

October 18, 2016

Pamela Oliver, ALO  
California State University at Fullerton  
PO Box 34080  
Fullerton, CA 9284-9480

Dear Pamela,

This summer, WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) staff conducted the Mid-Cycle Review (MCR) of California State University at Fullerton (CSUF); summer 2016 is the midpoint of CSUF's period of accreditation. The purpose of the Mid-Cycle Review is to "identify problems with an institution's or program's continued compliance with agency standards" while "tak[ing] into account institutional or program strengths and stability" (U.S. Department of Education, §602.19(b)).

Staff reviewed information related to the WSCUC Standards from four sources: College Navigator, College Scorecard, data submitted as part of the Annual Report, and data available on the institution's website. Staff recognized some of the limitations of College Navigator and College Scorecard including the time lag in posted data and their completeness. For example, data are not always available for graduate only institutions.

From these sources, staff identified a list of variables related to the Standards that would be examined as part of the Mid-Cycle Review. For some of these variables, WSCUC staff calculated a mean, based on all 198 institutions in the region. Staff recognized that the mean reflects the vast amount of institutional diversity characteristic within the region (e.g. different types of institution, admissions policies, sectors). For other variables, WSCUC staff used data points identified by a government entity or WSCUC practice. Below are the variables, with the source of the information, the mean or data point (if available), and the relevant CFRs:

- a) 4 and 6-year graduation rates (College Navigator; Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C RAC) focus for 6 year rates = 25%; CFR 1.2);
- b) percent of students receiving Pell grants (College Navigator; Mean = 32%; CFR 1.4);
- c) graduate borrower debt (College Scorecard; Mean = \$21,718; CFR 1.6);
- d) cohort default rate (College Navigator; California Student Aid Commission; > 15.5%; CFR 1.6, 3.4);
- e) composite score (studentaid.ed.gov; US Department of Education; < 1.5; CFR 3.4);
- f) student/faculty ratio (College Navigator; CFR 2.1, 3.1);
- g) faculty/degree ratio (calculated from College Navigator data; < 1; CFR 2.1, 3.1)
- h) 6-year graduation rates disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender (College Navigator; CFR 2.10);
- i) enrollment change (Annual Report; WSCUC practice; > 20% increase or decrease; CFR 3.4).

In addition to reviewing these variables, staff examined the link that each institution provides, as part of the Annual Report, to information about student achievement. Staff reviewed the information from this URL to confirm the following:

- a) student achievement data are easy to find;
- b) data include:
  - retention rates, disaggregated and for multiple years;
  - graduation rates, disaggregated and for multiple years;
  - brief and focused evidence of student learning (i.e. typically learning outcomes assessment results);
- c) data and evidence are displayed in a user-friendly way.

Finally, staff reviewed CSUF's answers to the questions identified on the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI) including: have learning outcomes been developed (institution, program, general education); where are outcomes published; what evidence is used to assess outcomes; who interprets results and what is the process; and, how are findings used? Staff also reviewed the date of each program's last Program Review.

Listed below are the findings from the review:

- a) CSUF is to be commended for enrolling a larger number of Pell grant recipients (44%) than the average for the region (32%).
- b) CSUF also has a lower cohort default rate (3.5%) and lower student debt (\$14,718) compared to the averages for the region.
- c) CSUF's six-year graduation rate of 62% is above the average for the region (57%). WSCUC staff is aware that the CSU system is launching an effort to strengthen the six-year graduation rates to 70% by 2025.
- d) In terms of publicly reporting retention and graduation rates, CSUF reports graduation data aggregated and disaggregated by 4, 5, 6 year rates; full-time freshmen and transfer status; parents' education; gender; race and ethnicity. Data are easy to find and read. Staff, however, could not readily locate retention data. CSUF may want to post retention data on its website.
- e) In terms of publicly reporting student learning, CSUF presents the results of the CLA and NSSE for multiple years on its website.
- f) CSUF has learning outcomes for all its programs and all programs reported assessment procedures on the IEEI.
- g) For program review, from the IEEI it appears that all degree programs were reviewed either in 2013-2014 or 2014-2015. For its next comprehensive review, the review team will want to explore the scheduling and results of CSUF's program review process.

WSCUC staff did not identify issues with CSUF's continued compliance with WSCUC standards. We updated CSUF's accreditation history to reflect this conclusion from the MCR and notified the Commission.

Some of the lessons learned from our review of all the institutions in the 2016 MCR include:

- a) Institutions use a broad variety of approaches to make their student achievement data public;

- b) Institutions use IPEDS, College Navigator and a diversity of other external sources to publicly share their student retention and/or completion data;
- c) It was generally easy to find an institution's Student Learning Outcomes, but difficult to find evidence showing how successful students are in meeting those outcomes;
- d) Finding student achievement data sometimes required significant searching of the institution's website; in several cases they were not readily available from the URL submitted with the WSCUC Annual Report. If public student achievement data are located in several places on the institution's website, the institution can provide multiple URL links when it submits its Annual Report;
- e) The MCR should accommodate multiple measures of student success and institutional compliance and different data presentations and limit any burden on the institution. At the same time, access to data should be readily available and user-friendly to enhance review efficiency and consumer availability.

If you have any feedback for us regarding your experience of the Mid-Cycle Review process, please feel free to share your comments with me and I will pass them along to the staff and Commission for their consideration.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact me.

Sincerely,



Barbara Gross Davis, Ph.D.  
Vice President

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tarmia Lowe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "T".

Tarmia Lowe  
Accreditation Process Coordinator  
WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)