

**REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM  
For Reaffirmation of Accreditation**

**To California State University, Los Angeles**

**February 26 – March 1, 2019**

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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**

### **I.A. Description of Institution and Accreditation History**

The California State University, Los Angeles (Cal State LA) is a comprehensive university located in East Los Angeles with a mission to transform lives and foster thriving communities across the greater Los Angeles region. Established in 1947, the institution became (in 1982) the eighth campus of the now 23 - campus California State University system. In 2017, Cal State LA celebrated its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary and its long-standing commitments and relationships with the public sector, industry, and communities within the greater LA metropolitan area. An ethos of serving the students and communities of LA is a distinctive feature of this urban campus.

Cal State LA offers 58 bachelors, 53 masters, and three professional doctorate programs as well as numerous non-degree programs in the sciences, arts, business, criminal justice, engineering, nursing, education, and the humanities. The institution is organized into eight colleges: the College of Arts and Letters; the Charter College of Education; the College of Engineering, Computer Science and Technology; the Rongxiang Xu College of Health and Human Services; the College of Natural and Social Sciences; the College of Professional and Global Education; the Honors College; and the University Library. The campus also offers educational opportunities through three additional locations: the California State Prison, Lancaster; Pasadena School District Administrative Office; and Downtown Los Angeles. The latter, which opened in 2016 and offers degree programs for working professionals, was reviewed as part of the reaffirmation process; the resulting report is appended. Although there is a focus on increasing the number of hybrid and online courses to better serve its students, the institution has no online degree programs.

According to Cal State LA's online student enrollment dashboard, as of fall 2018, the university enrolls 27,685 students, 57% of whom are first generation<sup>1</sup> and 58% are female. The student body is 65% Hispanic, reflecting the institution's status as an Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), 13% Asian, 8% international, 6% white, and 4% African American. Eighty-three percent (83%) of its students receive financial aid, and 83% are full time. Its most recent four-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time freshmen is 10%, its six-year rate 49%, and its one-year retention rate, 82%. For transfer students, the

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<sup>1</sup> Does not include students whose parents have some college or two-year college degree (20%).

most recent two-year graduation rate is 30% and four-year rate is 75%. Student success is addressed more fully in section II.E of this report.

Cal State LA's accreditation was most recently affirmed by WSCUC in February 2011. In fall 2012, the institution submitted an interim report, which was reviewed by the Interim Report Committee with the request that Cal State describe its progress on the Commission's recommendations in its 2018 institutional self-study for its reaffirmation. A description of the outcomes of these actions and the university's response is provided in section II.A of this report. Since 2011, Cal State LA has also undergone its mid-cycle review (2016), as well as substantive change reviews to establish the California State Prison, Lancaster (2016) as an additional location, and a Doctor of Audiology (2018). In 2015, Cal State LA submitted its First Doctoral Degree Fifth-Year Review Report to WSCUC, in keeping with WSCUC's then-practice that the first Commission-approved doctoral degree program at an institution be subject to a review the fifth year after implementation of the program. No special follow-up on matters related to substantive change actions were conducted as part of this reaffirmation review.

### **I.B. Description of Team's Review Process**

The team's contribution to Cal State LA's review for reaffirmation of accreditation was executed in three stages: an Offsite Review (OSR) held September 5-6, 2018 at the WSCUC offices in Alameda, California; the off-campus location review of the State L.A. Downtown location on February 25, 2019 (report appended); and the Accreditation Visit of February 24 to March 1, 2019 at Cal State LA's main campus in Los Angeles, California.

During the OSR, the team engaged in a structured discussion of Cal State LA's institutional report, evaluating each component of the report individually, and the report as a whole, to identify strengths of the institution's work (commendations) and to develop lines of inquiry to guide the Accreditation Visit. This included a discussion of the institution's compliance with the WSCUC standards, and consideration of the institution's accreditation history. The OSR concluded with a videoconference between the team and leadership from Cal State LA, during which the team orally communicated its commendations and lines of inquiry. A formal, written summary of the commendations and lines of inquiry was provided to Cal State LA one week after the videoconference.

The Accreditation Visit involved two days of meetings with select campus constituents, including faculty, staff, administrative leadership, and students. Meetings were structured to gather information and

insights bearing directly on the lines of inquiry. Team members also had access to stakeholder comments submitted via the confidential email account. Preparation for the visit involved the development of a preliminary draft of the team's report, and examination of additional documents requested from the institution. The Accreditation Visit concluded with the exit meeting, open to all campus constituents, in which the team communicated its commendations and recommendations.

For all three visits, the team prepared carefully and systematically. To guide its analysis of institutional materials, team members completed worksheets designed by WSCUC and discussed the completed worksheets as a group, identifying institutional strengths and areas for further inquiry. To ensure all aspects of the institutional report—and related review requirements—were carefully considered, pairs of team members assumed specific responsibility for particular elements of the review, leading the team through the analysis, soliciting input and reflection from all, and then summarizing the group's conclusions in draft sections of the team's report. To put their own responsibilities in context, all team members read Cal State LA's institutional report in its entirety. All team members also read and edited the final team report. As such, this report represents the team's collective understanding and evaluation of Cal State LA.

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

Following the organizational structure outlined in the *2013 Handbook of Accreditation*, Cal State LA's institutional report consisted of eight components, each with supporting documentation and evidence. The institution did not complete the optional essay on an institution-specific theme.

The team found the institutional report to comprehensively describe the considerable work undertaken by Cal State LA since its 2011 reaffirmation as the institution engaged in a number of significant initiatives responsive to the recommendations from the previous review. Through essays that attend to the expectations for each component outlined in the *Handbook*, the goals of these initiatives, their desired impact, and their alignment with the university's strategic plan and direction are well-described, including with reference to relevant supporting documentation and evidence. The team was impressed with the picture the report painted of a university "on the rise." Less well-developed is the institution's presentation and analysis of the evidence of these efforts' differential impacts and how that analysis is informing the university's path forward. As required, the institutional report also includes the two required exhibits, the Review under the WSCUC Standards and the Inventory of Educational

Effectiveness Indicators, each of which was completed via processes intentionally designed to engage the appropriate set of campus stakeholders.

The institutional report was developed under the guidance of the WSCUC Steering Committee, a 12-person committee evenly comprised of staff and faculty. Individual essays were drafted by writing teams, each of which was co-led by a member of the faculty and staff, and which were populated by three or four faculty and staff members. As the team learned during the visit, great care was taken to involve relevant campus constituents in the document's development, leading to both breadth and depth of engagement. The resulting draft was circulated to the campus community, with feedback solicited electronically and via town halls, prior to being finalized for submission.

In sum, the team found the institutional report to accurately portray the condition of Cal State LA, as understood by its constituents, and confirmed through discussions during the Accreditation Visit. It is clear that Cal State LA undertook the accreditation review process with seriousness and candor, and that it is committed to honest and open communication with the Commission. (CFR 1.8)

## **SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS**

### **II.A. Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions (CFRs 1.1, 1.8)**

In its March 2011 action letter reaffirming accreditation, the WSCUC Commission identified five areas for institutional attention: retention and graduation rates; strategic planning; assessment; improving student support services; and research, scholarship and creative activity. These focal areas formed the basis for an interim report submitted in November 2012, which was accepted by the Interim Report Committee (IRC) with a request that the university describe its progress in these areas in its 2018 institutional report for reaffirmation of accreditation. In making its recommendation, the IRC lauded Cal State LA for its "...considerable accomplishments and its thoughtful analyses, insights and deep understanding of Cal State LA students and what they need to succeed," and commended the university for satisfactorily addressing all of the Commission's recommendations.

As requested by the Interim Report Committee, Cal State LA included in its institutional report for reaffirmation of accreditation a summary of its progress in the five areas identified by the Commission in 2011. A summary of the Commission's recommendations and the institution's progress is provided below, organized by recommendation. As demonstrated through its institutional report and through the

Accreditation Visit, Cal State LA has responded seriously, thoughtfully, and purposefully to all Commission recommendations.

*Retention and graduation rates:* In its 2011 letter, the Commission urged Cal State LA to demonstrate progress in improving retention and graduation rates for all students, including underrepresented students who have lower-than-average graduation rates. It also urged the university to move forward with its proposed model for academic advisement.

Since 2011, the institution has strengthened its support for student advising, and more generally for student success. The university has hired six college directors of student success and academic advising, implemented e-advising, adopted a strategic plan for which student success is one of four strategic priority areas and which includes quality advising and academic support as a key initiative, and, in 2015, launched its Graduation 2025 initiative, for which improving advisement and student support is one of five focal areas. Activities under Graduation 2025 include a “Soar in Four” initiative to improve the four-year graduation rates, significant efforts to improve transfer credit evaluation to enable timely degree planning, participation in the Education Advisory Board’s (EAB) Student Success Collaborative to enable advisors and faculty to conduct data-informed student interventions, and the adoption of PeopleSoft’s Smart Planner to help all undergraduate students develop a clear path to completing their degree in four years.

Cal State LA’s efforts appear to be having some positive impacts. Six-year graduation rates for first-time, full-time freshmen have steadily climbed from 36.0% to 48.6% over the last six years, surpassing the institution’s 2010 goal of 45%, and four-year rates from 6.3% to 9.5% over the most recent four years. First-year retention rates for first-time, full-time freshmen have essentially held flat, falling to 2011 levels in the most recent three years following modest increases between 2012 and 2014. Discrepancies between retention and graduation rates of underrepresented minorities (URM) and non-URM students persist, with non-URM rates exceeding those of URM students by 3.5%, 5.8%, and 10.1% points for first-year retention and four- and six-year graduation rates respectively, according to the most recent data available on the institution’s online dashboard. Similar differences exist for Pell-eligible and ineligible students, with respect to four and six-year graduation rates, at 6.6% and 6.3% points, respectively. Notably, first-year retention rates for these two groups are essentially identical, differing by less than a percentage point. The team encourages Cal State LA to continue its intensive pursuit of its 2025 goals, and recommends the institution pay particular attention to its four-year graduation rates, which are low

by absolute measures and for which the institution has set the goal of reaching 30% by 2025. As it does so, assessment will help the institution determine the extent to which its initiatives are having the intended impact.

*Strategic planning:* In 2011, the Commission urged Cal State LA to revitalize and coordinate planning efforts to address declines in state funding. In 2013, the Interim Report Committee was pleased to see that a revised strategic plan has been adopted; measurable outcomes had been set; and budget priorities had been aligned with strategic priorities. In 2015, the university embarked on a broadly inclusive, extensive strategic planning process that gathered input from more than 2,500 campus stakeholders, including 1,160 students. Feedback from this effort was used to refine the university's mission, vision, and values statements and to generate a strategic plan consisting of the following four strategic priorities each supported by a set of key initiatives: Engagement, Service and the Public Good; Welcoming and Inclusive Campus; Student Success; and Academic Distinction. Resource allocation in support of these four strategic priorities is facilitated by overlap in the memberships of the six Strategic Planning Consultative Groups (SPCG) charged with overseeing work in the four strategic areas and the Resource Allocation Advisory Committee. The SPCG's also issue annual reports on the campus's progress, which are publicly available on the university's website. During the visit, the team learned that metrics to measure progress have been developed and that there are tentative plans to collectively evaluate the institution's progress at the five-year implementation mark. The team encourages Cal State LA to incorporate these metrics into the SPCG's annual reports and to pursue a holistic evaluation of the university's progress at five years.

*Assessment:* In its 2011 letter, the Commission asked Cal State LA to align its programs, including General Education, to its newly adopted Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), and to develop and implement a plan to assess them. The Commission also noted that to be effective, assessment efforts in curricular and co-curricular units would need additional resources, both human and financial.

Since 2011, the learning outcomes for both General Education and the academic programs have been aligned to the ILOs, and the Educational Effectiveness and Assessment Council has developed and is implementing its four year plan (2016-2020) to assess the ILOs. Since 2011, the university has also invested considerable human and financial resources in support of assessment. The positions of director of assessment and director of program review have been established. Funds have also been allocated to establish the stipended position of College Assessment Coordinator (CAC), and to support faculty

development in assessment, including sending teams of faculty to assessment conferences, creating a faculty learning community on assessment, and enabling collection and analysis of data to assess the ILOs. These efforts, with the support of the Educational Effectiveness and Assessment Committee (EEAC), and the superlative work of the Center for Effective Teaching and Learning, have enabled Cal State LA to re-invigorate its academic programmatic assessment efforts as a tool for promoting educational equity and student success, a development for which the team commends the institution.

*Improving student support services:* In its 2011 letter, the Commission urged Cal State LA to improve and enhance student services by using assessment instruments, streamlining services, and establishing exemplary advising and customer service.

Since 2011, the university has focused considerable energy and resources in support of student success and, in particular, student support services. In 2016, the Offices of the Registrar, Admissions and Recruitment, Financial Aid, and Enrollment Management Technology were restructured and new business practices were implemented to streamline and improve services. As described above, significant investments have been made to improve undergraduate advising. Finally, in 2015, the university began its customer service initiative, with the goals of delivering and sustaining effective customer service to students and the Cal State LA community. As the team learned during the visit, the university continues to strengthen its work in these areas as data becomes available on the efficacy of these efforts, particularly with respect to student support services and success. Going forward, the team encourages Cal State LA to identify opportunities to strategically integrate its student support efforts, so as to amplify their impacts and use limited resources more efficiently.

*Research, scholarship and creative activity:* In its 2011 letter, the Commission commended Cal State LA for promoting student research, scholarship, and creative activity (RCSA), noting its importance as a high-impact practice that has potential to improve retention, graduation, and student learning. The Commission also reported being pleased that Cal State LA had collected data on faculty and student engagement with RCSA. In light of its progress, the Commission recommended that Cal State LA develop a comprehensive approach to RCSA data collection and analysis that can demonstrate how RCSA connects to intended learning outcomes and encouraged the university to seek to understand and document correlations with retention and graduation patterns and other indicators of student achievement.

As noted by the Interim Report Committee, by fall of 2012 the university had developed a statement defining undergraduate research at Cal State LA, created a minor in this area, and had initiated efforts to examine the relationship between participation in research and graduation rates. Since that time, learning outcomes for General Education have been revised and include a focus on intellectual inquiry; overarching graduate program learning outcomes, which address the fundamental components of research, have been drafted, and program learning outcomes have been aligned to the ILOs, including ILO “1 Knowledge: Mastery of content and processes of inquiry.” The university has also expanded opportunities for participation in undergraduate research and developed a protocol for tracking and reporting student participation in courses and faculty sponsored research opportunities. The team encourages Cal State LA to continue to advance its work in this regard by moving beyond participation rates to assessing the relationship between participation in research and student success.

### *Institutional Changes Since 2011*

Cal State LA has experienced a number of significant leadership and organizational changes since its last comprehensive review. In 2013, the university’s seventh president was hired and, in 2015, a new provost and vice president of academic affairs joined the campus. Three new vice provost positions have been established in the areas of enrollment services, resource planning and budget, and diversity and engaged learning. The position of assistant vice president for institutional effectiveness was created under the vice provost for resource planning and budget, and the once-singular position of associate vice president for faculty affairs and research is now two individual associate vice president positions to ensure focused leadership in these two areas. The university also hired its first dean of students, six college directors of student success and academic advising, and two new decanal associate deans to support the institution’s student success initiatives. Organizationally, Enrollment Services has been shifted to Academic Affairs and resources, including additional staff FTE, invested in its associated subunits including Admissions, the Registrar’s Office, Financial Aid, and Enrollment Management Technology. The campus is also expanding and upgrading its physical plant, including the addition of new housing facilities that will provide 1,500 additional beds for first and second year students and renovations to the University Library.

Perhaps most significantly, over the last three to five years the university has engaged in a period of intensive self-examination and development that, while engaging the entire community, has been strongly focused on student learning and success. As part of the system-mandated conversion from

quarters to semesters (Q2S), a significant number of faculties carefully examined the coherence of program curriculum, revising learning outcomes, courses, and course alignment as needed. Overarching graduate learning outcomes for the institution were drafted, and the General Education program was completely revised, necessitating a redesign of how it is assessed, a process that is still underway. A new strategic plan was developed and implemented, and efforts to improve data availability and delivery in support of academic planning are being undertaken. And, of course, the university was engaged in the work of reaffirmation. The team found a university invigorated by change, and perhaps a little fatigued, but singularly focused on its mission of educating and graduating its students. The team commends Cal State LA for its significant accomplishments since its 2011 reaffirmation, the seriousness with which it has addressed the Commission's 2011 recommendations, and its ongoing commitment, as reflected in its strategic plan, institutional reorganizations, and the considerable resources (time, FTE, and funds) leveraged in support of these priorities.

#### **II.B. Component 2: Compliance: Review under WSCUC Standards and compliance with federal requirements; Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators**

As required by Component 2 of the 2013 WSCUC Handbook of Accreditation, California State University, Los Angeles submitted the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI), the Review under the WSCUC Standards (RUWS), and the federal requirement reporting forms. All documents were carefully completed. For every program, undergraduate and graduate, the IEEI provides information demonstrating that all academic programs have established outcomes, assessment measures, and associated assessment methods, and that all units complete an annual assessment report. Also provided is the date of the most recent program review for each program, reflecting as appropriate the hiatus in the program review process taken during the quarter to semester conversion. Learning outcomes for all academic programs, as well as General Education and the institution, are available on the Cal State LA website. In sum, the IEEI demonstrates the existence of outcomes and an associated assessment process at every level of the institution.

The RUWS is equally informative. Completed through a broadly inclusive and systematic process, the RUWS reflects the following forms of input: qualitative data gathered during the AY 2015-16 strategic planning process; evaluations by individual members of the WSCUC Steering Committee and writing teams; surveys of faculty, students, staff, and administrators; presentations to the Academic Senate, student government (Associated Students Incorporated) and the president's leadership team; and finally

town halls conducted to allow members of the campus community to discuss findings from the self-study process and to provide feedback on the Institutional report.

In the sections that follow, Cal State LA's compliance with the standards is analyzed and summarized, drawing on evidence provided in the institutional report, the IEEI, RUWS, and information gathered during the Accreditation Visit.

*Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives*

Cal State LA has demonstrated a strong commitment to the educational goals of its student body and for the region served by the campus. The institutional report illustrates that the university has created goals and objectives consistent with its mission and has shared those goals and objectives with the entire campus. The mission statement indicates that the university benefits its students "through engaged teaching, learning, scholarship, research and public service." The institutional report provides a description of the context for the strategic planning process, together with a detailed account of the institution's response and progress addressing the recommendations stemming from its last WSCUC reaffirmation. Additionally, the institutional report and the Accreditation Visit provide clear evidence of the university's commitment to generate and make available data on the retention and graduation rates of its students. Other data provided indicate the development of learning objectives for majors as well as individual courses. Educational objectives are apparent throughout the planning processes and these educational objectives inform activities inside the classroom as well as throughout the co-curriculum. The university recognizes the need to communicate these educational objectives and link them to student success at all levels. The institutional report provides detailed profiles of the faculty and student makeup on the campus. (CFRs, 1.1, 1.2)

Cal State LA has established policies and practices that indicate a continuing commitment to academic freedom for faculty, staff, and students. These policies are reflected in planning processes and in the established formal relationships with faculty, staff, and student groups. (CFR 1.3)

The team commends the university for its demonstrated commitment to increasing diversity in society through its educational programs. The institution has created innovative programs to increase student diversity through recruitment and enrollment efforts geared at local schools and community colleges. The team also notes the diverse credit-bearing courses and programs that enable Cal State LA students to engage in service learning geared toward improving the conditions of minority communities in the

vicinity of the campus. The team, however, is concerned with a lack of significant progress in the hiring and retention of underrepresented faculty and high-level administrators. The team recommends the university go beyond its current efforts and programs to improve its recruitment results with underrepresented faculty, with an emphasis on hiring more faculty to reflect its role as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, given the makeup of its service area and student body. (CFR 1.4)

Cal State LA's recent strategic plan provides evidence that the institution intends to increase its efforts to foster diversity by addressing the retention and graduation rates of underrepresented students. Members of the administration and faculty leaders expressed commitment to making Cal State LA a model for educating a very diverse student population especially those students who come from low-income backgrounds. An indicator of the university's commitment is the recent reorganization of campus services with the goal of addressing retention/graduation gaps among low-income and underrepresented students. The team also saw evidence of improved retention and graduation rates for underrepresented students, and took special note of the progress in graduation rates of low-income and transfer students. Also noteworthy was the increase in the university's six-year graduation rate. The team, however, remains concerned about the four-year graduation rate, which remains very low at 10%, and recommends continued attention to its improvement. (CFR 1.4)

The institutional report demonstrates that academic policies, standards, degree requirements and costs of enrollment are publicly available for easy access by campus visitors and the general public. University publications and web pages also provide detailed information for students and the public regarding policies for student complaints, grievances, and financial assistance. The institution also provides multiple avenues by which students can register concerns or complaints. However, the team is concerned that the offices charged with student support and financial services may not be sufficiently resourced to meet the stated campus goals of increasing the graduation rates of underrepresented students. The team encourages the university to monitor closely the efficacy of the new efforts outlined in the strategic plan and to make additional investments in proven successful efforts. (CFR 1.6)

Cal State LA exhibits integrity and transparency in its operations as shown by the creation of appropriate policies and procedures that are aligned with both the operation of a major institution of higher education and in compliance with the overall direction of the CSU system guidelines. For example, the institutional report provided additional, detailed information on a transparent process for the development of the latest strategic plan. The institutional report also reveals that the university used

planning workshops, focus groups, interviews and surveys to collect information and reactions to the strategic plan. This collection of input resulted in the participation of over 2500 individuals, including students and community members. (CFR 1.7)

Throughout this re-accreditation process, Cal State LA has demonstrated a commitment to open and professional communication with WSCUC. It also has demonstrated a commitment to compliance with WSCUC standards. Toward these ends, the institutional report provided valuable information, as did all of the links to campus data, survey results, and information regarding resources for students and community members. Requests for additional information also were met promptly and efficiently. (CFR 1.8)

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided evidence sufficient to demonstrate compliance with Standard 1.

*Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions*

Previous to its review under the WSCUC Standards, Cal State LA was actively engaged in a process of self-assessment, which enhanced the institution's approach to its accreditation review process. Led by the clear mission presented in its 2016 strategic plan, Cal State LA identified its vision and core values, including "engaged teaching, learning, scholarship, research, and public service that support[s students'] overall success, well-being, and the greater good." This clarity has leant itself well to the process of self-evaluation through the WSCUC standard of achieving educational objectives through core functions.

For example, the university created institutional learning outcomes (ILOs) in 2010, and faculty serving as College Assessment Coordinators (CAC) are currently working with academic programs to strengthen efforts to measure and improve learning outcomes. An Educational Effectiveness and Assessment Council (EEAC) was established the same year to assess ILOs, including written communication, oral communication, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and information literacy. As a way to assist this process, and the broader project of evaluating institutional effectiveness and the success of its core mission, each one of Cal State LA's 218 programs has an Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI) for "addressing, tracking, and improving student learning," and more than 160 programs were determined to have "developed" or highly developed assessment reports. (CFRs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.7)

Student learning outcomes reflect core institutional values: knowledge (mastery of content and processes of inquiry); proficiency (intellectual skills); place and community (urban and global mission); and transformation (integrative learning). In support of achieving these outcomes, a General Education (GE) Revision Committee, established in 2010 by the provost and Academic Senate Executive Committee, aligned the GE Learning Outcomes (GELO) with AAC&U, LEAP-based ILOs (CSU-wide) for diverse urban-serving university, thereby more broadly aligning institutional and student learning outcomes with both the institutional mission and relevant external standards. Additionally, by having faculty work with programs, the changes are sought from within the academic infrastructure, deepening faculty buy-in and more easily assessing student, program, and institutional learning outcomes. (CFRs 2.1, 2.2, 2.2a)

Ensuring that undergraduate students complete their degrees with learning outcomes that reflect both PLOs and ILOs is an ongoing process, especially in light of the challenges Cal State LA has had in boosting its two-, four-, and six-year graduation rates. In addition to technological strategies to support “multimodal learning opportunities,” Cal State LA is working with faculty to create “user-friendly data tools” to enhance faculty knowledge of “key student metrics” and more efficacious class schedules. The Center for Effective Teaching and Learning (CETL) has become an increasingly effective and impactful facility for strengthening learning communities on campus and engaging faculty in interdisciplinary and cross-curricular planning, including, for example, the incorporation of service learning. Service learning remains a strong focus for the university, with 75% of seniors having participated in 2017, up from 62% in 2014. Additionally, a focus on “hands on” learning, including research work with faculty, has been prioritized, based in part on student requests articulated in strategic planning town hall meetings. For graduate students, overarching Graduate Learning Outcomes have been developed to promote programmatic standards and assessment metrics. (CFRs 2.2b, 2.5, 2.6, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 2.11)

More robust advising strategies have become woven in to programmatic and curricular planning, boosted in part by a 2012 Student Success Fee, supporting both freshman-admit and transfer students, and carried out through numerous advising tools, including the EAB Student Success Collaborative, which allows advisors and faculty to track student progress electronically, facilitating early intervention and course correction. Existing College Student Success Centers are also making use of data and other assessment tools to boost graduation rates and student learning. (CFRs 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14)

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with Standard 2.

*Standard 3: Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability*

Cal State LA has focused its organizational structures to allocate resources for quality and ongoing financial stability. Changes since the last visit include a revision to its budget model to allocate resources in alignment with its strategic priority areas. The process to revise the budget model included campus consultation, and its ongoing implementation rests with the University Resource Allocation Advisory Committee (RAAC), which is advisory to the president on budget policy, planning, and resource allocation matters. Membership of the RAAC includes faculty, administration, staff, and students. Faculty representation has been increased from two to three members to include the chair of the Fiscal Policy Committee of the Academic Senate. The RAAC intentionally has overlapping administrative and faculty representation with the Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee (SPCC), which is charged with monitoring progress on the strategic plan to ensure alignment between resources and strategic priorities. (CFRs 3.7, 3.9)

As a member of the California State University System (CSU) a major component of Cal State LA's resources come from the state budget and student tuition. As further outlined in section II.G of this report, in the last decade, state funding for CSU has not kept pace with enrollment growth after a number of years of dramatic state funding cuts. Most recently there have been nominal increases by the state to the CSU system. Illustrative of this macro issue, between fiscal years 2011-12 and 2016-17, Cal State LA's total budget increased 27%, with funds largely restricted to mandatory cost and compensation increases. During the same time period, however, enrollment grew 31%, while state support for enrollment growth increased only 9.4%. Despite this difference in funding, Cal State LA has been conservative and built up reserves that it can use for investments and capital projects. Within this framework, Cal State LA has managed well and has allocated resources to faculty, staff, and technology in alignment with its strategic priorities.

One such strategic allocation is to increase the number of tenure-track faculty. Cal State LA has directed resources to grow this faculty, authorizing 50 searches in each of the last four years, for a total of 200 searches, to augment the current number of 600 full-time, tenured faculty. Regarding staffing, Cal State LA continues to leverage Graduation 2025 resources to increase staff and technology in support of continued improvement in timely degree completion.

Cal State LA has full time president and chief financial officer, and adequate administrative resources. At the system level there is an independent board. One area that is unusual is that Cal State LA lacks a full-time senior administrator focused on technology and cyber security. Given the ongoing cyber threats to universities, the existence of a full time senior staff member to manage these resources would augment audits and reviews by the system and outside agencies. (CFRs 3.1, 3.4, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9)

Right before its Accreditation Visit, Cal State LA submitted a proposal to the CSU system office to become an impacted campus. If approved, this status would enable the university to establish slightly more selective admissions criteria, thereby helping moderate enrollment growth while also providing time and resources to support the success of its students. The university takes very seriously its mission of access, and understands this step as a tool to manage its resources as the state funding situation evolves.

Cal State LA has also increased its focus on space, including its use, categorization, and financing, in light of recent changes to how debt is issued for the CSU system. It has used accumulated fund balances, as well as limited philanthropy, for capital infrastructure. To meet ongoing campus space needs, it will need to continue to do what it has already begun - partner with the system, be creative in how it uses its debt capacity, and evaluate its space use practices and policies to gain efficiencies in its deployment of existing space. (CFR 3.5)

Cal State LA has demonstrated progress on informational resources, institutional effectiveness, and institutional research. Maturation of the institution's culture of data-informed planning and decision making is a focus. The next steps include important work on data governance. (CFR 3.5)

Cal State LA has made both organizational and calendar changes to support student success and to better align campus organizational structures with those of other CSU campuses. One example is the relocation of enrollment services to academic affairs. Another is the quarter-to-semester conversion, with active institutional engagement and a robust culture of shared governance.

The team observed the institution's leadership, at all levels, to be characterized by integrity, high performance, appropriate responsibility, and accountability. (CFR 3.6)

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with Standard 3.

*Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement*

Cal State LA has undertaken a more rigorous and ongoing institutional commitment to assessment, learning, and quality improvement. For example, whereas an outcomes assessment policy was established in 1990, the institution's commitment to assessment, including program review, has been significantly enhanced in recent years. In addition to academic program reviews, Cal State LA has in place resources for instruction-related faculty development and assessment, a university-wide customer service initiative, and is developing and implementing assessment plans for General Education and the units comprising the Division of Student Life. (CFRs 4.1, 4.3)

Institutional commitment to rigorous and ongoing improvement is further evidenced by enhancements to the structures and programs established since the last reaffirmation review to support improvement. For example, in 2011 the Educational Effectiveness Council, which oversees campus wide assessment, including assessment of General Education learning outcomes and institutional learning objectives, was renamed the Educational Effectiveness and Assessment Council. More than a mere change in title, this change reflected greater commitment to institutional improvement. The oversight of assessment evolved to a commitment to develop a culture of evidence-based assessment and improvement. An administrative director of program review and assessment was hired, and a budget was allocated to support assessment activities, send teams of faculty to assessment conferences, create a faculty learning community on assessment, and fund collection and analysis of data relating to institutional learning outcomes. In 2015, College Assessment Coordinators were appointed for all colleges and, in 2016, administrative restructuring resulted in responsibility for assessment and program reviews moving to the associate vice president and dean of graduate studies (who is also the Accreditation Liaison Officer).

It is important to note that since the last review Cal State LA underwent the conversion from quarters to semesters. The institution took a disciplined and data-informed approach to facilitating an impressively smooth and productive conversion. The normal academic program review process was temporarily suspended as the institution embarked on a thoughtful program conversion process for a two-year period. Programs re-examined and modified program learning outcomes, and they utilized curriculum mapping to ensure that program learning outcomes were properly woven through programs. Furthermore, work is underway to improve General Education assessment and improvement. The

institutional commitment to assessment and improvement was made stronger through the quarter to semester conversion, and the benefits and commitment are ongoing. (CFR 4.4)

Significant improvements in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness have taken place since the last review. Whereas institutional research previously focused primarily on generating standard reports to be consumed, the office has created a Program Planning Data website where users can work with interactive data tables for admissions, enrollment, and graduation data, with the ability to drill down on a variety of variables, e.g. college, department, student level, gender, and ethnicity. The office provides workshops on data retrieval and analysis using the Program Planning Data website. Additional tools, such as the Tableau data visualization platform, standardized reports and historical data, also are provided online to support the campus culture and commitment to data-informed assessment and improvement. A next important step for the Office of Institutional Effectiveness will be to coordinate and implement a data governance process so that the institution is better able to support data-informed decision making. (CFR 4.2)

Over the past six years, Cal State LA also has been proactive in generating and conducting surveys to support improvement. Examples include the administration of the NSSE in 2014 and 2017, an incoming transfer student survey, an alumni survey administered in 2017, and surveys of seniors, faculty, and staff. (CFR 4.5)

In 2015, Cal State LA undertook a rigorous and broadly inclusive strategic planning process, engaging over 2,500 faculty, staff, and students in determining strategic priorities for the coming years. As the team confirmed during the visit, the resulting strategic plan is functioning as a framework for planning at every level, as academic, co-curricular, and administrative units align their activities to these shared priorities and resources are allocated in support. (CFR 4.6)

In summary, Cal State LA has demonstrated substantial progress toward establishing a culture of assessment and data-informed decision making aimed at improving the institution. The uses of data and its implications are far reaching. Actionable data are collected and made available to support the implementation of the university's strategic plan, improvement of all academic programs, improvements in student success goals, and the cultivation of a campus community that is welcoming and supportive. Continued work developing the processes, systems, governance structures, lines of accountability, and overall efficiency of assessment and decision making should benefit students and the university overall.

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with Standard 4.

### *Conclusion*

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with all four Standards. The team notes that final determination of compliance with the Standards rests with the Commission.

### **II.C. Component 3: Degree Programs: Meaning, quality and integrity of the degrees**

Cal State LA has written a clear essay that defines and discusses in considerable detail the meaning, quality, and integrity of the degree. While the threads of discussion concerning the three separate strands could have been more tightly woven or connected, Cal State LA was able to provide an explanation of the meaning, quality, and integrity of its degrees, providing evidence to support key points.

Students who graduate with degrees from Cal State LA are distinguished by their proficiency in civic and community engagement, diversity, equity and inclusion, and applied learning and research. At Cal State LA, department annual assessment reports emphasize the alignment of program learning outcomes with the institution's community engagement outcome, and the institution has documented the growing number of students participating in service-learning projects and assignments. The GE curriculum, which was revised during the quarter-to-semester conversion, also enables students to gain a greater understanding of the intersections between race, class, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality. Finally, during Q2S, departments revised curricula to address Cal State LA's focus on the urban communities surrounding the campus, thereby aligning programmatic content to the institutional diversity outcome. Experiential and co-curricular learning programming also provides opportunities for civic and community engagement, equity and inclusion, and applied learning. Cal State LA conducted forums and surveys, and solicited feedback from alumni and the community, when developing these criteria for the meaning of the degree. Furthermore, a survey of alumni demonstrated that a high percentage of former Cal State LA students agreed that their degree was meaningful and that community engagement, diversity, and applied learning were priorities at the institution. (CFRs 2.2a, 2.11, 4.5)

During the conversion from quarters to semesters, all departments reexamined course learning outcomes as existing courses were revised and new courses were proposed. Additionally, 44 departments across six colleges also elected to participate in the “conversions plus” program. With funding from the administration, these departments aligned course and program learning outcomes and undertook one of the following steps to strengthen the quality and integrity of the degree: revise curriculum and adopt technology-enhanced instruction, streamline curriculum, integrate high impact practices, or facilitate remediation with a focus on core competencies and degree proficiencies. Departments that responded to questionnaires about departmental conversations on the meaning, quality, and integrity of the degree emphasized that students have a plethora of opportunities to interact with disciplinary experts and to conduct and to present research, and that Cal State LA faculty see these kinds of activities as contributing to the meaning of the degree. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.8)

For Cal State LA undergraduates, the quality of the degree is connected to the Leap-based institutional learning outcomes (ILOs) adopted in 2010, and for graduate students to the graduate level-learning outcomes developed in 2017-2018. Undergraduate and graduate program learning outcomes are well-developed and aligned to the institutional and/or graduate level learning outcomes, respectively. General Education (GE) outcomes are also aligned to the university mission and institutional learning outcomes. Annual assessment reports provide detailed information on the evaluation of program and GE learning outcomes, and demonstrate that students are achieving proficiency in key objectives. Program review involves an extensive evaluation of the curriculum, faculty, and student learning outcomes of departments/programs, including GE learning outcomes if the department offers GE courses. Surveys of employers and alumni provide evidence that almost two-thirds of students are employed in a field related to their major/degree within one year of graduation. This is another indicator in regard to the high quality of the degree. (CFRs 2.2a, 2.2b, 2.3, 2.4)

The integrity of the degree is dependent upon transparency, rigor, and a coherence that exceeds the simplistic list of units and requirements to be met in order to earn a degree. Cal State LA has extensive materials and data available to students about degree requirements and programs and about the rules for student conduct and procedures related to grade protests and other petitions. The rigor of programs for undergraduate and graduate degrees are evaluated by reviewing annual assessment reports, during program review, and by the evaluation of core competencies. Furthermore, outcomes and assessment data are widely disseminated and discussed by numerous stakeholders, including staff, faculty, current and former students, and the administration. There is considerable evidence to validate the assertion

that GE and major requirements are connected in part by specific skills, such as written proficiency and critical thinking, that are incorporated throughout the student's four years at Cal State LA. (CFRs. 2.2a, 2.4, 2.7)

Overall, the team concludes that Cal State LA has defined, within the context of its mission, the meaning, quality, and integrity of the degree. As emphasized by students, faculty, and the administration, one of the most meaningful aspects of the degree is civic engagement, which is manifest through a multitude of curricular and co-curricular connections that have been established between Cal State LA and the larger community. The quality and integrity of its degrees were demonstrated by the detailed assessment plans and annual assessment reports submitted by undergraduate and graduate programs. Although the campus culture of assessment is still maturing, the university is carrying out extensive assessment and program evaluation that verify and strive to improve the quality of the degrees, while providing students with a coherent explanation of requirements that culminate in a degree that has integrity and is more than the sum of its disparate parts.

#### **II.D. Component 4: Educational Quality: Student learning, core competencies, and standards of performance at graduation**

Academic Affairs at Cal State LA has made a clear commitment to student learning as evidenced by learning outcomes at all levels, the implementation of extensive outcomes-based assessment, an emphasis on professional learning opportunities, and assessment workshops aimed at faculty. More specifically, Cal State LA has adopted institutional learning outcomes, and program and GE outcomes have been aligned with these ILOs. Following Q2S, the university restarted its program assessment efforts and assessment is now understood as tool for equity. Also new is the expectation that departments and programs annually engage in and report on program assessment. The considerable time, effort, and thought that has been invested in initiatives related to student learning and outcomes assessment is significant and commendable.

As part of the reinvigoration of its annual assessment process, Cal State LA initiated an annual review of program assessment reports to strengthen departmental/programmatic assessment practices and infrastructure. Guided by a rubric, the CACs provide formative feedback on the quality of the program learning outcomes, the quality of the assessment evidence, and the quality of the assessment process. In the first iteration of this process, the assessment practices of 57 of its 218 programs were deemed emerging, rather than developed or highly developed. The largest number of emerging departments

and programs was in the College of Natural and Social Sciences, whereas degrees in the colleges of Engineering, Education, and Business, which have external accreditation requirements, were almost all deemed developed or highly developed. To strengthen support for continuous improvement of program assessment practices, Cal State LA began providing CAC's with course releases in 2018-19. There is some evidence that this investment is having the desired effect; during the visit, the team learned that progress had been made in reducing the number of departments and programs deemed emerging. The team applauds this development and encourages continued progress in this area. (CFRs 4.1, 4.4)

To support assessment activities, Cal State LA has a director of assessment, College Assessment Coordinators, an Office of Institutional Effectiveness, an Educational Effectiveness and Assessment Council (EEAC), and an Assessment Team. This infrastructure demonstrates Cal State LA's commitment not only to assessment, but also to a thorough review and evaluation of assessment practices on campus. The EEAC developed the institutional learning outcomes and initially planned the campus assessment of the WSCUC core competencies. More recently, responsibility for planning and implementing assessment of the five WSCUC Core Competencies has been assumed by the Assessment Team, a subset of the EEAC that consists essentially of its Academic Affairs-based members.

Over the last several years, Cal State LA has assessed student achievement of the five competencies. Written communication, critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning were evaluated using the norm-referenced Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), completed by 198 first year students in fall 2014 and 93 seniors in spring 2015. Information literacy was assessed in 2017 with 147 seniors, across a diversity of majors, taking the Project Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS, which is a national test). Oral communication was assessed in 2016-17 by video-taping 171 oral presentations in senior-level courses representing five of the colleges. A team of faculty then assessed presentations using the AAC&U oral communication VALUE rubric.

The results of the written communication and critical thinking assessment showed that Cal State LA students scored lower than average across all CLA-taking institutions, but outscored students at similar minority-serving institutions and colleges with high percentages of Pell-eligible students. Similar results were observed for quantitative reasoning, with Cal State LA seniors scoring significantly higher than students at similar institutions serving students from historically underserved populations. That said, overall results indicated that, with respect to written communication, only 32% of the work submitted by seniors was deemed proficient. In its institutional report, the university notes that this "underscores

the need for reinforcement of the core competencies across GE and major curriculum.” The report then goes on to give examples of two departments making changes, rather than discussing possible college or university-level initiatives to strengthen student development of this critical competency. The team encourages Cal State LA to consider a broader initiative to strengthen student writing, perhaps under the guidance of the EEAC and/or the Assessment Team and with the support of the Center for Effective Teaching and Learning. (CFRs 2.2a, 2.6)

Results of the Project SAILS assessment indicated that Cal State LA students are proficient in information literacy as benchmarked against peer institutions. Indeed, for several skill sets (searching, retrieving sources, and evaluating sources), Cal State LA students exceeded comparator benchmarks. (CFRs 2.2a, 2.6)

Results of the oral communication assessment showed that a strong majority of students met milestone competency or better in all domains of oral communication assessed by the oral communication VALUE rubric (organization, language, delivery, supporting material, and central message). (CFRs 2.2a, 2.6)

In sum, Cal State LA has evaluated undergraduate achievement of all five of the WSCUC core competencies. With respect to the quantitative reasoning competency, the team encourages Cal State LA to pursue its plans to develop a uniform definition of quantitative reasoning across the institution in order to facilitate the most meaningful assessment possible of this essential skill. The team also recognizes the considerable effort Cal State LA has recently undertaken to strengthen student development of quantitative reasoning in the redesign of its GE math requirement, following Executive Order 1110 which required campuses to convert remedial math courses to two-semester sequences, where both courses count toward graduation. The team was impressed with the university’s efforts to coordinate and standardize instruction across the many sections of this class, to integrate formative assessment with the goal of providing students, faculty, and staff with the information all parties need to proactively support student success, and to connect this early feedback system to a structured, peer-based, supplemental instruction program. (CFR 2.5)

Assessment of the newly redesigned General Education program is a work in progress. As the team learned during the visit, the institution is in the process of developing a comprehensive plan and process for assessing the program, with this work being guided by the General Education Subcommittee of the Senate’s Education Policy Committee, the interim director of assessment, and the director of program review. Existing components of the plan include the expectation that programs describe their

curriculum's contribution to student development of General Education outcomes as part of their annual assessment reports, and then report on the assessment of GE courses as part of the self-study for periodic program review. Regarding the latter, information requested includes results of the direct assessment of student achievement of intended GE outcomes, any changes that have improved student outcomes, and a timeline for improving student mastery of GE outcomes. The team recognizes the complexity of assessing this campus-wide program and acknowledges the care the institution is taking to develop a sustainable assessment process. As the university continues its work in this regard, the team encourages it to evaluate the efficacy of its assessment strategies. (CFR 4.1)

The success of students in developing intended learning outcomes depends upon the coordinated efforts of all faculty, tenure track and adjunct. During the visit, the team was heartened to learn that, despite the challenges posed by contractual obligations, there are ongoing efforts to involve adjunct faculty in curriculum planning and improvement, including assessment. Depending on the number of courses they may teach, adjunct faculty involvement ranges from receiving syllabi that include the intended course outcomes, together with information on assessment results, to participation in meetings to discuss common syllabi, signature assignments, and student learning results. During discussions of this topic, the team did hear a desire for greater institutional coordination on this issue, as practices tend to be locally determined and, thus, variable among colleges and departments. The team encourages Cal State LA to consider this desire, noting its potential importance for achieving campus and program goals for student learning and success, particularly as adjunct faculty outnumber tenure-track faculty by a factor of roughly two-to-one. (CFR 3.3)

In conclusion, Cal State LA has demonstrated its ability to develop and implement effective strategies for student learning outcomes-based assessment, including of the WSCUC core competencies. For four of the competencies, the institution used externally normed instruments to generate benchmarked data on student performance. Results indicated that Cal State LA students are matching or exceeding student performance at peer institutions. For the fifth competency, oral communication, a VALUE rubric provided a set of externally developed performance standards and criteria against which a strong majority of students demonstrated a milestone level of performance. Importantly, Cal State LA continues to strengthen its support for student development of these important skills, including by developing a common definition of quantitative reasoning and undertaking efforts to improve student writing.

## **II.E. Component 5: Student Success: Student learning, retention, and graduation**

Student success has been central to Cal State LA's self-assessment and strategic-planning processes since 2010, and some of the work the campus has committed to the WSCUC accreditation process is a logical extension of previous efforts. Consequently, the institution has a clear sense of purpose when it comes to pursuing programmatic interventions and evidence-based measures of student success. Indeed, in 2018, Cal State LA revised its admission criteria to better align with the qualities that yield success in the majors, and within the past five years, the university has seen a substantial increase in two-year graduation rates for transfer students, from 22.6% to 30.2%. (CFRs 1.1, 1.2)

In service of continuing to improve four- and six-year graduation rates, the California legislature has allocated funding, including \$5.5 million for Cal State LA's Graduation Initiative 2025, which the university is using for designated priorities, including enrollment services; advising staff and e-advising tools; hiring tenure-track faculty; course redesign; learning technologies; and addressing unintended barriers to success. Assessment of a new First Year-Experience program (FYR@ECST) demonstrated significant progress for students during their first year, including a 71.9% rate of completion of the calculus sequence (Calculus I, II, and III). (CFRs 2.5, 2.10, 4.4)

More attention and funding aimed at graduation rates is critical, because Cal State LA's four-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time students has increased only about three percentage points in the last six years, advancing from 6.7% to 9.5%. As with six-year rates, the rates for underrepresented students are lower than those for non-URM students (7.8% versus 13.6%). Likewise, rates for Pell-eligible students are lower than those for Pell-ineligible students (7.8% versus 14.4%). Discrepancies also exist by race with white students succeeding at rates that are more than twice those for Hispanic students (16.7% versus 7.7%), and about one-and-one half times those for African-American students (10.6%).

More generally, as part of the CSU systemwide Graduation Initiative begun in 2010, Cal State LA has achieved increases in six-year graduation rates from 36.0% to 48.6% over the last six years, although not all cohorts have yet reached the institution's 45% goal for first-year freshmen. Six-year graduation rates for African American students are less than 43%, although they almost doubled between 2013 and 2018 (from 23.4% to 42.6%). Among transfer students, four-year graduation rates have overall exceeded the target rate of 57%, reaching 74.5% for the fall 2014 cohort. Within this cohort, African-American student four-year transfer graduation rates are still in the lower range, but at 72.5% they clearly exceed the systemwide Initiative goal. (CFRs 1.2, 2.10)

Overall results are mixed, as WSCUC's graduation rate dashboard suggests that Cal State LA's actual success in graduating students is greater than that reflected in the numbers provided above. As of 2017, Cal State LA's absolute graduation rate, a measure that reflects the proportion of matriculated students who eventually graduate without regard to a predetermined window of time, was 78%, following a steady climb from 58.5% over the last six years. This increase is particularly notable, as it has occurred during a period of rapid enrollment growth. The team notes, however, that Cal State LA's four-year graduation rates are still low by absolute and relative measures. They are also far below the 30% goal set by the institution in response to the CSU's Graduation Initiative 2025. The team recommends that Cal State LA prioritize improvement of four-year graduation rates for first-time, full-time students going forward.

The Graduation Initiative 2025 is focused on a number of student success priorities: improving advisement and student support, engaged teaching and learning, student life and sense of belonging, curriculum structure and degree flexibility, and enrollment management and data capabilities. A number of initiatives have been established to improve holistic student achievement and success, both inside and outside the classroom, including three scheduling initiatives to reduce unmet course demand: College Student Success Centers, a new degree planner tool for advisors and students, career development outreach focused on mentorships and job placement, strong articulation agreements for transfer students, and the Mind Matters program, which helps students manage competing academic, family, and job priorities. Additionally, campus conversation is underway between faculty and academic advisors regarding whether students, especially those served by Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) advisors, should take 12 or 15 units per semester. While some advisors often recommend 12 units, current research demonstrates that 15 units facilitates greater academic performance and success. (CFRs 2.11, 2.12, 2.14)

While the institution has dedicated significant resources and strategic planning to student success initiatives, the institution continues to struggle to retain more students. Retention rates for freshmen in 2015 dropped from 84% to 79.2% (in 2014), even as transfer retention rates remained relatively steady (87.3% in 2014, and 87.8% in 2015). Where the story becomes even more complicated is in comparing the academic success of Pell-eligible and ineligible students. For those students graduating in 2018, for example, after six years, Pell-ineligible students graduated at a rate of 53.3%, compared to 47% for eligible students. The gap might not seem so significant if not for the fact that first-year retention rates for these students were virtually identical (82.2% to 81.7%). So there remains a question of what is

happening during the subsequent five years that is boosting the achievement of Pell-ineligible students over Pell-eligible students, who represent the significant majority of Cal State LA students. (CFR 2.10)

This gap may speak in part to the issue of prioritization, especially within the resource-limited environment of California public higher education. The institution has undertaken an impressive and thoughtful array of programs, initiatives, and services to boost academic achievement and success, including providing academic advisory care team members access to student data systems that allow them to follow (and perhaps accelerate) student progress. Indeed, the flourishing of so many programs and services presents a challenge to the institution, especially in its assessment efforts. Within the multiple, concurrent initiatives and responses to previous the accreditation cycle, as well as both campus and systemwide initiatives and goals, is the question of how to measure what is working and what is not working *in isolation*. There is bound to be synergy between some elements of the cultural shift occurring at Cal State LA and, despite the serious focus on assessment, it is unclear if the institution is able to yet differentiate between how things are working independently and how they are working collectively. In particular, the team encourages the institution to ascertain why gaps in graduation rates among different student cohorts persist. (CFR 2.11)

On the co-curricular side, however, there is discernible progress in student participation in service learning, which increased by 114% between 2015 and 2016, demonstrating a solid commitment to civic engagement, perhaps due in part to the establishment in 2014 of the Center for Engagement, Service, and the Public Good. Additionally, the establishment of an integrated Center for Academic Success may help align efforts to support at-risk students in ways that yield measurable effects, especially given the work the campus is doing to improve graduation rates and promote a number of different learning outcomes. (CFRs 2.10, 2.11, 2.13)

## **II.F. Component 6: Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program review, assessment, use of data and evidence**

As described previously, Cal State LA has undertaken significant efforts to strengthen its quality assurance and improvement processes over the last eight years. Since 2011, the university has cultivated an approach to assessment, annual and periodic, that supports achievement of institutional goals and that, perhaps most significantly, recognizes the inextricable connections between program assessment, teaching and learning, and the campus mission to support access and equity in outcomes. The university has also invested significant human and financial resources in support of assessment. The

result is an institutional infrastructure for continuous improvement that reflects the campus's culture of shared governance, and which involves institutional and college-level faculty leadership for assessment. (CFRs 2.9, 4.1)

Key elements of this infrastructure include the Educational Effectiveness and Assessment Council (EEAC), an institution-wide committee comprised of faculty, academic administrators, and staff that enables a culture of evidence-informed planning in alignment with strategic priorities; the College Assessment Coordinators, faculty who provide department-level assessment support and who are members of the EEAC; a director of assessment; a director of program review; and a Program Review Subcommittee (PRS) of the Academic Senate's Education Policy Committee. The Center for Effective Teaching and Learning also contributes to assessment and continuous improvement through its support for improving instruction, curriculum, student outcomes, and student success. Administrative oversight and coordination is provided by the office of the associate vice president and dean of graduate studies, who is also the university's ALO. These investments speak to the priority Cal State LA places on assessment as tool for continuous improvement, planning, and quality assurance. (CFRs 4.1, 4.2)

#### *Academic Program Review & General Education Assessment*

A central component of the institution's assessment practice is program review. The university has a robust program review policy and process. At Cal State LA, program review is conducted on a six-year cycle, and involves the development of a self-study, the generation of a report by a two-member review team external to Cal State LA, and the development of a final report by the Program Review Subcommittee. The report forms the basis of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between administrative and academic leadership, articulating actions to be taken in the interval between reviews. Strengths of the policy include the expectation that programs develop, as part of the self-study, a five-year plan outlining the activities to be undertaken in the interval between program reviews to strengthen or maintain leadership in the field. The policy also requires development of an MOU outlining goals and associated responsibilities of all parties. These commitments are then integrated into the department's five-year plan with progress reported in an annual report, a commendable practice that strengthens program review as a program planning tool. To ensure programs have the resources necessary to implement the outcomes of the review, the PRC takes care to direct programs, where possible, to existing campus resources. The MOU is also carefully drafted to provide deans with the space they need to negotiate resources as necessary. Importantly, program review is supported by

annual assessment, with the expectation that self-studies summarize the results, including actions taken to address assessment findings, of the most recent five years of assessment activities. (CFRs 4.1, 4.3)

To ensure that programs are able to make the most of the program review process, departments receive a three-unit release to support development of the self-study. They also receive support in the form of workshops to orient them to the review process and the institutional resources available to support the review process. For instance, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness provides a workshop on data retrieval and analyses, allowing departments to become familiar the data sets available to support program review and ongoing program planning. (CFR 4.2)

That the program review process leads to meaningful programmatic changes is supported by the MOUs that the institution provided as part of this review, which outline the diversity of program-specific actions to be taken before the subsequent review. Examples include aligning practices for orienting adjunct faculty to college expectations, addressing needs related to programmatic accreditation, and pursuing strategies for strengthening curriculum in support of intended educational outcomes. In terms of accountability, programs are expected to report on their progress annually, and then again retrospectively, during the subsequent review. (CFR 4.4)

Overall, the team was impressed with Cal State LA's program review process from the policy to the description of its implementation, which is, by all accounts, collegial and positive, with a focus on continuous improvement. The team learned that the institution continually looks for ways to continue to strengthen the process and to increase its value to the institution. With this in mind, the team encourages Cal State LA to more formally assess, for the purposes of institutional learning in support of institutional effectiveness, what it is learning about the quality of academic programs in the aggregate and what it is learning about the quality of its program review process. The university seems well-positioned to gather formative and summative information about both these aspects from a number of sources. For example, the self-study template includes rubrics for each section of the report outlining criteria and levels of development, and external reviewers are asked to make a summative recommendation regarding next steps for the program, including whether the program should be reaffirmed, reaffirmed with specific concerns, remain under continuing review, or be suspended. The MOUs also provide an opportunity to identify themes common to the outcomes of program review for institutional consideration and action, as appropriate. The team encourages the university to integrate this kind of data collection and evaluation into its quality assurance processes.

### *Annual Assessment*

Since 2011, the campus has been working to strengthen its culture of evidence-based assessment of student learning outcomes. Institutional administrative structures have been developed and resources have been directed to faculty development in teaching, curriculum design, and assessment. In 2013, the institution suspended for two years the requirement that all degree programs submit an Annual Assessment Report to allow programs to focus on the quarter-to-semester conversion and associated examination and revision of curricula. During this time, faculties re-examined program learning outcomes and, as appropriate, course learning outcomes, and curricula were remapped to ensure student development of intended outcomes. Outcomes of the process included additional investment in faculty development in support of student learning outcomes; establishment of the stipended position of CAC to support college assessment activities; expansion of programming to address needs identified through this process; and increased institutional funding for faculty to attend assessment workshops. (CFRs 2.2, 4.4)

Annual assessment resumed in AY 2016-17, with a new annual report template that is designed to prepare programs for program review. The university also established rubrics and processes for providing feedback to departments about the level of development of its assessment activities, including program learning outcomes, assessment evidence, and assessment process. CACs then support departments in addressing the feedback. CACs also offer two to three workshops each semester on PLO assessment.

Data collected through this process for the institutional report indicated that about 75% of undergraduate program practices were scored as developed or highly developed with respect to assessment evidence and process, whereas one-in-four were scored as emerging. At the graduate level, approximately 80% of graduate program assessment reports submitted in 2017 were scored as developed or highly developed with respect to both assessment evidence and process. Overall these results indicate that a strong majority of programs are engaged in assessment practices likely to lead to program improvements. The team encourages the university to build on these successes by continuing to increase the number of programs with a developed level of practice. (CFRs 2.4, 4.4)

Program review also provides a means for strengthening program assessment, and example reports examined as part of this review indicate that PLO assessment was addressed in all steps of the review: the self-study, the report of the external review team, the report of the PRS, and the resulting MOUs. In

general, the program review and assessment reports provided for the reaffirmation review suggest that the results of both annual and periodic review are being used to improve programs and their support for student learning. Examples include revisions to course sequencing, course content, and PLOs; development of program rubrics; and the adoption of new pedagogies. It is also clear that ensuring results do inform revisions to curriculum and pedagogy is a priority for the institution. Feedback to programs emphasize this crucial aspect of the assessment process, both in response to annual assessment reports and through the program review process, and programs are encouraged to develop follow-up studies to ascertain whether actions have led to desired improvements. The CACs and CETL are also available to help faculties identify actions to improve student learning in response to assessment results. (CFR 4.4)

The team applauds the development of this infrastructure and process, and encourages the university to continue its efforts to advance the program assessment process as a tool for strengthening student outcomes, student success, and program quality.

#### *Co-curricular Assessment*

Cal State LA's efforts to strengthen its culture of evidence-based learning outcomes assessment also extend to the Division of Student Life. In April 2017, the Division initiated a multi-year plan to implement institutionally aligned, learning outcomes-based assessment. Moving strategically, the process involved the establishment of a Student Life Assessment Council; a division-wide, self-assessment of existing outcomes and assessment practices; the development of institutionally-aligned, Divisional Learning Domains; and the delivery of workshops to build faculty with learning outcomes assessment. As of the Accreditation Visit, all units in the Division had developed assessment plans that are grounded in thoughtfully conceived, institutionally aligned student learning outcomes. However, implementation of the plans, the first results from which were due in spring 2019, had been delayed. The team recommends that the Division initiate its first annual assessment process as soon as possible, including the direct assessment of student learning, with the goal of engaging in an ongoing annual assessment process as outlined in the institutional report. The team also encourages the Division to consider whether establishing a review and feedback process for annual reports would be helpful for strengthening assessment practice and capacity in the Division. (CFRs 2.11, 4.3)

The institutional report also states that the Division intends to develop a program review process that will mirror the academic process, including the emphasis on annual assessment as a foundation for the

review. During the visit, the team learned that a program review schedule had been developed. The team recommends the development of periodic program review, as units and students will benefit from these periodic holistic reviews of programs and the insights and expertise of professionals external to Cal State LA. (CFR 4.1)

### *Conclusion*

Since 2011, Cal State LA has significantly reinvented and reinvigorated its institutional infrastructure in support of continuous improvement. In developing this infrastructure, the university has taken, and continues to take, a commendably organic and measured approach. For example, the position of CAC grew naturally out of the faculty learning communities, and the new academically focused Assessment Team, from the EEAC. Connections and collaboration between the EEAC and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness have been forged in light of areas of intersecting interest and responsibility. Policies are also being developed and revised as the university continues this evolution. A process for providing formative feedback on annual academic assessment reports has been implemented, and the Division of Student Life is developing policy and practice in support of annual and periodic program assessment. Finally, the institution is still determining how best to assess General Education.

The team commends the university for the significant work it has undertaken in this short time, and notes the importance of its highly collegial and collaborative culture to its success. As Cal State LA continues this development, the team encourages the university to begin to assess, at a time it determines to be appropriate, the efficacy of its new practices in relation to its goals for what assessment should accomplish for the institution (i.e. a set of principles), and to use this information to guide refinement of its practices and infrastructure as needed. The team anticipates that this work will provide support and direction for the ongoing maturation of its newly invigorated assessment activities. (CFR 4.1)

### **II.G. Component 7: Sustainability: Financial viability, preparing for the changing higher education environment**

Like most higher education institutions, Cal State LA is focused on the changing environment of higher education, the equity gaps of its student population, and the need for constant vigilance on its resource allocation for a sustainable financial model. As a member of the California State University System (CSU), a major component of Cal State LA's resources come from the state budget. In the last decade, state funding for CSU has not kept pace with enrollment growth. Between 2008 and 2011, the state cut public

funding to the CSU system by \$1 billion, or a third. By 2015, the CSU was serving 4% more full-time equivalent students annually, while state support remained 7% lower relative to 2008. Between 2015-16 and 2018-19, state funding for the CSU increased nominally. At Cal State LA specifically, between fiscal years 2011-12 and 2016-17, the total budget increased 27%, with funds largely restricted to mandatory cost and compensation increases. During the same time period, however, enrollment grew 31%, while state support for enrollment growth increased only 9.4%. Despite this gap, Cal State LA has been able to accumulate and use reserves for its strategic priorities; between 2011 and 2016, the university averaged over 20%, with the use of reserves in fiscal 2016 for capital projects, bringing the level to 16% of revenue. (CFR 3.4)

Cal State LA has pursued additional revenue sources through expanded fundraising, new public-private partnerships, and a student support fee through student referendum. The team believes the strategic priority of increasing alumni engagement and adding fundraising staff will be important to continuing to build a pipeline for growing additional resources in the coming years. In 2012, the students voted for a student services fee, which generated over \$7.5 million in FY 2018-19 in support of student-centered activities and services that enrich the learning experience and foster intentional campus engagement through infrastructure enhancements, counseling staff increases, additional mentorship opportunities, and many other innovative programs. (CFR 4.7)

Cal State LA is focused on maximizing use of existing space as well as using its debt capacity to generate additional space. To accommodate facilities needs within the existing physical footprint and establish priorities for future investment, Cal State LA's strategic plan includes implementation of a system (FacilitiesLink) to house a "one-stop shop" for data related to space and facilities. The goal is increased communication and improved transparency, as the state expects the CSU system to fund campuses' capital priorities, deferred maintenance, and enrollment growth. (CFR 3.5)

Early indications in 2019 are that the fiscal 2020 budget will more favorable to CSU and to Cal State LA. As Cal State LA expects to continue to be a destination campus, in addition to meeting strong local demand, it will need to continue to leverage its new budget model to integrate operating and capital planning to meet strategic priorities. Before the site visit, the university submitted a proposal to the CSU system office to become an impacted campus. This would allow Cal State LA to establish some selectivity criteria, with the goals of moderating enrollment growth and providing the institution with the time and resources to support student success.

Cal State LA reflects the challenges facing public institutions, including the changing landscape of technology to deliver coursework and to meet the needs of its students. It is using its revised budget model and strategic planning to address its students' needs. Cal State LA has also made organizational changes, shifted resources, and is working with the system to ensure that it can continue to provide high-quality, high-impact student experiences that increase four-year graduation rates, to complement its historical focus on six-year rates. (CFR 4.6)

## **II.H. Component 9: Reflection and plans for improvement**

The team recognizes the considerable and substantial progress made at Cal State LA since the last reaffirmation review. The university has a long-standing and deep passion for students and their success. Historically, however, that passion was not coupled with a sustained commitment to using all available resources to drive progress on student learning, graduation, or operational efficiency. Since the last accreditation review there has been a literal sea change in attitude towards using assessment, data, and proactive service models to support student success and institutional improvement. As a result, there is every reason to be optimistic about the future of Cal State LA, and the students it is and will be serving. (CFR 4.7)

The institutional report and the Accreditation Visit reflect considerable activity toward improving student outcomes and enhancing operational efficiency. For example, the quarter-to-semester conversion was followed by new or revised efforts in academic program assessment and assessment of General Education to enhance overall academic quality, as well as to make progress toward achieving degree completion and time-to-degree goals. Likewise, an aggressive faculty hiring program has been undertaken to help address student demand in the light of considerable recent enrollment growth. This renewed emphasis on the hiring of tenured and tenure-track faculty has dovetailed with a new faculty search process that is expected to yield more diverse candidate pools and, ultimately, a more diverse faculty. (CFR 1.4)

The new or renewed commitment to student success and excellence in academic programs has been supported with major changes in academic support areas, such as institutional research, the Center for Effective Teaching and Learning, closer integration between academic affairs and student services, the adoption of technology support such as the EAB platform, and better coordinated, more proactive advising. (CFRs 2.11, 2.12, 3.3, 4.2)

Throughout the Accreditation Visit, and in every meeting, it was abundantly clear that Cal State LA's faculty and staff are deeply committed to the institution's students and mission and, since the appointment of the current president, enormous progress has been made in crafting an appropriate and ambitious strategic plan. Furthermore, multiple efforts have been launched and resourced to make progress toward achieving the goals in the strategic plan, particularly with regard to student success. However, just about every one of these efforts is recent and therefore not yet at the point where it is possible to properly assess outcomes. (CFR 4.6)

Real and meaningful improvement will require not only that the institution stays committed to these programs and the goals it seeks to achieve, but also that Cal State LA intentionally and efficiently develop a more mature culture of assessment and data-informed decision making. It is, for example, too early to tell if initiatives targeting student success and increased graduation rates will prove to be effective. The team expresses particular concern about the four-year graduation rate and, in all cases, there will be the need to let the data speak so as to identify opportunities for improvement, as well as to evaluate programs following implementation. All in all, the institution has made considerable progress in recent years and is encouraged to continue to develop a high-performing culture of assessment and data-informed decision making. (CFR 4.1)

### **SECTION III – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

As the team learned during the visit, the comprehensive review process provided Cal State LA with an opportunity to take stock of the multitude of initiatives the institution had undertaken since its last review and, in turn, to measure its progress and its success. The work of writing and vetting the report generated intellectual engagement and meaningful discussion among campus stakeholders about important topics such as the meaning of the degree. It also sparked conversations about campus initiatives and activities, and exposed members of the campus community to aspects of the institution's operation that are typically less visible during routine business. The process also revealed unrealized capacity, for instance, in the form of institutional effectiveness data, and the university has begun to capitalize on these existing resources. And finally, the reaffirmation process proved a catalyst for the reinvigoration and expansion of the university's assessment efforts. In sum, the team found Cal State LA to have substantially fulfilled the intended outcomes of this comprehensive review process and, further, that the review broadly engaged and impacted the entire institution.

In light of Cal State LA's successes, the team highlights the following accomplishments and practices as particularly worthy of commendation:

1. Taking steps to improve graduation rates by implementing 15-unit course loads, and educating students and campus community on the benefits of a full course load to aid students in timely graduation.
2. Increasing transfer and six-year graduation rates as a result of retention and graduation initiatives that are based on proven national models.
3. Creating an ambitious and comprehensive strategic plan that is transparent, inclusive, and has significant campus buy-in.
4. Thoughtfully using the quarter-to-semester conversion to advance institutional goals, including efforts to define the meaning of the degree, and to strengthen curriculum and learning outcomes in support of quality and integrity.
5. Demonstrating a commitment to civic and community engagement as reflected in the curriculum and co-curriculum, including the Cal State LA Downtown campus.
6. Initiating an academic assessment infrastructure that understands the importance of program assessment as a tool for equity.
7. Developing and using institutional effectiveness tools and services to enhance data-informed decision making.
8. Developing the Center for Effective Teaching and Learning to the point where it is a national model for faculty development, with the express focus on student success and equity.
9. Demonstrating a system of strong shared governance supported by early consultation and transparent processes.

As noted in its institutional report, Cal State LA is a university "on the rise." The significant work and change undertaken by the campus since its last reaffirmation has positioned it well for continued evolution toward even greater fulfillment of its mission. As the university continues its development, the

team believes the following to be particularly important to realizing the promise of efforts. Specifically, the team recommends Cal State LA:

1. Demonstrate substantial progress toward the 2025 goal for the four-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time students. (CFR 2.10)
2. Define and implement a mature culture of assessment as demonstrated by a comprehensive set of assessment principles and a more integrated organizational structure, and provide evidence of achievement of those principles. (CFR 4.1)
3. Continue to develop and implement direct assessment and program review in the co-curriculum and support services. (CFR 2.7, 2.11)
4. Develop and implement an integrated plan for achieving the key initiatives in the student success goal of the strategic plan that leverages campus assets as efficiently as possible. (CFR 3.7, 4.6)
5. Move far beyond its current efforts and programs to improve its hiring results with underrepresented faculty and high-level administrators, consistent with the institution's status as a Hispanic-Serving Institution. (CFR 3.1)
6. Continue to take steps to ensure enrollment is in line with the financial resources available to meet student needs with a focus on continued faculty hiring and professional development, new and enhanced facilities, strategic and timely advising, robust student support, and enhanced infrastructure. (CFR 3.4)

## APPENDICES

## A. Federal Compliance Forms

### FEDERAL COMPLIANCE FORMS

#### OVERVIEW

There are four forms that WSCUC uses to address institutional compliance with some of the federal requirements affecting institutions and accrediting agencies:

- 1 – Credit Hour and Program Length Review Form
- 2 – Marketing and Recruitment Review Form
- 3 – Student Complaints Review Form
- 4 – Transfer Credit Policy Review Form

Teams complete these four forms and add them as appendices to the team report. They are included here in order for the institution to provide the necessary information for the team. Teams are not required to include a narrative about any of these matters in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings, Commendations, and Recommendations section of the team report.

#### 1 - CREDIT HOUR AND PROGRAM LENGTH REVIEW FORM

Under the federal requirements referenced below, 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 WSCUC 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**

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

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Policy on credit hour	<p>Is this policy easily accessible? XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If so, where is the policy located? <a href="http://ecatalog.calstatela.edu/content.php?catoid=11&amp;navoid=772#Credit_Hour">http://ecatalog.calstatela.edu/content.php?catoid=11&amp;navoid=772#Credit_Hour</a>; The undergraduate program length requirement is discussed at <a href="http://ecatalog.calstatela.edu/content.php?catoid=11&amp;navoid=704">http://ecatalog.calstatela.edu/content.php?catoid=11&amp;navoid=704</a> The program length requirement for master’s degree programs is discussed at <a href="http://ecatalog.calstatela.edu/content.php?catoid=11&amp;navoid=732">http://ecatalog.calstatela.edu/content.php?catoid=11&amp;navoid=732</a></p> <p>Comments: CSU sets the policy on assignment of units to courses across the system.</p>
Process(es)/ periodic review of credit hour	<p>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)? XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments: The recent conversion from the quarter to semester system in 2016 necessitated careful review of credit hours and program length. Going forward, credit hours for new courses are verified as part of the curriculum review process.</p>
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	<p>Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	<p>How many syllabi were reviewed? Two</p> <p>Type of courses reviewed: X <input type="checkbox"/> online X <input type="checkbox"/> hybrid</p> <p>What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS XX <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral</p> <p>What discipline(s)? History, Political Science (each course is three units)</p> <p>Are students doing the amount of work per the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments: Syllabi indicate expectations for the amount of work required for the courses, and syllabi show the class schedule (assignments, topics, tests).</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>How many syllabi were reviewed? Two</p> <p>What kinds of courses? Lab, Internship</p> <p>What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS XX <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS XX <input type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral</p> <p>What discipline(s)? Nursing, Social Work</p> <p>Are students doing the amount of work per the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments: Nursing lab hours are dictated by the professional association; students complete 65 hours of lab and 70 hours of clinical experience a three unit course. For the Social Work internship second year, students complete 600 hours for six units (three units for each semester), which is the appropriate amount of work for the units awarded.</p>
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	<p>How many programs were reviewed? Two</p> <p>What kinds of programs were reviewed? Onsite</p> <p>What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS XX <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS XX <input type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral</p> <p>What discipline(s)? Biology, English</p> <p>Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of an acceptable length? XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO (120 units are required for a bachelor degree and at least 30 units are required for a master’s.)</p>

Review Completed by: Francisco Hernandez; Date: 03/08/2019

**2 – Marketing and Recruitment Review Form**

Under federal regulation §602.16(a)(1)(vii), WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s recruiting and admissions practices.

<b>Material Reviewed</b>	<b>Questions and Comments: (Enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections of this table as appropriate.)</b>	
**Federal Requirements	Does the institution follow federal requirements on recruiting students?	XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Degree completion and cost	Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree?	XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree?	XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Careers and employment	Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable?	XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable?	XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: The institution provides web-based and print material on overall cost of attendance for all areas of study Many resources are available at the Career Development Center. <a href="http://www.calstatela.edu/univ/cdc">http://www.calstatela.edu/univ/cdc</a> Through the Career Development Center, students have access to the Mentor Network which enables them to talk to alumni and other professionals who have volunteered to offer themselves as resources for career development. <a href="http://www.calstatela.edu/univ/cdc/wheretogo.php">http://www.calstatela.edu/univ/cdc/wheretogo.php</a>	

\*\*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 requirements 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: Francisco Hernandez; Date: 03/01/2019

### 3 – Student Complaints Review Form

Under federal regulation\*§602-16(1)(1)(ix) WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s student complaints policies, procedures, and records. (See also WSCUC Senior College and University Commission’s Complaints and Third Party Comment Policy.)

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections of this table as appropriate.)
Policy on student complaints	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints? <span style="float: right;">XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</span>
	Is the policy or procedure easily accessible? <span style="float: right;">XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</span>
	If so, where? Student Affairs site and links accessible from the Student Affairs site (see below). Some relevant policies/procedures are also available in the Faculty Handbook; Systemwide Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation Against Students and Applicants for Admission and Systemwide Procedure for Handling Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation Complaints by Students <a href="https://www.calstatela.edu/academicsenate/handbook/appr">https://www.calstatela.edu/academicsenate/handbook/appr</a> ; Non-Discrimination Statement and Discrimination Complaint: <a href="http://www.calstatela.edu/academicsenate/handbook/appq">http://www.calstatela.edu/academicsenate/handbook/appq</a>
	Comments: Campus has a student complaint policy and procedure for both academic and non-academic issues
Process(es)/ procedure	Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? <span style="float: right;">XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</span>
	If so, please describe briefly: Student Grievance Procedures: <a href="http://www.calstatela.edu/academicsenate/handbook/apph">http://www.calstatela.edu/academicsenate/handbook/apph</a> and <a href="http://www.calstatela.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Judicial%20Affairs/Docs/student_grievance_procedures.pdf">http://www.calstatela.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Judicial%20Affairs/Docs/student_grievance_procedures.pdf</a> ; University Student Grievance Committee Statement of Grievance Form: <a href="http://www.calstatela.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Student%20Conduct%20Office/docs/statement_of_grievance_form.pdf">http://www.calstatela.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Student%20Conduct%20Office/docs/statement_of_grievance_form.pdf</a> ; Dean of Students website access to grievance procedures and statement of grievance form: <a href="http://www.calstatela.edu/deanofstudents">http://www.calstatela.edu/deanofstudents</a> ; Non-Discrimination Statement and Discrimination Complaint: <a href="http://www.calstatela.edu/academicsenate/handbook/appq">http://www.calstatela.edu/academicsenate/handbook/appq</a> ; Systemwide <i>Policy</i> Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation, Sexual Misconduct, Dating and Domestic Violence, and Stalking against Students and Systemwide <i>Procedure</i> for Addressing Such Complaints by Students (Executive Order 1097 Revised June 23, 2015): <a href="http://www.calstate.edu/EO/EO-1097-rev-6-23-15.pdf">http://www.calstate.edu/EO/EO-1097-rev-6-23-15.pdf</a> with link to this policy/procedure from <a href="http://www.calstatela.edu/campusclarity/university-policies-and-procedures">http://www.calstatela.edu/campusclarity/university-policies-and-procedures</a>
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <span style="float: right;">XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</span>
Comments: Institution has student complaint procedures	
Records	Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? <span style="float: right;">XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</span>
	If so, where? All files related to student grievance files are maintained for seven years in a locked file cabinet in a secure storage location in the Office of the Dean of Students per our Cal State LA Student Records/Information Retention and Disposition Schedule <a href="https://www.calstate.edu/recordsretention/documents/Student_Records.pdf">https://www.calstate.edu/recordsretention/documents/Student_Records.pdf</a> and Administrative Procedure <a href="http://www.calstatela.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Administration%20and%20Finance/Procedure/ap707.pdf">http://www.calstatela.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Administration%20and%20Finance/Procedure/ap707.pdf</a> .
	Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? <span style="float: right;">XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</span> If so, please describe briefly: Cal State LA uses Maxient for recording CARE, Student Conduct, and Title XI electronic case files, messaging, and tracking. They have plans to add student grievance reports to Maxient during AY 2017-2018. Maxient affords the university the opportunity to confidentially store information and observe trends in these areas.
Comments:	

Review Completed By: Francisco Hernandez; Date: 03/01/2019

**4 – Transfer Credit Review Form**

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

<b>Material Reviewed</b>	<b>Questions/Comments (Enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections of this table as appropriate.)</b>
Transfer Credit Policy(s)	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for reviewing and receiving transfer credit? <span style="float: right;">XX <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</span>
	If so, is the policy publicly available? <span style="float: right;">XX <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</span>
	If so, where? <a href="http://www.calstatela.edu/academicsenate/handbook/ch4c#transfer">http://www.calstatela.edu/academicsenate/handbook/ch4c#transfer</a> for graduate students; For undergraduate students at <a href="http://www.calstatela.edu/academicadvisementcenter/frequently-asked-questions">http://www.calstatela.edu/academicadvisementcenter/frequently-asked-questions</a> . Information for undergraduate students about articulation/transfer credits is available at <a href="http://www.calstatela.edu/undergraduatestudiesT/articulationtransfer-credits">http://www.calstatela.edu/undergraduatestudiesT/articulationtransfer-credits</a> Transfer equivalencies of community colleges is available at <a href="http://www.calstatela.edu/undergraduatestudiesT/california-state-university-los-angeles-transfer-equivalencies">http://www.calstatela.edu/undergraduatestudiesT/california-state-university-los-angeles-transfer-equivalencies</a> Individual academic programs have there own procedures listed online.
	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? <span style="float: right;">XX <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</span>
	Comments: Institution presents all transfer policies and procedures on campus web pages and in the campus catalog. Transfer credit policies adhere to CSU statewide standards.

\*§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 WSCUC Senior College and University Commission’s Transfer of Credit Policy.

Review Completed By: Francisco Hernandez; Date:03/01/2019

## B. Off-Campus Location Review

### OFF-CAMPUS LOCATIONS REVIEW-TEAM REPORT APPENDIX

Institution: Cal State LA  
Type of Visit: Reaccreditation  
Name of reviewer/s: Francisco Hernandez  
Date of review: 3/1/2019

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report for all visits in which off-campus sites were reviewed<sup>2</sup>. One form should be used for each site visited. Teams are not required to include a narrative about this matter in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings and Recommendations section of the team report.

#### 1. Site Name and Address

California State University, Los Angeles  
Downtown Los Angeles Campus  
AKA: Cal State LA Downtown

801 S. Grand Avenue, Suite 600  
Los Angeles, California 90017

#### 2. Background Information (number of programs offered at this site; degree levels; FTE of faculty and enrollment; brief history at this site; designation as a branch campus standalone location, or satellite location by WSCUC)

Cal State LA Downtown, an additional location, was created in 2015 to meet the needs of Los Angeles residents for degree programs near the downtown core of the city. The facility has 10 classrooms, two computer labs, student rooms, lounges and additional administrative offices for program faculty and staff. The campus is led by the College of Professional and Global Education one of the eight colleges of Cal State LA. The following programs and degrees are offered at the location:

##### *Undergraduate Degree Completion Programs*

- Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
- Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies\* (*Note: teach out in AY18-19*)
- Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

##### *Graduate Degree Programs*

- Fully Employed Master of Business Administration (FEMBA)
- Advanced Standing Master of Social Work (MSW)

##### *Extension Certificate Programs*

- Paralegal Studies
- Project Management

##### *Professional Training Programs*

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<sup>2</sup> See Protocol for Review of Off-Campus Sites to determine whether and how many sites will be visited.

- Accounting and Tax Seminars
- Medical Billing and Coding
- Pharmacy Technician
- Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Exam Preparation

Faculty from the Cal State LA main campus are assigned to the Cal State LA Downtown location based on course needs for each semester. Faculty qualifications are the same as those for the main campus. Faculty members new to the Cal State LA Downtown facility are provided an orientation to the mission and goals of the location. The campus also provides direct student services with the following staff:

- Director of Downtown LA Operations and Student Services
- Coordinator of Student Services
- Academic Advisor
- Financial Aid Advisor
- Student Assistants (three part-time)
- Operations Assistants (two full-time)

In addition to the previously referenced onsite services, other services are made available to Cal State LA Downtown students through the following main campus departments:

- University Writing Center (<http://www.calstatela.edu/uwc>)
- University Testing Center (<http://www.calstatela.edu/smartstart/testing-center>)
- Dreamers Resource Center (<http://www.calstatela.edu/gfdrc>)
- Veterans Resource Center (<http://www.calstatela.edu/vets>)
- The Division of Student Life (<http://www.calstatela.edu/student-services>)
- Associated Students, Inc. (<http://www.asicalstatela.org>)

### **3. Nature of the Review (material examined and persons/committees interviewed)**

Reviewed:

- Website, available descriptions and background information
- Campus report developed for off-campus location review
- Off-campus publications and reports
- Meetings with off-campus location administrators, faculty, staff, and students

\*See attached agenda for off-campus location

Lines of Inquiry	Observations and Findings	Follow-up Required (identify the issues)
<i>For a recently approved site.</i> Has the institution followed up on the recommendations from the substantive change committee that approved this new site?	NA	
<i>Fit with Mission.</i> How does the institution conceive of this and other off-campus sites relative to its mission, operations, and administrative structure? How is the site planned and operationalized? (CFRs 1.2, 3.1, 3.5, 4.1)	The institution conceives of this additional location as being consistent with its mission to serve the population within its region. The site was well planned with input from future students, campus faculty, advisory boards, government agencies, business representatives and community members.	
<i>Connection to the Institution.</i> How visible and deep is the presence of the institution at the off-campus site? In what ways does the institution integrate off-campus students into the life and culture of the institution? (CFRs 1.2, 2.10)	The institution is present at the off-campus site with faculty and staff with direct responsibility to the main campus. Because of the make-up of the off-campus students, they are not integrated with the main campus, but receive all available services, some at the off-site facility and others online.	
<i>Quality of the Learning Site.</i> How does the physical environment foster learning and faculty-student contact? What kind of oversight ensures that the off-campus site is well managed? (CFRs 1.8, 2.1, 2.5, 3.1, 3.5)	The off-site facility has several full-time administrators who monitor student and faculty needs. The structured programs provide multiple opportunities for student-faculty contacts using cohort models that also facilitate student-student contact.	
<i>Student Support Services.</i> What is the site's capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services and other appropriate student services? Or how are these otherwise provided? What do data show about the effectiveness of these services? (CFRs 2.11-2.13, 3.6, 3.7)	The off-campus site provides student services through on-site staff, and web-based services to meet student needs. Campus representatives from offices and student services regularly visit the off-site facility to provide direct student services. Other offices are represented online or through telephone contacts. Other services are provided through partnerships with service providers in the area of the off-site location. The current data reveals a high degree of student satisfaction with the provision of these services.	

<p><i>Faculty.</i> Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? In what ways does the institution ensure that off-campus faculty is involved in the academic oversight of the programs at this site? How do these faculty members participate in curriculum development and assessment of student learning? (CFRs 2.4, 3.1-3.4, 4.6)</p>	<p>Degree programs are taught predominately by full-time faculty from the main campus. Student learning is assessed in the same fashion as on the main campus using SLOS, departmental student surveys, focus group and campus based student satisfaction surveys. Certificate and professional training programs are taught primarily by part-time faculty.</p>	
<p><i>Curriculum and Delivery.</i> Who designs the programs and courses at this site? How are they approved and evaluated? Are the programs and courses comparable in content, outcomes and quality to those on the main campus? (CFR 2.1-2.3, 4.6)</p>	<p>Main campus departments design the program and courses. They are approved and evaluated in the same fashion as those on the main campus. By all accounts the course content, outcomes and quality are the same as those on the main campus.</p>	
<p><i>Retention and Graduation.</i> What data on retention and graduation are collected on students enrolled at this off-campus site? What do these data show? What disparities are evident? Are rates comparable to programs at the main campus? If any concerns exist, how are these being addressed? (CFRs 2.6, 2.10)</p>	<p>The campus provides yearly data on the retention and graduation rates of students enrolled in degree and certificate programs at the off-campus site. Current data reveals that the retention rates are equal to or exceed the rates of the main campus.</p>	
<p><i>Student Learning.</i> How does the institution assess student learning at off-campus sites? Is this process comparable to that used on the main campus? What are the results of student learning assessment? How do these compare with learning results from the main campus? (CFRs 2.6, 4.6, 4.7)</p>	<p>Student learning is assessed in the same fashion as on the main campus. The additional location is subject to the same student learning objectives as the main campus. Available information indicates that the off-site course offerings meet the student learning objectives at a comparable rate to that of the main campus.</p>	
<p><i>Quality Assurance Processes:</i> How are the institution's quality assurance processes designed or modified to cover off-campus sites? What evidence is provided that off-campus programs and courses are educationally effective? (CFRs 4.4-4.8)</p>	<p>The main campus provides reports and data based on graduation rates and student satisfaction surveys. Available data indicates that the off-campus programs are very effective in meeting the requirement for being educationally effective.</p>	

## WASC Site Visit

### Cal State LA Downtown

#### A G E N D A

February 25, 2019

12 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

12 p.m. Arrive to Downtown LA campus

12:15 p.m. Campus Tour

12:30 p.m. Lunch with Deans and Directors

- Dr. Eric Bullard, Dean, College of Professional and Global Education (PaGE)
- Harkmore Lee, Associate Dean, Administration, College of PaGE
- Regina Cash, Associate Dean, Programs and Academic Innovation, College of PaGE
- Jean Cruz, Director, Downtown Operations, Student, and Enrollment Services

1:30 p.m. Meet with Student and Enrollment Services and Advising Team

- Jean Cruz, Director Downtown Operations, Student, and Enrollment Services
- Dr. Jimmy Solis, Coordinator, Advising
- Tom Lau, Financial Aid Counselor
- Victor Iglesias, Advisor

2:30 p.m. Meet with Cal State LA faculty and Program Directors/Coordinators

- Dr. Stephen McGuire, Director, MBA program
- Dr. Kern Kwong, Academic Coordinator, BSBA program
- Dr. Siyon Rhee, Academic Coordinator, MSW program
- Dr. Senqi Hu, Chair, Psychology
- Dr. Ramin Maysami, Business faculty
- Dr. Joanne Altschuler, Social Work faculty
- Dr. Seung Kim, Social Work faculty
- Dr. Hermilar Melero, Social Work faculty
- Dr. Tiffini Coleman, Social Work faculty
- Dr. Steven Frenda, Psychology faculty
- Dr. William London, Public Health Faculty

3:30 p.m. Break

4:30 p.m. Meet with Cal State LA Downtown Students

- Light refreshments and/or dinner to be served

6:30 p.m. Depart at the start of evening classes