadership. Various partnership conversations were advancing for programmatic market entries.

A third critical element to SCU's plan consisted of a new campus move rather than addressing the challenges of its current facilities. Plans to construct a new facility had been stopped due to changes in project costs and sale terms of the existing campus. Other approaches such as leases and lower cost facilities acquisitions were actively being pursued. Considering the dependence on additional new programs for future financial stability, the incremental operating costs and capital expenditures of a new facility were being evaluated. This financial impact would be balanced with the

strategic and operational benefits of relocating away from an aged property with high maintenance risks.

SCU was at a crossroads in its evolution and financial trajectory as pivotal decisions and implementations were underway for new programs, consequential partnerships, and campus operations. The organization was also embarking on a new strategic planning process as the current strategic plan expired in 2023. All these moving pieces will need to be skillfully managed and new processes leveraged. The team felt reassured that a knowledgeable and committed board would provide strong counsel and ensure that thoughtful decisions would be made in benefit of the organization and its students.

Section III –Commendations and Recommendations from the Team Review

As a result of its work, the team commended SCU for:

1. Its thoughtful and transparent self-reflection, which has led to significant advancements in key areas identified by the Commission since the last interaction with WSCUC.
2. A strong commitment across all levels to SCU's mission and values, which includes a consistent emphasis on interprofessional practice and education and whole person care.
3. The active engagement of the board of regents in defining and advancing the strategic direction of the organization.
4. Substantive progress in strengthening its financial position over the past three years.

5. The dedication of faculty and staff to continuous improvement, illustrated by the Big Leap, implementation of annual assessment processes, and regularly scheduled program reviews.
6. Significant investment in personnel, technology, and processes that has enabled the institution to capture and analyze data for improvement and informed decision-making.
7. Collaboration across departments to address achievement gaps and provide academic support throughout the student experience, resulting in improved outcomes.
8. A responsive and dedicated staff who care deeply about the success of faculty, students, and the institution as a whole.

The team recommended that SCU:

1. Increase its enrollment and diversify additional revenue streams to achieve financial sustainability. (CFR 3.4)
2. Continue to refine financial plans that enable future decisions regarding the viability of new program launches, partnerships, and potential relocation alternatives. (CFR 3.4)
3. Enhance facilities and equipment that will advance student learning and satisfaction as well as business continuity. (CFR 3.5)
4. Advance diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, informed by the recommendations of the DEI Task Force. (CFR 1.4)

5. Further develop the acquisition of external data and actively engage external stakeholders to inform program review and other continuous improvement processes. (CFRs 2.7 and 4.5)
6. Maintain positive momentum in assessment by mapping IPEC competencies to other outcomes and collecting direct evidence of student achievement of those competencies. (CFR 2.3)

Section IV - Appendices

Appendix A. Federal Compliance Forms

Credit Hour and Program Length Review Form

Under federal regulations, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's credit hour policy and processes as well as the lengths of its programs.

Credit Hour - §602.24(f)

The accrediting agency, as part of its review of an institution for renewal of accreditation, must conduct an effective review and evaluation of the reliability and accuracy of the institution's assignment of credit hours.

1. The accrediting agency meets this requirement if-
 - i. It reviews the institution's-
 - A. Policies and procedures for determining the credit hours, as defined in 34 CFR 600.2, that the institution awards for courses and programs; and
 - B. The application of the institution's policies and procedures to its programs and coursework; and
 - ii. Makes a reasonable determination of whether the institution's assignment of credit hours conforms to commonly accepted practice in higher education.
2. In reviewing and evaluating an institution's policies and procedures for determining credit hour assignments, an accrediting agency may use sampling or other methods in the evaluation.

Credit hour is defined by the Department of Education as follows:

A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than—

1. One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
2. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

See also WASC Senior College and University Commission's Credit Hour Policy.

Program Length - §602.16(a)(1)(viii)

Program length may be seen as one of several measures of quality and as a proxy measure for scope of the objectives of degrees or credentials offered. Traditionally offered degree programs are generally approximately 120 semester credit hours for a bachelor's degree, and 30 semester

credit hours for a master's degree; there is greater variation at the doctoral level depending on the type of program. For programs offered in non-traditional formats, for which program length is not a relevant and/or reliable quality measure, reviewers should ensure that available information clearly defines desired program outcomes and graduation requirements, that institutions are ensuring that program outcomes are achieved, and that there is a reasonable correlation between the scope of these outcomes and requirements and those typically found in traditionally offered degrees or programs tied to program length.

1. Credit Hour and Program Length Review Form

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Policy on credit hour	Is this policy easily accessible? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, where is the policy located? University Catalog: Credit Hour Policy
	Comments:
Process(es)/ periodic review of credit hour	Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: Credit hour assignments are reviewed in Curriculog during the process by which new courses are requested or existing courses are revised, as well as at mid-cycle academic program review, consistent with the credit hour policy published in the catalog and other institutional processes through the Instructional Programs Committee, mid-cycle Academic Program Review, and the ongoing Curricular Integrity Review [Periodic Review of Credit Hour Assignments].
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: A sample schedule (Spring 2022 term) is available here: [Schedule of On-Ground Courses (Spring 2022)]
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	How many syllabi were reviewed? 9 syllabi, as described in "Comments" below.
	What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? Both.
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences, Master of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine, Master of Science Physician Assistant, Doctor of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine, Doctor of Chiropractic
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: The linked syllabi provide 1-2 examples of online/hybrid from each degree level as appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All courses at the Bachelor's level at SCU are online only, not hybrid: BSHS 0300 and BSHS 0301 - With very few exceptions such as those provided here - CDX0310 taken by Master of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine, Doctor of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine, and Doctor of Chiropractic students and PA100 taken by Master of

	<p>Science: Physician Assistant students - all courses that are online at the Master's level at SCU are not hybrid: IHP200, CDX0310, and PA100</p> <p>The Doctoral programs at SCU have both online and blended courses, in addition to the many on-ground courses: APP1520, AN0510, GA0102, and GA0202</p>
<p>Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated) <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i></p>	<p>How many syllabi were reviewed? 5 syllabi, as described in "Comments" below.</p>
	<p>What kinds of courses? Clinical courses</p>
	<p>What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctoral</p>
	<p>What discipline(s)? Ayurveda Practitioner, Master of Science: Physician Assistant, Doctor of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine, Doctor of Chiropractic</p>
	<p>Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>
	<p>Comments: All SCU courses have a prescribed number of hours. Courses meet on a prescribed schedule that dictates specific days and hours that course sessions are held, <i>except clinical courses</i>, which dictate prescribed hours <i>per week</i> achieved by students attending different clinical shifts. An example clinical syllabus is provided for each level of degree program (first professional doctoral degree, master's degree, certificate) as examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From Ayurvedic Practitioner Certificate: AYPC51 - From Master of Science: Physician Assistant: PACR General Surgery and PACR Internal Medicine - From Doctor of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine: ACL1911 <p>From Doctor of Chiropractic: CL10T09</p>
<p>Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)</p>	<p>How many programs were reviewed? 5</p>
	<p>What kinds of programs were reviewed? Doctor of Chiropractic, Master of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine, MS: Physician Assistant, Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences, Ayurvedic Practitioner Certificate</p>
	<p>What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctoral</p>
	<p>What discipline(s)? See above</p>
	<p>Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>
	<p>Comments: For all certificate and degree programs, the number of credits required is provided in the catalog by program, listed in each program's section called "Degree Completion Requirements." Full descriptions of each program are available in the same location. The catalog is published on SCU's website. Ayurvedic Wellness Certificate, Ayurvedic Practitioner Certificate, Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences, Doctor of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine, Doctor of Chiropractic, Graduate Certificate in Human Genetics and Genomics, Master of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine, Master of Science in Human Genetics and Genomics, Master of Science in Medical Science, Master of Science: Physician Assistant, Postbaccalaureate Health Education Certificate. Information is also directly available on the website for each program. Samples are provided here: Ayurvedic Practitioner Certificate, Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences, Master of Science: Physician Assistant, Doctor of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine.</p>

Review Completed By: Stephanie Juillerat
Date: March 24, 2023

2. Marketing and Recruitment Review Form

Under federal regulation*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's recruiting and admissions practices.

Material Reviewed	Questions and Comments: Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this table as appropriate.
**Federal regulations	<p>Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments: SCU follows all federal regulations on fair and ethical recruitment practices. SCU admissions staff are evaluated and compensated in the same manner as all SCU Employees. There is no incentivized compensation for any SCU employee. SCU also follows the following policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6.12 Conflict of Interest (From Employee Handbook) - Statement from SCU People+Culture (Human Resources): Southern California University of Health Sciences prohibits the award of any commission, bonus, or other incentive payment based in any part, directly or indirectly, upon success in securing enrollments or the award of financial aid, to any individual or entity who is engaged in any student recruitment or admission activity, or in making decisions regarding the award of Title IV, HEA program funds. <p>University admission staff are also guided by the NACAC (National Association of College Admissions Counseling) Guide to Ethical Practice in College Admission</p>
Degree completion and cost	<p>Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments: Information about the cost of the degree is available on SCU's catalog, published on the website – accessible directly through this link: University Catalog: Tuition and Fees. Information about the typical length of time to degree can be accessed in the program description of each program on the catalog – accessible directly through these links: Ayurvedic Wellness Certificate, Ayurvedic Practitioner Certificate, Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences, Doctor of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine, Doctor of Chiropractic, Graduate Certificate in Human Genetics and Genomics, Master of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine, Master of Science in Human Genetics and Genomics, Master of Science in Medical Science, Master of Science: Physician Assistant, Postbaccalaureate Health Education Certificate. Information on time to degree and cost is also directly available on the website for each program. Samples are provided here: Ayurvedic Practitioner Certificate, Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences, Master of Science: Physician Assistant, Doctor of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine.</p>
Careers and employment	<p>Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>
	<p>Comments: A majority of SCU students are enrolled in programs that lead directly to a specific profession and/or license (such as chiropractic, acupuncture, physician assistant, and Ayurveda). Other programs are expressly pathways into health profession programs (such as Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences and Master of Science in Health Sciences). Licensure and career information are available on the program pages of the website but not necessarily the catalog.</p>

*§602.16(a)(1)(vii)

**Section 487 (a)(20) of the Higher Education Act (HEA) prohibits Title IV eligible institutions from providing incentive compensation to employees or third party entities for their success in securing student enrollments. Incentive compensation includes commissions, bonus payments, merit salary adjustments, and promotion decisions based solely on success in enrolling students. These regulations do not apply to the recruitment of international students residing in foreign countries who are not eligible to receive Federal financial aid.

Review Completed By: Stephanie Juillerat

Date: March 24, 2023

3. Student Complaints Review Form

Under federal regulation*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s student complaints policies, procedures, and records.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Policy on student complaints	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, is the policy or procedure easily accessible? Is so, where?
	Comments: The policy can be found in the catalog on the university website under “University Policies,” “Student Rights and Responsibilities,” and “Campus Safety Manual:” Title IX Complaint: Policy and Process , Student Grievance: Policy and Process , FERPA Complaint: Policy and Process . The policy on external complaints is also in the catalog on the university website: Complaints to External Agencies: Policy and Process .
Process(es)/ procedure	Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, please describe briefly: Each internal complaint is investigated in timely fashion by the associated office, with complainants informed of the outcome and outcomes tracked by type of complaint. Procedures for complaints are included in the links above.
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Comments: Each of the policies in the item above includes the process/procedure. Please reference the links immediately above. The policies are followed, with outcomes monitored – see the Student Complaints Table .	
Records	Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where? Complaints are tracked in Symplicity-Insight. Data can include artifacts, outcomes, and more.
	Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, please describe briefly: Complaints are tracked in Symplicity-Insight.
	Comments: The attached document, Student Complaints Table , indicates the number and type of formal complaints in the last 2 years, as of publication in July 2022; where complaints are stored, tracked, and monitored; and the outcome of the complaints.

*§602-16(1)(1)(ix)

See also WASC Senior College and University Commission’s Complaints and Third Party Comment Policy.

Review Completed By: Stephanie Juillerat

Date: March 28, 2023

4. Transfer Credit Policy Review Form

Under federal regulations*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s recruiting and admissions practices accordingly.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Transfer Credit Policy(s)	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, is the policy publicly available? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where? In the Advanced Standing/Transfer Credit Policy in the catalog published on the website.
	Does the policy(s) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: SCU’s policy for receiving transfer credit is available in the catalog, published on the website.

*§602.24(e): Transfer of credit policies. The accrediting agency must confirm, as part of its review for renewal of accreditation, that the institution has transfer of credit policies that--

1. Are publicly disclosed in accordance with 668.43(a)(11); and
2. Include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education.

See also WASC Senior College and University Commission’s Transfer of Credit Policy.

Review Completed By: Stephanie Juillerat
Date: March 28, 2023

Appendix B - Distance Education Review

Institutions must have WSCUC approval to utilize distance education in the delivery of any of its programs in any amount, and are required to seek WSCUC approval for programs where 50% or more of the program can be completed through distance education. The institution's use of distance education in the delivery of its programs is reviewed as part of a comprehensive evaluation of the institution including an Accreditation Visit or Seeking Accreditation Visit.

Distance Education is defined as:

Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed below to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor or instructors and to support **regular and substantive interaction** between the students and the instructor or instructors, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies that may be used to offer distance education include:

- The internet;
- One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband, fiber optic, satellite, or wireless communication devices;
- Audioconference;
- Other media used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in this definition

In keeping with federal expectations, WSCUC requires institutions that utilize distance education in the delivery of programs to demonstrate "Faculty-Initiated Regular and Substantive Interaction" and "Academic Engagement" as defined by the federal regulations (see Code of Federal Regulations §600.2).

Regular and Substantive Interaction is engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and also includes at least two of the following:

- (i) Providing direct instruction;
- (ii) Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework;
- (iii) Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency;
- (iv) Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or
- (v) Other instructional activities approved by the institution's or program's accrediting agency.

An institution ensures regular interaction between a student and an instructor or instructors by, prior to the student's completion of a course or competency -

- (i) Providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency; and
- (ii) Monitoring the student's academic engagement and success and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student.

Academic Engagement requires active participation by a student in an instructional activity related to the student's course of study that –

(1) Is defined by the institution in accordance with any applicable requirements of its State or accrediting agency;

(2) Includes, but is not limited to -

(i) Attending a synchronous class, lecture, recitation, or field or laboratory activity, physically or online, where there is an opportunity for interaction between the instructor and students;

(ii) Submitting an academic assignment;

(iii) Taking an assessment or an exam;

(iv) Participating in an interactive tutorial, webinar, or other interactive computer-assisted instruction;

(v) Participating in a study group, group project, or an online discussion that is assigned by the institution; or

(vi) Interacting with an instructor about academic matters

Please complete either Section A for institutions that offer distance education programs approved by WSCUC or are 100% distance education institutions OR Section B for institutions that utilize distance education in the delivery of programs that do not rise to the level of a WSCUC approved distance education program.

Institution: University of Southern California Health Sciences

Type of Visit: Reaffirmation

Name of reviewer/s: Stephanie Juillerat

Date/s of review: March 31, 2023

Section Completed: A

SECTION A: Institutions with Approved Distance Education Programs

1. Programs and courses reviewed (please list)

All courses in BSHS program

All courses in MSM program

2. Background Information (number of programs offered by distance education; degree levels; FTE enrollment in distance education courses/programs; history of offering distance education; percentage growth in distance education offerings and enrollment; platform, formats, and/or delivery method)

SCU has offered distance education programs since 2020 – nearly all of SCU’s distance education programs launched during the pandemic when “everything was online,” whether a formal distance

program or not. As the emergency waiver draws to a close in 2023, all SCU courses in all programs are presently returned to published delivery methods.

The total mix of distance education programs at SCU currently includes four non-degree certificates - and four degree programs at the Bachelors, Masters, and Doctoral level (the latter starting in January 2023).

The following programs are offered distance at SCU, listed in order of launch:

Program, Level, Launch Date	FTE Enroll. (FA22)	% FTE Enroll. Growth (FA21-FA22)	Platform	Format	Delivery Method*
Master of Science in Medical Sciences (MSMS) Masters 2020	106.0	41% (75.0 to 106.0)	LMS and asynchronous delivery: Canvas Synchronous delivery: Zoom Assessment: Canvas, Examsoft (live proctoring), TurnItIn	Online synchronous and asynchronous sessions delivered over 15 weeks. Modules may include peer-to-peer discussion board posts and replies, self-directed exercises, written assignments, quizzes, case studies, mid-term and/or final exams.	Online and Online Interactive
Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences (BSHS) Bachelor's Completion 2021	29.7	90% (15.6 to 29.7)	LMS and asynchronous delivery: Canvas Assessment: Canvas, Proctorio, TurnItIn	Online courses consist of seven modules delivered over 7 ½ week blocks within the 15-week term. Each module may include peer-to-peer discussion board posts and replies, self-directed exercises, written assignments, quizzes, case studies, mid-term and/or final exams.	Online
Ayurveda Certificate Programs (Wellness Educator [AYW] and Practitioner [AYP]) Non-Degree 2021 (on-ground versions with	71.0 44.3 AYW 27.7 AYP	-23% (92.7 to 71.0) -9% AYW (48.7 to 44.3) -39% AYP	LMS and asynchronous delivery: Canvas Synchronous Delivery: Zoom Assessment: Canvas, Examsoft (with Exam ID / Exam Monitor), TurnItIn	Combination of on-ground sessions, online synchronous lectures, asynchronous components, and in-person clinical rotations over 15 weeks. Online components may include peer-to-peer discussion board posts and replies, self-directed exercises, written assignments, quizzes, case studies, mid-term and/or final exams.	Online Interactive and Blended

distance elements since 2008 and 2013)		(44.0 to 26.7)			
Master of Science in Human Genetics and Genomics (MSHGG) Masters 2021	31.0	79% (17.3 to 31.0)	LMS and asynchronous delivery: Canvas Assessment: Canvas, Proctorio, TurnItIn	Online courses consist of seven modules delivered over 7 ½ week blocks within the 15-week term. Each module may include peer-to-peer discussion board posts and replies, self-directed exercises, written assignments, quizzes, case studies, mid-term and/or final exams.	Online
Graduate Certificate in Human Genetics and Genomics Non-degree 2022	0.3	NA** (NA to 0.3)	LMS and asynchronous delivery: Canvas Assessment: Canvas, Proctorio, TurnItIn	Online courses consist of seven modules delivered over 7 ½ week blocks within the 15-week term. Each module may include peer-to-peer discussion board posts and replies, self-directed exercises, written assignments, quizzes, case studies, mid-term and/or final exams.	Online
Post-Baccalaureate Health Education Certificate Non-degree 2022	1.3	NA** (NA to 1.3)	LMS and asynchronous delivery: Canvas Assessment: Canvas, Proctorio, TurnItIn	Online courses consist of seven modules delivered over 7 ½ week blocks within the 15-week term. Each module may include peer-to-peer discussion board posts and replies, self-directed exercises, written assignments, quizzes, case studies, mid-term and/or final exams.	Online
Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) Doctoral 2023	NA** (Spring 2023 launch with 19 students)	NA** (NA to NA)	LMS and asynchronous delivery: Canvas Synchronous Delivery: Zoom Assessment: Canvas, Proctorio, TurnItIn	Lecture courses are offered online synchronously, lab courses and clinical experiences are taken on-ground - delivered over 15 weeks. Online components may include peer-to-peer discussion board posts and replies, self-directed exercises, written assignments, quizzes, case studies, mid-term and/or final exams.	Online Interactive and Blended

*Note: SCU courses are delivered in four delivery methods: online (meaning asynchronous), online interactive (synchronous), blended (some combination of online and on-ground components), and

on-ground. Any delivery method that says “online” should be recognized as online asynchronous, and any delivery method that says “blended” includes live, on-ground elements.

**Note: NA = Not Applicable; the program was not active in the time period

3. Nature of the review (material examined and persons/committees interviewed)

SCU provided extensive material in a document entitled “Distance Education Review – Institutional Briefing.” Material that was needed beyond this document was provided promptly. In addition to the review of this document, members of the team met with relevant institutional representatives to explore their distance education delivery.

Observations and Findings

Lines of Inquiry	Observations and Findings	Follow-up Required (identify the issues)
<p><i>Fit with Mission. How does the institution conceive of distance learning relative to its mission, operations, and administrative structure? How are distance education offerings planned, funded, and operationalized?</i></p>	<p>SCU's values include inclusivity and health equity, and its mission is to educate students as competent, caring, and successful integrative healthcare practitioners and professionals. To achieve this mission in the most inclusive way, and in a manner sensitive to issues of equity and access, SCU conceives of distance offerings in health and healthcare-related fields as essential. SCU began to explore distance offerings with substantial change submissions to WSCUC in 2019.</p> <p>Programs are planned, funded and operationalized in a multi-stage process. Program need (including for distance education offerings) is determined by a Program Launch Planning team, which evaluates the local, state, and national need for the program – and considers SCU's University Master Program Criteria: the program allows a student to pursue a clinical or nonclinical career in a healthcare related field; does not require the university to offer general education; leads the student to a recognized licensure, certification, or vocation or provides a pathway to the same; Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data supports future growth; the university can reasonably compete in the space; the program can, at its maturity, contribute to the financial health of the university; and the program advances SCU's mission, vision, and values.</p> <p>Programs are approved by faculty and administrative bodies as well as by the Board of Regents. Programs are then developed consistent with the SCU Program Design Principles of Quality, Relevance, Marketability, and Innovation.</p> <p>Curriculum is backwards designed by the program director and faculty in consultation with the Provost's Office, the Online Education Department, the Center for Faculty Development and Excellence, and other support organizations and departments on campus. Ultimately, program faculty are responsible for the curriculum as subject matter experts. Assessment maps and curriculum maps come first. Syllabi are then developed by program faculty and approved by representatives of the Faculty Senate (Instructional Programs Committee) and other institutional stakeholders.</p>	

<p><i>Fit with Mission. How does the institution conceive of distance learning relative to its mission, operations, and administrative structure? How are distance education offerings planned, funded, and operationalized?</i></p>	<p>The newly approved program works within institutional processes to develop a budget and acquire funding from the university, first to support start-up costs, and then to support the program to the point that adequate enrollment occurs to support the program, and then to continue to support the program indefinitely through institutional indirect costs. The Program Launch Planning process and the institutional budget planning process help ensure that the university is prepared across all operational areas to support the new students and new program.</p> <p>SCU has developed an Online Education Department, with an Associate Vice-President reporting to the Provost, multiple Instructional Designers, an LMS manager, and a Center for Faculty Development and Excellence to support SCU's online offerings. SCU has 24-hour support through the managed service provider (Synoptek), 24-hour Tier-1 support through Canvas, and 24-hour support for ExamSoft (the assessment software).</p> <p>Faculty who are hired to support the new program are onboarded to receive training in SCU's online teaching tools, assessment tools, and in Quality Matters standards. The Center for Faculty Development and Excellence provides ongoing faculty development. The Online Education Department provides ongoing support regarding instructional design and course development.</p>	
<p><i>Connection to the Institution. How are distance education students integrated into the life and culture of the institution?</i></p>	<p>Distance education students are integrated into the life and culture of the institution throughout their time at SCU. From new student orientation to tutoring, club events, guest lecturers, wellness workshops, counseling support, advising, learning resources, office hours and much more, distance education students receive opportunities to be part of the life of SCU that parallel those of on-ground students. SCU creates opportunities in virtual settings that facilitate community interactions among students for them to connect, support and interact in "live engagement."</p>	

<p><i>Quality of the DE Infrastructure.</i> Are the learning platform and academic infrastructure of the institution conducive to learning and interaction between faculty and students and among students? Is the technology adequately supported? Are there back-ups?</p>	<p>SCU has several different technologies designed to enhance student/faculty interaction and create a more engaging experience. Remote learning tools include Echo360, which provides a way for students and faculty to interact in virtual spaces around recordings of lectures and other presentations. Instructors may opt to deliver lectures via Zoom. Zoom allows the instructor to create breakout rooms and virtually move around to each group as needed. Canvas is used as the institutional LMS, and Canvas provides discussion forums and other methods for interaction.</p> <p>SCU maintains servers onsite as well as Microsoft cloud-based infrastructure and leverages managed services with our service partner, Synoptek, a leader in managed services in higher education, for the day-to-day operational management of IT.</p> <p>Synoptek is charged with providing support and related technology services for administrative functions to the user community of the university, including stability and reliability of the technology infrastructure, secure data storage, student computer labs, equipment repair and replacement, computer hardware, computer software including a learning management system and university portal, telecommunications, audiovisual equipment, security camera system, printers, copiers, scanners, and other related technology services and equipment. Hardware maintenance and repairs are coordinated by Synoptek.</p> <p>Both vendors (Canvas and ExamSoft) provide back up and data recovery plans.</p>	
<p><i>Student Support Services:</i> What is the institution's capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services, academic support and other services appropriate to distance modality? What do data show about the effectiveness of the services?</p>	<p><i>All services are fully available to students online</i>, beginning with a New Student Orientation through the completion of the program with commencement and Registrar services for diplomas, transcripts, and licensure support. Departments have procedures to ensure that online students' needs are met. Students are able contact staff members from these departments by e-mail, online access, or by phone to discuss questions regarding their education. In addition, student-facing support services plan and host in-person and virtual educational and professional events related to students' programs.</p> <p>Given the need to move all courses into a distance education delivery module, disaggregated data has not been collected. Overall awareness of student services was reportedly high, although usage and satisfaction with services was not as high.</p>	

<p><i>Faculty. Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? Do they teach only online courses? In what ways does the institution ensure that distance learning faculty are oriented, supported, and integrated appropriately into the academic life of the institution? How are faculty involved in curriculum development and assessment of student learning? How are faculty trained and supported to teach in this modality?</i></p>	<p>Full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty teach online courses. In fully online programs, the faculty exclusively teach online. In other cases, the faculty may teach both online and in person. Because so many SCU courses are hands-on skills courses in the health sciences, it is common at SCU for faculty to teach fully online, hybrid, and on-ground courses. Additionally, every course has online components via the Canvas LMS.</p> <p>Distance learning faculty are oriented in the same way faculty who teach in person are oriented. All faculty members complete the faculty onboarding course through the LMS. They also receive one on one Canvas training followed by an orientation to their actual course(s) by an Instructional Designer. All teaching faculty participate in Quality Matters training courses starting in 2022.</p> <p>All faculty have access to the Center for Faculty Development and Excellence SharePoint website which serves as a hub for access to training and development resources. The content of the site includes topics such as accessibility education and a series focused on optimizing the student experience using Canvas. These on demand training options are designed to further support new faculty and help other faculty who have more teaching experience enhance their online courses and improve both the student and instructor experience.</p> <p>Faculty who lead courses conduct assessment of student learning, with assistance of faculty course assists depending on the size and nature of the courses. Assessments are developed by faculty in conjunction with programs and with university support (such as through Assessment and Learning Council or instructional design support). Where multiple faculty utilize the same assessment, interrater reliability assessment is conducted by faculty.</p> <p>The University's Online Education Department offers online training to new and established faculty on how to use tools like Canvas and Zoom to not only deliver information, but also engage students in the construction of knowledge that they will retain. Additionally, all teaching faculty are participating in Quality Matters training.</p>	
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<p><i>Curriculum and Delivery.</i> Who designs the distance education programs and courses? How are they approved and evaluated? Are the programs and courses comparable in content, outcomes and quality to on-ground offerings? (Submit credit hour report.)</p>	<p>Currently, all courses are developed with instructional designers and support of SCU's Online Education Department, with faculty as Subject Matter Experts. SCU faculty function as Subject Matter Experts during new curriculum development and curriculum revision.</p> <p>SCU has a comprehensive, multi-stage development and approval process for online programs and courses, including a substantive program review. The syllabi for all modalities have the same Student Learning Outcomes and are aligned to the Program Learning Outcomes. The activities in the course may be adapted to distance education where necessary but are the same in quality and rigor as the on-ground counterparts. All courses are built with assistance from instructional designers and faculty subject matter experts and reviewed by the faculty-led Instructional Programs Committee. All programs report the same information back to the Assessment and Learning Council and Accreditation Coordination Council.</p> <p>Because all of SCU's distance education programs have had all of their operating lifetimes during the pandemic, when because of the waiver, all of SCU's programs – even on-ground programs – were functionally distance programs, this makes comparing the two difficult. However, outcomes are satisfactory, and SCU strives to always improve.</p>	
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<p><i>Faculty Initiated Regular and Substantive Interaction.</i> How does the institution ensure compliance with the federal expectation for “faculty-initiated, regular and substantive interaction”? How is compliance monitored? What activities count as student/instructor substantive interaction”?</p>	<p>Course design with the Online Education Department ensures that design is compatible with faculty-initiated, regular and substantive interaction (RSI). Onboarding and ongoing training from the Online Education Department, and all course lead faculty participating in Quality Matters training, help faculty understand the expectation. Additionally, Program Directors utilize a custom Canvas “last log-in report” to determine if more than 48 hours have passed since a faculty member logged into a Canvas shell. Program Directors contact faculty and inquire after them when this occurs. While helpful, that process only verifies that a faculty member has logged in regularly and dependably but does not evaluate the quality or substantiveness of the interaction. Therefore, Program Directors ensure there is faculty-initiated RSI through Course <u>Wellness Checks</u>. These Wellness Checks verify for overall instructor activity, substantive interaction, and timely feedback.</p> <p>Activities that count as substantive interaction are described in the Wellness Check and Faculty Handbook (which is referenced throughout the Wellness Check rubric) as follows:</p> <p>Overall Instructor Activity: This rubric dimension directly references the Faculty Handbook language:</p> <p>Faculty teaching courses held online in whole or in part are obligated to engage in communication channels and systems at least five (5) days per week while the course is being held and to respond to students within 48 hours. A schedule of hours during which the faculty member is available to staff and administration shall be updated on the online scheduling system used by the University (currently Microsoft Outlook). The online schedule should include when courses and clinical hours are held.</p> <p>Substantive Interaction: This rubric dimension states:</p> <p>Announcements for current week, recent and timely discussion board responses, other course activities promoting student interaction with the instructor and/or other students, most recent lecture recordings are posted and available to students.</p> <p>This rubric dimension also references the Faculty Handbook:</p> <p>“In all course delivery models at the University, faculty-initiated contact is frequent, predictable, and content-focused. Faculty monitor and take prompt and proactive action based upon student academic engagement. Compliance with these standards requires interaction - primarily driven by the faculty member - that is “regular,” “predictable and scheduled” throughout the course, and “substantive,” meaning that students are academically engaged through teaching, learning, and assessment, as well as at least two of these five activities by the instructor: providing direct instruction, assessing or providing</p>	
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	<p>feedback on student work beyond just grades, providing information or responding to questions about course content or competencies, facilitating group discussions about course content or competencies, or other instructional activities approved by WSCUC or programmatic accreditors.</p> <p>Timely Feedback: This rubric dimension states:</p> <p>The standard for meeting expectations is set by the program and regularly communicated to program faculty. The guidelines apply to all graded assignments within the course.</p>	
<p><i>Academic Engagement.</i> How does the institution ensure compliance with the federal expectation for “Academic Engagement”? How is compliance monitored? What activities contribute to academic engagement?</p>	<p>SCU monitors academic engagement through the course Wellness Check described in other materials. Additionally, the Online Education Department helps build courses to foster engagement through the ongoing Big Leap which will be completed this year, and course instructors learn best practices through the Quality Matters training.</p> <p>Online Education Department provides training to faculty through onboarding and on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>SCU’s handbook requires engagement and compliance as follows:</p> <p>Compliance with these standards requires interaction - primarily driven by the faculty member - that is “regular,” “predictable and scheduled” throughout the course, and “substantive,” meaning that students are academically engaged through teaching, learning, and assessment, as well as at least two of these five activities by the instructor: providing direct instruction, assessing or providing feedback on student work beyond just grades, providing information or responding to questions about course content or competencies, facilitating group discussions about course content or competencies, or other instructional activities approved by WSCUC or programmatic accreditors.</p>	

<p><i>State Licensure Requirements.</i> Describe, as appropriate, the institution's process for disclosing to students how state licensure requirements are met by distance education programs, whether licensure requirements are not met by programs, or whether the institution has not determined where licensure requirements are met by the programs.</p>	<p>SCU has only one distance education program with licensure. The accreditor approved that program's distance education plan (which includes substantial on-ground lab and clinical components); the accreditation process is underway and on track for this program. Students are informed through this program's website and in the catalog that the program meets educational requirements for licensure in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, that the program requires accreditation for students to be eligible to sit for the national licensure exam which is required by all states for practice, that each jurisdiction may have non-academic requirements for licensure, that licensure requirements may change, and that SCU <i>will</i> and students <i>should</i> monitor for changes to licensure requirements.</p>	
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<p><i>Student Identification Verification.</i> What is the institution's process for student verification, e.g., a secure login and pass code; proctored examinations; other technologies or practices that are effective in verifying student identification?</p>	<p>In accordance with Federal Requirement 34 CFR §602.17(g), the Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education, and the WSCUC Distance Education Review Guide, Southern California University of Health Sciences (SCU) ensures vigorous security and verification of student identity by having processes in place through which the institution establishes that the student who registers in a distance education or online education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit.</p> <p>The University employs a three-tiered system of verification of student identity. The first tier includes unique student login and protected password access to Canvas, SCU's learning management system, and other academic systems and tools, such as test-taking software. The second tier of identity verification requires students to present a government-issued photo ID during midterms, final examinations, and other high-stakes tests. The third-tier verification includes monitoring software that proctors exams via video and audio recording of the students. Some faculty also assign recorded audio and visual presentations or perform assessment in-person for some online courses. Finally, the University has adopted Turnitin, plagiarism detection software that helps instructors determine viability of a student's writing and notifies instructors of any plagiarism or related academic dishonesty detected in written assignment.</p>	
<p><i>Retention and Graduation.</i> What data on retention and graduation are collected on students taking online courses and programs? What do these data show? What disparities are evident? Are rates comparable to on-ground programs and to other institutions' online offerings? If any concerns exist, how are these being addressed?</p>	<p>When conducting comparative analysis, both distance and on-ground students fared well, and essentially identically: Evaluating credit hours attempted and earned in on-ground and online courses in 2020 and 2021, completion rates are within 0.2% of each other (89.6% and 89.8%). Additionally, graduation rates in online and on-ground programs are statistically indistinguishable from each other overall at the 100% and 150% of program length (p=.0000). Overall term 1 to term 2 retention at SCU is 97%, with online and on-ground programs performing similarly. GPAs of students in graduate programs that were online and not online in Fall 2021 were within 0.2 of each other (3.25 vs. 3.27). Last, online and on-ground courses had similar student course evaluations over the last year, with no question having a greater score difference between groups than 0.1/5.0, or 2%, and no score averaging below 4.2/5.0 on any question.</p> <p>It is difficult to discern disparities because all programs have functioned as distance programs during the pandemic due to the pandemic waiver, and the waiver has covered all of the lifespan of all of SCU's distance education programs. It is also difficult to discern disparities because after analyzing comparative data, on-ground and online programs performed similarly well in the comparisons noted above.</p>	

<p><i>Student Learning.</i> How does the institution assess student learning for online programs and courses? Is this process comparable to that used in on-ground courses? What are the results of student learning assessment? How do these compare with learning results of on-ground students, if applicable, or with other online offerings?</p>	<p>At the course level of assessment, faculty assign Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) to certain assignments during the course. To ascertain the level of student comprehension, faculty rely on the Canvas Mastery gradebook, self-reported student feedback, student grades, and Examsoft Longitudinal Reports that are tagged to SLOs.</p> <p>Course-level SLOs are tagged to Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), which are the basis of program-level assessment at SCU. Program-level assessment is directed by the Office of Institutional and Academic Insights (IAI) and implemented through two communities of practice called the Assessment and Learning Council (ALC) and the Accreditation Coordinating Council (ACC). The former group focuses on annual program assessment plans and reports while the latter discusses educational effectiveness within the context of institutional academic program review and specialized accreditation. The process is identical for online programs.</p> <p>For new programs offering online courses, targets were initially set somewhat arbitrarily, and were set higher than on-ground programs, with the understanding that subsequent analysis would determine future targets. Based on those initial outcome targets, 97.8% of students met specified targets individually, but 60% of cohort/program targets were not met and 40% were partially met. As part of the “closing the loop” assessment discussion with programs and the Assessment and Learning Council, and given successful individual student performance, outcome targets have since been set to somewhat mirror those of on-ground programs, and 100% of targets were met.</p>	
<p><i>Contracts with Vendors.</i> Are there any arrangements with outside vendors concerning the infrastructure, delivery, development, or instruction of courses? If so, do these comport with the policy on <i>Agreements with Unaccredited Entities</i>?</p>	<p>Yes. Two vendors have aided SCU’s in-house Instructional Designers in developing courses and providing instructional design. They do not provide content, they do not deliver the courses, and they do not perform assessment. Their expertise is in design and development to improve student learning. Faculty provide and review all content as Subject Matter Experts and do the teaching/delivery. The faculty-led Instructional Programs Committee (IPC) also reviews all syllabi prior to course content being built in the LMS. University standards must be met for syllabi to be approved.</p> <p>SCU faculty can adopt textbooks or course materials developed by publishers, and they can change that at any time by working through the course revision process and submitting those changes through the IPC.</p>	

<p><i>Quality Assurance Processes:</i> How are the institution's quality assurance processes designed or modified to cover distance education? What evidence is provided that distance education programs and courses are educationally effective?</p>	<p>All syllabi, regardless of modality, are reviewed and approved through the Faculty Senate's Instructional Program Committee (IPC). In addition, SCU has adopted the Quality Matter framework for all distance education courses. The standard Quality Matters rubric is used to review distance education courses to ensure baseline standards are met.</p>	
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