REPORT OF THE WASC PATHWAY B VISIT TEAM

To the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising
July 16-19, 2013

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The team evaluated the institution under the 2013 WASC Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective evaluation for consideration and action by the institution and by the Senior College and University Commission. 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 WASC website.
# Table of Contents

SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT ................................................................................................................................................................................................. 3

Description of the Institution and Visit ................................................................................................................................................................................................. 3

The Institution’s Self-Study Report: Quality of the Report and Evidence ................................................................................................................................. 3

Description of the Team Review Process................................................................................................................................................................................................. 4

SECTION II – TEAM ANALYSIS UNDER THE STANDARDS ........................................................................................................................................... 5

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives ................................................................................................................................. 5

Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions ........................................................................................................................................... 9

Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability ........................................................................................................................................... 18

Standard 4: An Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement ........................................................................................................................................... 24

SECTION III – FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ........................................................................................................................................... 28

Commendations ................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 28

Recommendations ................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 29

APPENDICES ................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 31

Credit Hour Review ................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 32

Student Complaints Review ................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 33

Distance Education Summary ................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 34

Off-Campus Site Summary 1 ................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 38

Off-Campus Site Summary 2 ................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 41
SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

Description of the Institution and Visit
The Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising (FIDM) is a coeducational private college offering a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree program in Business Management and specialized Associate of Arts (AA) degree programs in 22 majors. FIDM is a proprietary degree-granting college operating continuously in the State of California since 1969. Since the founding of the college, FIDM has expanded and now has four campuses: the Los Angeles campus (considered the main campus) and three branch campuses, located in San Francisco (established in 1973), Orange County (1981), and San Diego (1985). FIDM’s enrollment (4,967 for fall 2012) is comprised entirely of degree-seeking undergraduates (associate and baccalaureate combined).

FIDM has been accredited at the institutional level by the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) since 1978, at the program level by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) since 2003, and at the single baccalaureate level by the Accrediting Commission of Senior Colleges and Universities (ACSCU) since 2008. A bachelor’s degree program (BS in Business Management, off-campus) was approved by the ACSCU Substantive Change Committee and ratified by the Commission in 2011. In March 2011, a joint-reaffirmation site visit was conducted between ACCJC and ACSCU.

Following the release of the revised ACSCU standards, in April 2013, FIDM’s Chief Academic Officer and Accreditation Liaison Officer met with the FIDM administration to initiate formal steps to move FIDM’s institutional accreditor from ACCJC to ACSCU. The institution applied for and was approved to pursue initial accreditation with the ACSCU under the accelerated process known as Pathway B (for institutions already accredited by an USDOE recognized agency). A single comprehensive visit was held in July 2013.

Team members visited two off-campus locations (San Diego and San Francisco) on Tuesday, July 16, 2013. On July 17, the team met together in Los Angeles for consultation and planning. From July 17-19, 2013, the team conducted onsite reviews of institutional documents, held interviews with key personnel and board members, and led discussions with groups of faculty, students, and staff to further its findings.

The Institution’s Self-Study Report: Quality of the Report and Evidence
The team reviewed the Self-Study Report and the supporting documents prior to the visit, and during the team conference call developed a number of questions and lines of inquiry to extend the review further. The Self-Study Report provided the foundation for the campus visit, but the onsite interviews and discussions provided the necessary information to answer questions and shape the findings.

Additional documents requested by the team and provided by FIDM included the most recent financial audit, the A-133, the management letter, and enrollment projections for 2013-14.

The Self-Study Report was clearly written and organized by Standard and Criteria for Review (CFR). The exhibits provided a reasonable selection of evidence to support the statements made in the report. To ensure broad participation, FIDM held workshops on four separate days over a two-week period. Individuals from a cross-section of departments, campuses, and organization levels attended.

1 Renamed the WASC Senior College and University Commission effective July 2013
the workshops and contributed to developing the “Preliminary Review of the Standards.” Special invitations were extended to FIDM faculty. Each standard was addressed by the entire group and each CFR was reviewed by break-out groups. The Pathway B process calls for the institution to demonstrate compliance with the Core Commitments and Commission Standards at both the capacity and educational effectiveness levels in a single self-study and site visit. The team found that the Self-Study Report and site visit evidenced successful compliance to the Core Commitments and Commission Standards.

Description of the Team Review Process
During the email communications prior to the team conference call, team members divided the responsibilities for the writing and inquiry that would be conducted. The breadth of professional experiences of the team enabled the members to explore questions, prepare lines of inquiry, and draft preliminary documents to guide the visit.

Team members visited two off-campus locations (San Diego and San Francisco) on Tuesday, July 16, 2013. In a preliminary meeting on July 17, the team had the opportunity to detail its inquiry plan for the main Los Angeles site visit from July 17-19, 2013. The team efficiently used the time for interviews and discussions to extend their understanding and confirm or correct preliminary findings. The team had adequate time to discuss various findings and to shape the conclusions, commendations, recommendations, and confidential recommendations of the Team Report.

On July 19, 2013, the team chair presented the commendations and recommendations to the president prior to presenting those statements to an assembled group of faculty, staff, administration, students, and representatives of FIDM’s campus community.
SECTION II – TEAM ANALYSIS UNDER THE STANDARDS

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

Institutional Purposes

1.1 Formally approved statements of purpose that define its values and character

The team found that stakeholders across all programs, campuses, and administration were familiar with and committed to the mission statement as presented in the catalog, student handbook, and website:

"FIDM’s focused curriculum integrates creative and leadership skills to develop graduates for the global industries of Fashion, Visual Arts, Interior Design, and Entertainment. Combined with these skills, FIDM graduates value ethical choice, demonstrate an awareness of cultural diversity, communicate effectively, think critically, and possess the knowledge of technology essential to their professions."

The mission statement describes the purposes as an institution of higher education and serves as a framework for long- and short-term planning. Academic departments and student support services annually review their outcomes for alignment to the department mission, the institutional learning outcomes, and the institution’s mission statement.

The institution’s mission statement is systematically reviewed every three years; however, in conversation with the president and vice-president of education, the mission statement was described as long-standing principles that have remained constant and have provided the foundation upon which continual development and pedagogical/curricular improvement has taken place. Specifically, the addition of the bachelor’s degree offering in business management has had little impact on the mission of the institution except to enhance the bachelor’s degree students’ understanding of broader social, cultural, and political contexts within which their learning takes place.

FIDM describes its commitment to the public good in two fundamental ways: economic engagement and community involvement. The president as well as department chairs and faculty, consistently describe their purpose as being industry-driven, responsive to industry needs and opportunities, and validated by external review of student work by industry professionals. Administrators and faculty exhibit pride in the quality workforce provided to local, national, and international venues which is validated by the Career Center’s placement rates between 86-94% for most recent graduates. FIDM’s commitment to the public good is first and foremost in producing an educated workforce that possess the requisite communication, critical thinking, information literacy, technical skills, and the personal commitment needed to succeed in fashion, interior design, visual design, entertainment, and the businesses engaged in these creative fields.

The institution also contributes to the public good by offering a strong co-curricular program that encourages civic engagement, wellness, and leadership development. Service opportunities include a wide variety of opportunities for students to interact with local charities while applying the skills and knowledge acquired in their education. Student government and a variety of student clubs also develop student leadership skills. FIDM is an active citizen in each of the local communities in which the four campuses are located. By hosting charity and museum events, or engaging in civic programs, students, faculty, and staff contribute to the community.
Finally, the team found that an unstated but highly visible and unique contribution to the public
good is the cultural and social norms of the institution and its curriculum. The professional
teamwork, collaboration, intentional openness, transparency, open-door policies, and
communication, from the administrative leadership and at all levels throughout the institution, are
producing students who have the personal and communicative skills of mature workers and future
leaders. The distinct and pervasive environment at FIDM that immerses the student in a
collaborative, cooperative, communicative environment, in the conclusion of the team, is a
significant component of the institution’s contribution to the public good.

1.2 Clear objectives; indicators of achievement at institutional, program, and course level;
systems to measure student achievement; achievement data made public
FIDM’s educational outcomes have been created at the institutional, program, and course levels, are
reflected in department learning maps, and are included in the department program review, course
outlines, syllabi, and rubrics. In addition, the institution assesses program learning outcomes at the
beginning, middle, and end points of all programs using signature assignments with rubrics. The
outcomes are widely recognized and specifically referenced by all stakeholders at the college; most
have been assessed in learning studies, with results accessible to FIDM employees on the
Institutional Research Center (IRC) through the ePortal.

Measures of retention and graduation are made public on IPEDS. During the site visit, FIDM
restructured their website to display more clearly graduation and retention rates. Student learning
outcomes assessment summaries will require easier web-accessibility for students and parents.

Integrity and Transparency

1.3 Academic freedom: Policies and practices
Posted in full on TeamPlaces Policy Place and in an abbreviated form in the FIDM College Catalog,
FIDM Student Handbook & Planner, and on the Faculty Channel on the ePortal, FIDM’s Academic
Freedom & Responsibility Policy delineates the rights of faculty and students to exchange ideas in
the classroom as long as they adhere to the master course outline. In the 2010 Faculty & Staff
Survey, 83% of the faculty acknowledged that they were aware of the existence and nature of the
policy.

The academic freedom policy is reviewed every three years by parties designated in the Education
Content Management assessment calendar. For its next scheduled revision, faculty have
recommended that the college more clearly differentiate academic freedom for faculty from the
rights of expression for students, and also that a due process procedure be added to the versions of
the policy in TeamPlaces Policy Place and the Faculty Channel on the ePortal. FIDM’s mission does
not include instilling specific beliefs and world views; therefore, this portion of CFR 1.3 does not
apply.

1.4 Diversity: Policies, programs, and practices
The FIDM Mission Statement announces diversity as an institutional value and awareness of
diversity as an institutional learning outcome. During a yearlong institution-wide research study on
FIDM’s concept of diversity, each academic department mapped the points in its curriculum where
diversity was a theme. The college adopted the following definition:

Diversity encompasses all the ways we differ as individuals. Differences such as age, gender,
ethnicity, and physical appearance are readily discernible. Underlying differences in thought
styles, religion, nationality, socio-economic status, belief systems, sexual orientation, and
physical and learning disabilities are also differences to be understood. (2010 WASC ACCJC Self-Study)

FIDM’s definition encompasses a complex view of the subject, rich in implications. As such, FIDM’s procedure for meeting the educational needs of its diverse population begins with admissions and continues through graduation and is embedded implicitly in the college’s learner-centered curriculum. The college embraces diversity. The FIDM admissions process is nondiscriminatory and inclusive, as shown in the enrollment and graduate rates reported annually to IPEDS by race and ethnicity.

Tolerance for and appreciation of differences in thought, culture, appearance, religion, sexual orientation, and learning is essential for success in the global industries FIDM serves. Accordingly, the theme of diversity appears throughout the curriculum and is documented in the “Institutional Themes” table of each academic program review.

In their responses to the Annual Student Satisfaction & Campus Climate Survey, FIDM students expressed appreciation for a college culture that accepts and honors individual differences and creates a sense of community among its students. When students were asked to rate FIDM’s policies for fairness, their average response was 3.3 on a 4.0 scale.

In future years as the academy builds out its faculty, it needs to reflect the distribution of ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. The team recommends that the institution discuss the issue and identify some targets appropriate for the institution. The team recognizes that this issue will also eventually become important for board membership.

1.5 Education as purpose; autonomy from external entities
FIDM is a proprietary degree-granting college that has operated continuously as an academic institution in California since 1969. FIDM is not supported by or affiliated with any external organizations, such as political or religious groups; nor is it publicly traded and answerable to shareholders. FIDM is a privately owned, autonomous institution. Governance and oversight is currently provided by a 12 member governing board that meets four times a year.

1.6 Truthful representation to students/public; timely completion; fair and equitable policies
Public information about FIDM’s academic goals, programs of instruction, faculty, admissions processes, costs, refund policies, grading and ancillary policies, disability and nondiscrimination policies, student services, and campus locations is listed in a variety of publications accessible to the public on the FIDM website, to faculty and staff on the ePortal, and to students on the FIDM Portal. This information is updated annually to ensure that all information published is clear, accurate, and helpful. FIDM publishes data comparing its 2- and 3-year cohort default rates, percentage of revenue from Title IV programs, and graduation rates, to national rates as evidenced by FIDM’s “Thresholds to Excellence in Education.” In addition, FIDM annually publishes its completion and placement rates and employment and finance statistics by program as evidenced by the “FIDM Completion & Placement Rate, Employment & Finance Statistics Report, July 2013.”

For every academic program, FIDM publishes an advisement sheet—a curricular map that defines course sequencing. Various student service departments, such as Student Advisement and Academic Support, use these maps in conjunction with transcripts to monitor students’ academic status and verify that they are making timely progress toward program completion. FIDM’s retention and graduation rates, as reported to IPEDS, are published on the institution’s website.
Prospective students are provided information about student policies, including refund, complaint, and grievance procedures during the admissions process. At orientation, all new students receive a FIDM Student Handbook & Planner that includes student policies, which can also be accessed at any time on the FIDM Portal.

With respect to student grievances and fair treatment, FIDM publishes a transparent, step-by-step procedure for resolving grievances in the FIDM College Catalog, in the FIDM Student Handbook & Planner, and on the FIDM Portal. For the past 7-year period, all complaints received at the institutional level have been resolved and a record of the resolutions kept on file in the Academic Development office.

FIDM’s mission does not include clinical research involving human subjects.

FIDM is ADA compliant. Students who self-identify as disabled are individually assessed by the Education Department and are offered reasonable accommodations.

The Student Financial Services Department staff assist current and prospective students identify and apply for financial assistance. Information about aid programs, eligibility criteria, application process, and required forms are available in multiple documents on FIDM’s website, including the FIDM College Catalog, the Student Handbook & Planner, and the Student Consumer Handbook. The institutional refund policy that applies to all students can also be found in these documents.

FIDM defines a credit hour as “the 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 one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately ten weeks for one quarter unit of credit.”

1.7 Operational integrity; sound business practices; timely and fair complaint handling; evaluation of performance

The college has formal, written policies to guarantee consistency and integrity in its operations. To ensure transparency, all institutional policies are posted on the TeamPlaces Policy Place, accessible to all FIDM employees at all times. FIDM employees (through the ePortal) and students (through the FIDM Portal) can access detailed instructions for resolving grievances. External agencies periodically review FIDM’s business practices, policies, and procedures. Independent external auditors examine all financial reporting annually. The results of these audits are consistently rendered with unqualified opinions with no material weaknesses.

1.8 Honest and open communication with WASC; inform WASC of material matters; implement WASC policies

For four decades, FIDM has benchmarked its effectiveness against external accrediting agency standards. Its policies and procedures are modeled on the standards of its three accrediting commissions (ACCJC, WASC Senior College and University Commission, and NASAD). FIDM participates in accreditation-sponsored conferences and workshops, and remains current with best practices in higher education accreditation. The institution has never received a warning nor sanction from any of its accrediting agencies, and all recommendations from visiting teams have been addressed in a timely and satisfactory manner. FIDM is proactive in communicating substantive changes. FIDM’s relationship with its accreditors has been marked by timely response and diligence in preserving an honest and open relationship with the accreditation community.
Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions

Teaching and Learning

2.1 Programs appropriate in content; standards, degree level; sufficient qualified faculty
FIDM offers 22 Associate of Arts (AA) degree programs in the fashion, visual, interior, and graphic design, and entertainment industries, and one Bachelor of Science (BS) degree program in business management. AA programs require 90 quarter units for completion and the BS program requires 181 quarter units.

Program content for the AA programs in art and design is externally reviewed by the National Association of Schools of Arts and Design (NASAD). The program content for the BS program in Business Management is reviewed by internal program review processes as scheduled in the institution's 3-year cycle. The team strongly suggests that the program review process for the BS degree program also include qualified external reviewers in order to validate content, standards of performance, rigor, and nomenclature.

Rigor in all degree programs delivered in all modalities is validated through assessment and benchmarking, which measure student progress at various points in the program. Expected levels of learning outcomes achievement are identified in rubrics and on the learning maps developed for each program. Student work (capstone projects and major course presentations) are evaluated by college faculty and selected qualified industry members using calibrated faculty-developed rubrics. Institutional Research then compares the faculty ratings to the industry ratings to ensure that internal standards correspond to industry standards. Results of all assessments are forwarded to the Institutional Research Office which aggregates the measures and distributes findings to all faculty for discussion and course/program improvement.

The team found sufficient qualified faculty available to deliver the curriculum for all programs including the BS in Business Management (BUMT) program (3 FT and 37 PT faculty). As evidenced in the “Fall 2012 Faculty Roster by Department,” of all BUMT faculty, 37 faculty have master’s degrees or higher.

2.2 Clearly defined degrees re: admission and level of achievement for graduation
Entry-level requirements for all degree programs are listed in the FIDM College Catalog, Student Handbook & Planner, and program advising sheets distributed to students. In addition, program learning outcomes, also in the FIDM College Catalog, Student Handbook & Planner, and program advising sheets, define competencies and expectations for graduation for students entering the programs. Students in progress of a degree also receive rubrics for all major course assignments. The rubrics specifically define the levels of achievement expected of students for successful completion of the program.

FIDM’s degrees are directly related to its institutional mission and learning outcomes as can be seen on the alignment frameworks for each program.

2.2a Undergraduate degree requirement, including general education and competencies
FIDM’s general education curriculum is delivered in three intentional stages. Students in the AA degree programs take between 7-11 specific 3-credit courses in general studies. Students in the AA program also receive intentional designed reinforcement and extension of the general studies curricula in their program courses. Students in the bachelor's degree program take 11 additional general studies courses (3 credits each) at the upper division level. Courses in the general studies
curricula cover all areas identified in the WASC CFR 2.2a. As displayed in the FIDM College Catalog, Student Handbook & Planner, and program advising sheets, the BUMT degree also includes 60 quarter credits of in-depth study in business management.

Student services departments and learning environments, such as the Library and the IDEA Center, reinforce academic skills through bibliographic instruction, study groups, workshops, and tutoring. Students regularly practice teamwork and leadership skills in group projects, peer critique, classroom discussion, and “pairing and sharing.” The growth of the baccalaureate program indicates that AA graduates wish to continue enhancing their skills, knowledge, and marketability at FIDM—that is to say, they want to become lifelong learners, with the breadth, depth, and engagement that the term implies.

2.2b Graduate degree requirements stated and appropriate
Not applicable.

2.3 Student learning outcomes (SLOs) and expectations for student learning at all levels reflected in policies, advising, information resources, etc.
The team found that FIDM has completed learning outcomes and standards of performance for all degree programs and for general education. The team also found that the institution has matured to an exemplary level their infrastructure and protocol for assessing the learning outcomes at all three levels. In addition, and to add even more specificity in assessment, the institution measures learning outcomes at the beginning, midpoint, and end of all programs. Curriculum maps for all programs show the clear relationship between all three levels of learning outcomes and are linked directly to the institutional mission and purpose. Specific learning outcome assessments are identified and assessed for all degree programs as well as for student service departments. For example, the IDEA Center staff at each campus (tutoring) review the course schedule for course offerings during an academic quarter and prepares specific support workshops and tutoring emphases related to the learning outcomes for those course offerings. The proper alignment of all levels of learning outcomes is reviewed annually.

2.4 Faculty’s collective responsibility for attainment of expectations for student learning.
FIDM’s self-study submitted for this accreditation review claimed that faculty shape and assess the curriculum by: developing the student learning outcomes, defining curricular content, developing signature assignments, writing department rubrics, and establishing standards of performance. The team took significant time to validate each of those activities in interviews with multiple faculty groups and actual development documents (e.g., course syllabi, comparison of old vs. new English composition syllabi, department meeting minutes). The team verified the significant and leading role of faculty in the assessment process. Faculty from all programs submit rubric-driven evaluations of signature assignments to the Institutional Research Office which then aggregates all submissions and provides a summary report back to the faculty for discussion, analysis, and course/program improvement. Faculty provided specific examples of course changes, rubric adjustments, and outcome revisions based upon the data provided from the assessment protocol.

Strategic, systematic assessment of students’ work is continual. Both the AA and BS degree programs assess their program learning outcomes college-wide once every 3-years at three performance levels—beginning, middle, and end points (capstone) of the programs. This comprehensive assessment allows FIDM to measure students’ achievement levels throughout the curriculum. To reinforce their validity, FIDM’s assessment designs are triangulated and multifaceted, drawing upon an appropriate combination of rubric-based learning studies, student assessment of learning gains results, adjudication by industry and discipline experts, instructor and peer critique, meta-analysis,
and cross-curricular evaluations as evidenced by the Institutional Research Department schedules. In addition to distributing program-specific findings to all department faculty, all FIDM employees have access to all assessment results on the Institutional Research Center (IRC) through the ePortal.

Team members validated the following claims that the “academic departments assessed 77% (99 out of 128) of their PLOs and that 33% (7 out of 21) assessed all of their PLOs through direct assessment. Student performance met or exceeded expectations in 88% of direct assessments as evidence by “Learning Studies and Industry Evaluations.”

2.5 Students actively involved in learning and challenged; feedback on learning provided
The institution reported that in every major course FIDM students solve business and/or design problems by integrating their understanding of the industry with their general education knowledge. The emphasis throughout the curriculum is on applied learning that will secure gainful employment for students upon graduation. Team members were able to review syllabi and observe classes in session, which were using these pedagogical approaches. Student signature assignments reviewed by the team also demonstrated the authentic assignments of using their knowledge and skills in actual work for local industries. Team members reviewed student projects for Williams-Sonoma, Inc., Cadillac, and Nordstrom. Students engaged in these projects have formal reviews of the work from the industry clients as well as FIDM faculty and fellow students.

2.6 Graduates achieve stated levels of attainment; student learning outcomes (SLOs) embedded in faculty standards for assessing student work
Team members audited the annual reports and program review documents for each program area from the Institutional Research Office. The reports generated from the assessments provided by the faculty and industry evaluators included a summary report of the student learning outcomes.

2.7 Systematic program review includes SLOs, data on retention and graduation; includes reference to external evidence and evaluators
As of 2010-2011 all of FIDM’s programs had completed at least one comprehensive program review. However, the faculty and administration were not satisfied with the findings and subsequent results of those program reviews. As a result, a 3-year cycle with more specific protocol for the expectations of program review was designed by the institution. Under the new protocol, each department conducts a comprehensive report during the first year followed by two annual summary reports. For both the comprehensive and summary reports, Institutional Research provides a data packet and a template for each department to complete. The packet includes 3-year data on institutional enrollment; enrollment by program, gender, and race; retention by gender and race; graduation by gender and race, and for academic programs, faculty headcount and academic preparation. In addition to statistical information, the Annual Student Satisfaction & Campus Climate Survey report, the Evaluation of Instruction, the Faculty & Staff Survey, and all academic learning studies or student service assessment results for the period covered are available in the Institutional Research Center through the ePortal. For the comprehensive report, Institutional Research also includes updated learning maps, curricular alignment frameworks, current organization charts, and student placement information.

Analysis of student performance occurs in two stages. First, Institutional Research analyzes the data from the rubrics submitted for a learning study and then submits a report to the department chair and schedules a meeting to review the results. The chair then meets with the program faculty to discuss the report. Faculty analyze the results further and decide how to best use the data to improve teaching and learning (“closing the loop”). In meetings with the faculty, they were familiar with all steps of the process and were able to describe their specific program learning outcomes.
Program review is the basis for budgeting and planning. During the site visit, faculty cited specific examples of changes to programs and/or courses based upon annual and comprehensive assessment efforts. Additionally, in 2012, Institutional Research conducted an assessment of program review that yielded a recommendation to streamline the process, possibly through acquiring assessment technology.

Scholarship and Creative Activity

2.8 Scholarship, creativity, curricular and instructional innovation for both students and faculty valued and supported by institutional policy

The expectations for research, scholarship, and creative activity for students are clearly defined. Program review workbooks provide a detailed overview of how an individual degree program is linked to the mission of the institution. In turn, a unique mission statement is developed for each program, and every course in the program is tied to its mission statement. The program workbooks also include course-by-course illustrations that display which student learning outcomes are embedded in the programs. All course syllabi include program learning outcomes. The evidence of a culture that values student creative activity appropriate to the institution’s purposes and character was visible on every campus visited by the team. Current hallway and open space areas include exhibits of student project work as well as student entries into design competitions including fashion design, textiles, visual communication, and interior design. Student portfolios, in print and digital formats, detail the creative process and the end result of student research and creative activity. As an example, the capstone assignment in the advanced study program in Footwear Design requires students to design and oversee the custom manufacturing of two unique shoe designs. The finished product is included in the student’s portfolio.

The institution’s research focus for faculty is somewhat restricted with a primary emphasis on pedagogy and the scholarship of teaching and learning. FIDM provides a robust array of professional development activities and resources on the ePortal. Instructional specialists (who are themselves faculty) work with faculty peers to improve and enhance pedagogy and maximize faculty engagement in curricular and instructional innovation. Collaborative spaces exist through the ePortal which allow faculty to share pedagogical success stories, coordinate the development of syllabi and rubrics, and engage in cross-campus dialogue with colleagues. The evaluation of faculty performance takes these and other related activities into consideration. New FIDM faculty are likely to arrive at the institution with deep subject matter expertise and industry experience. However, they may lack classroom teaching experience or expertise. Thus the FIDM focus on the scholarship and dissemination of information related to teaching and learning is understandable.

It was visibly evident to the team that the FIDM faculty are engaged in their disciplinary specialties in a variety of important ways. It was also evident that creative teaching and engaging, authentic project course work is an outstanding characteristic of this institution. The institution documents and disseminates faculty accomplishments to internal audiences and prospective students by publicizing information about awards, industry recognition, gallery exhibits, and faculty biographies on its ePortal and website and in “Faculty Buzz” and other publications. However, it was not clear to the team how the institution defines expectations for faculty in the areas of scholarship or creative activity. Nor was it clear whether there were expectations for faculty regarding the dissemination of such work to external audiences—one of the roles of higher education plays in disseminating
creative endeavors both in and outside of the classroom to industry and other institutions of higher education.

2.9 Faculty evaluation links scholarship, teaching, student learning, and service
FIDM recognizes that excellent teaching is linked to faculty expertise in the subject matter taught. Faculty members engage primarily in the scholarship of teaching and learning. This scholarship is based on research using assessment findings to improve programs (both academic and student services). The ongoing purpose of these activities aligns with the institutional mission. The linkage between faculty research in teaching and learning and the use of assessment results to improve teaching and student learning are evidenced in the institution's assessment and program review documents (e.g., Assessment Cycle: Combining Direct and Indirect Assessment for Reliability and FIDM’s Updated Program Review Process). Increased student achievement is an integral part of the faculty role and clearly evident in program review.

Usually involving industry-relevant experiences, students apply the skills and knowledge they learn in the classroom to industry or community sponsored projects. In this way, industry or community service is also linked to program learning outcomes. However, while FIDM faculty engage in scholarship, teaching, and assessment daily, opportunities for industry or community service are not always available.

Student Learning and Success

2.10 Collection, analysis of disaggregated student data; measures of achievement, satisfaction and climate tracked, evaluated; student needs identified and supported
Student learning and success is a critical component in Standard 2 of the WASC Senior College and University Commission’s Handbook of Accreditation. In its July 5, 2011, letter, the Commission noted that among three areas for which FIDM was advised to address, one was the use of comparative data. For CFR 2.10, the team reviewed the evidence of data gathering, tracking, and analysis.

IPEDS data from 2012 shows that FIDM has earned a retention rate of 86% (Los Angeles) and 94% (San Francisco) for first-year students, compared to their identified peer institutions at 55% and 57% respectively. Graduation rates at all campuses are 54%, compared to the 60-70% range for peer institutions reported in each individual campus IPEDS feedback report.

The FIDM Self-Study Report is thorough in its description of its systems of tracking student progress across academic departments and student services. Indeed, FIDM is data rich. The institutional culture has a palatable student-centric ethos, demonstrated in service program review and survey data results, and confirmed during campus interviews. Importantly, conversations across departments and services consistently reported that directors/unit heads meet weekly or quarterly (including off-campus locations) to discuss issues identified in current data including program review, and decide together what are the most effective solutions or remedies.

The institutional research environment is well-structured and well-resourced with assessment enthusiasts and experts, lodged on a solid foundation of program review in both academic and service areas. Aggregated and disaggregated data from annual student satisfaction and climate surveys are abundant for each of the four campuses. Areas for improvement are identified at the institutional and branch campus levels based on data results. What was less clear from the institutional study was the decision-making process across divisions (education, marketing, financial) and across campuses (Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, Orange County) to address improvements. Campus conversations, however, convincingly demonstrated how faculty and staff
are active in cross-collaborative discussion about those data including how improvements will make a difference in improving student achievement. Improvements are recorded in individual departmental assessment summaries and were discussed in many other reports provided in the site visit team room.

Anecdotally and also documented in student survey data are descriptions of how—when students ask for a change in service hours or have questions about their course of study—FIDM staff and faculty respond to address or correct the concern. This process of improvement is uniquely FIDM, flowing from the culture of “solve it now, solve it well” rather than a system of checks and balances. The visiting team believes that this characteristic is one of the indicators of their success and effectiveness, yet, it took time on the campuses to observe these approaches to taking action on issues identified by data.

FIDM student services and academic departments track student progress through the curriculum with the goal of helping students complete their programs in a timely manner. Upon admission, students are informed of the sequence of courses they must complete in order to graduate. In campus interviews with the admission to graduate focus group, service leaders were definitive about how hand-off occurs from the point of admission to Student Financial Services to Articulation, Registrar, and Career Center. Likewise, described by the student support admissions to alumni group, was the “normal” practice of informal referral of student assistance between and among all service areas. The team was impressed by this best practice employed across non-academic services. FIDM staff at all levels really “get” how to deliver excellent customer service, and seem to do it with grace, intelligence, and heart.

Data are evaluated at two levels: 1) aggregated, and 2) disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, program type, major, campus, state of residence, age, prior college, disability, and other socioeconomic factors where appropriate. While service program review evidence included reference to survey data, it was difficult to determine whether enrollment planning goals had used data to shape classes, or how counseling services, for example, respond to particular student needs where attributed to college preparation, socioeconomic, learning style issues or the like. The FIDM Self-Study Report claims that at-risk students are proactively identified and given support and this was confirmed through campus conversations.

FIDM’s IPEDS retention and graduation rates (both of which exceed the mean of FIDM’s peer institutions) provide ample evidence that the institution is achieving high levels of student learning results. It should be noted that during the team’s visit, the Marketing Department in immediate response to conversations with the evaluators revised the FIDM home page by moving graduation data up “two clicks” from where it was buried onto “one click” form the institution’s landing page.

The culture at FIDM demonstrates that institutional learning occurs by using data and that analysis influences the critical area of communication. For example, the team was impressed with how tuned in and engaged the communications staff is in the educational outcomes of FIDM students—demonstrated in conversation and by ample publication examples what FIDM “deliverables” will be for students who choose FIDM. Survey data appears to have shaped the focus and content of many publications.

Despite the recent decline in enrollments, explained by the economic downturn and tuition cost, admitted students are successful in completing their academic programs. Students receive effective mentoring and guidance for continuing their education or alternatively, becoming employed almost immediately upon graduation. From the president, board, department chairs, branch directors, and
nearly all service area managers, all articulate that the FIDM connection to and relationship with industry is one of the most successful components to its student success. This fact is well recognized by prospective students and alumni.

2.11 Co-curricular programs aligned with goals and assessed
The team was impressed with the level of thoughtful and formal co-curricular learning outcomes that are aligned to the mission in support student learning. Student services staff on the off campus locations provided many examples of how across the units co-curricular outcome progress was tracked, monitored, and assessed.

FIDM in its documentation provided a “List of Student Service Department Outcomes” that included an impressive array of service areas: Academic Development and Institutional Research, Academic Support, ADA, Alumni Association, Articulation, Campus Visuals, Career Center, Education Content Management, Faculty Services, FIDM Store, IDEA Center, instructional technology, international students, Library, Personal Counseling, Registrar, Student Activities, Student Affairs, Veterans Affairs, Admissions, Community & Educational Affairs, Housing, Marketing, Publications, Student Advisement, Web Marketing, Accounting, College Services, Facilities, Fiscal Operations, Student Credit Counseling, and Student Financial Aid. Clearly, the infusion of this culture of outcomes-based methodology has had a powerful impact on connecting service areas around student learning achievement; a best practice among institutions of higher education to have a comprehensive system of co-curricular activity linked across non-academic areas.

While FIDM gets high marks for building infrastructure in the co-curricular outcomes arena, what was less clear was whether formal review and assessment of the co-curricular takes place at a higher level such as the WASC steering committee. The program review process flow chart illustrates that the academic and student service areas are evaluated in the 3-year cycle, but the association between program review and outcome assessment was not explicitly evident to the team.

The team was struck by the numerous co-curricular events designed to nurture the life-long growth, development, and success of students. At the heart of the Student Activities program is the goal of assisting students to build a strong career and personal network, develop technical and leadership skills, and to adopt and sustain healthy lifestyles through personal wellness events. Many remarkable events were described that illustrated the FIDM commitment to student wellness. One such event is the Substance Abuse workshops offered each academic quarter at all four campuses by an individual external to the institution (not employed by and does not report to FIDM staff) who provided confidential counseling to students. It was reported that around 150 emails were received during the last quarter.

The FIDM Self-Study Report provided ample description of how co-curricular programs align with the institution’s academic programs and goals, and all of these creative programs were “live” and well-advertised in the typical FIDM artistic manner:
- Program-sponsored and independent study tours to Europe, Asia, and New York that enable students to engage directly with facets of the industry reflected in their coursework;
- Guest speakers who expand students’ industry knowledge and personal growth;
- “Career Connections,” an event in which employed alumni interact with current students, providing networking opportunities and reinforcing what students have learned in the classroom about the industry;
- A partnership between financial services, the department advisors, and the IDEA Center to track and help students who are not making satisfactory academic progress (SAP);
- Internships that provide real-world exposure to the industry;
- The Innovative Materials Conference, sponsored by the Library, to increase students’ awareness of sustainable textiles, fabrics, and products;
- A close working relationship between the Career Center and the General Studies capstone, Professional Practices, which prepares students close to graduating for greater in depth career development; and
- Student clubs, such as the Student Council and Phi Theta Kappa, provide students opportunities to demonstrate leadership and to network with students from other majors and speakers.

The success and effectiveness of some of these programs were evident by comments in the San Francisco and Los Angeles student meetings, as well as testimonials from Student Services, Career Center, Admission, and Alumni staff who described how value-adding these events are perceived by prospective and enrolled students. The team was unclear how it was all accomplished, and across most if not all campuses.

The number, diversity and frequency of student activities across all four campuses are remarkable. The team examined the individual campus reports that provide extensive detail in calendar and schedule format and a quarterly planning guide highlighting learning outcomes (leadership, cultural awareness, civic and health wellness, career connections, and exposure to industry). Clearly, the Student Activities program has intelligent, competent, creative, and results-orientated leadership that connects these programs with the broad learning goals and values of FIDM.

FIDM has developed a solid infrastructure for its eLearning program, including sufficient staff expertise and resources to create a successful learning environment. Campus interviews with IT leadership described the most recent accomplishment— the roll-out of student WiFi that had been a suggestion from student survey data. The team explored the process of how online curriculum is development in partnership between faculty, instructional developers, and IT staff; by their assessment of these projects in their infancy; and systems of assessment and improvements that are being designed.

The data displayed in the FIDM eLearning Program Update, reports that in fall 2012 there were 120 web students (100% online), and the most recent data for spring 2013 reports 136 online students. The team met with students, and when asked how satisfied they were with the online environment, most of the comments were directed toward the need for more WiFi, with expressed appreciation that the program has just been implemented at the Los Angeles site.

Also of note: eLearning has produced the “FIDM eLearning Faculty Duties and Responsibilities” document where expectations for faculty performance with respect to online students; a second document is the “Regular and Substantive Interaction in FIDM eLearning Courses” that guides faculty in ways to “put a human face” on the eLearning experience by providing student access to assistance and consultation in completing course assignments.

2.12 Timely, useful program information and advising provided to students
It is clear that the organization of academic and student services is designed to ensure that students receive all the necessary information, including requirements to complete their course of study. Campus interviews confirmed the methods by which staff initiate conversations with students to monitor their understanding and follow-through of requirements. For example, the Articulation Officer has developed a system to track student inquiries and also schedules regular meetings with students to evaluate that they have in fact understood those requirements, many of which are compliance in nature.
Since 2011, student satisfaction data reveals that students believe they have received appropriate advice to keep them on track towards their degrees. This was verified by the combined team of Academic Support, Personal Counseling, Admissions, Articulation, and the Registrar. What was considered noteworthy to the team was how knowledgeable and conversant staff are about each other’s work and responsibilities, and articulated how “it’s all about student success.” FIDM staff appear to value that they do not have a culture of “finger-pointing” and instead have “relationship-based practices of walking the student from colleague to colleague or from service to service, to confirm that the student’s question has been answered.”

Recruiting, marketing, and advertising materials accurately and effectively portray the FIDM mission, academic programming, whole-student service, and continuing education ethos. Student group discussions underscored the high level of front-end information they received, with one exception. It was pointed out that while first-year student orientation is required, a second-year orientation is not, and students believe that mandatory and reoccurring orientations are critical—especially if students transfer from one campus to another.

The caliber, professionalism, and content-rich nature of FIDM marketing, publications, web design, and organization are outstanding. The materials provide dynamic evidence that the institution graduates the highest quality of students—in substance, beauty, and inspiration. Upon matriculation, students also participate in the Success Seminar (a required financial counseling workshop) and systematic curricular advisement from the Education Department. Students are given the Student Handbook & Planner with a reference guide to all of FIDM’s academic policies and are notified that advisement sheets are available on the FIDM Portal.

The team found that students were dissatisfied with the Student Financial Services department. The 2011-12 annual summary assessment report by the student financial services department is candid and comprehensive, and it acknowledged the problem identified in the student survey data and proposed action: “The student survey gives the SFS-Financial Aid Department pause. After we look at the specific detail from the survey (actual student comments vs. the summary), we plan to organize and hold a focus group of students in 2013 to find out the best ways to address their needs, in terms of funding options... we plan to partner with Institutional Research to hold focus groups to gather specific feedback.” Additionally, while past student survey data noted this important area of concern, the team was not able to observe noticeable improvement for FIDM students. Comments from students came from both the associate and bachelor degree levels alike.

The team observed a possible explanation based on various campus interviews: there is general confusion and misinterpretation of the role of Financial Aid in disseminating information about obtaining scholarship money. For second-year students with the appropriate GPA and three faculty recommendations, FIDM scholarship funds are available, however they are distributed through the Education department (in some consultation with admissions). The Financial Aid office does not advise nor disperse scholarships. There are likely other explanations, and the team urges the institution to conduct follow up inquiry to resolve the issue.

2.13 Appropriate student support services planned, deployed, and evaluated
The team met with a variety of student support services: Academic Development, Institutional Research, Academic Support, Admissions, ADA, Articulation, Career Center, FIDM Store, Housing, IDEA Center, Information Technology, International, Library, Personal Counseling, Registrar, Student Activities, Student Advisement, Student Affairs, Credit Counseling, Student Financial Services, and Veterans’ Affairs.
Tutoring occurs in various areas at FIDM. The IDEA Center ensures that all students are apprised of their services during the first two days of orientation and through the FIDM Portal. Academic services are available in a wide array of course subjects at both the AA and BS levels.

ADA services for students with disabilities are available on all campuses. Since 2012, ADA has operated as a single program with its own program review. The 2012 Program Review Workbook for the ADA program, a 75-page document, is a thorough synthesis of survey data results, linkage to student learning goals in the Education Department, and response to WASC and 2010 self-study recommendations. It is clear that this service unit, and many others, take seriously their commitment to alignment with student learning outcomes and improvement based on data.

Students can readily access services provided in all areas (academic, personal, financial, and career counseling) through the FIDM College Catalog, the FIDM Portal, and—their primary contact—their admissions advisor. During orientation with their department chair, students meet service staff and learn about their services. FIDM is proactive in introducing these resources early on to ensure that students can readily access assistance when required.

2.14 Appropriate information to, and treatment of, transfer students
The FIDM Self-Study Report describes policies for the accommodation of students who wish to transfer either into or out of the institution. These policies are accessible to students through the FIDM Portal, FIDM College Catalog, and the Student Handbook & Planner. The team confirmed that the Articulation Office is an active member of the California Intersegmental Articulation Council (CIAC). FIDM maintains General Education certification with the California State University. FIDM provides transfer counseling to prospective students, current students, and alumni, and maintains course equivalency guides with over 100 colleges and universities. Credit for Academically Relevant Experience (CARE) is available to all students. FIDM also recognizes CLEP, AP, and IB credit.

The team was impressed by the engagement and expertise of the Articulation staff including understanding of the importance of their work and diligence for admission and retention goals, and student success. There is a robust system of monitoring agreements and the provision of clear information for students is apparent and active, critical for sustaining the institution.

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

Faculty and Staff

3.1 Sufficient qualified, diverse faculty and staff committed to institution and to support programs
The collaboration, cooperation, and collegiality of FIDM faculty, staff, and administrators; their active engagement in developing their department’s mission, program learning outcomes, and student learning outcomes; and their participation in program reviews, is exceptional in higher education, as is the sense of pride and ownership that faculty have in their programs and courses. Active faculty discussion and engagement is an institutional strength at FIDM. Faculty are partners in every academic process and are highly engaged in the calibration of their courses to ensure that student and industry needs are being met. As evidenced by the eLearning Planning Committee meeting agendas, the FIDM approach to the development of new online courses includes regular
meetings (sometimes two or three a month) with detailed agendas and meeting notes to document faculty involvement in the course and program development.

Both full- and part-time faculty bring specialized knowledge and technical expertise to FIDM from their academic preparation and/or experience in the fashion, entertainment, visual arts, and interior design industries. Each program maintains a comprehensive list of instructors, including FIDM status, degree qualifications, and courses taught. The minimum requirements for employment are as follows: AA instructors not in art and design programs must have a baccalaureate degree or equivalency; AA art and design instructors must have an MFA or equivalent degree; instructors who teach in the fashion, entertainment, visual arts, and interior design programs must also have five years of industry experience. General Studies and baccalaureate instructors must have at least a master’s degree. A small number of faculty, categorized as technical experts, are qualified by experience in fields for which no formal degree is offered (e.g., footwear construction).

In the academic programs, the faculty job description and the department program reviews both define faculty as shapers of the curriculum. They are closely involved in its design, implementation, and assessment, and are instrumental in developing the master course outline, signature assignments, and rubrics for evaluation of student work. Through these assignments and rubrics, the faculty monitor student performance to ensure that the program maintains its integrity and continuity regardless of campus location and instructional mode.

The type of instruction required by the course content determines class size. Overall the student-to-faculty ratio is 20:1.

FIDM continually seeks qualified personnel who exemplify and affirm the value of diversity to its students. Professional consultants validate the college’s policies that mandate fairness in employment and are published on the ePortal. In program review, FIDM management analyzes IPEDS data by race and ethnicity to verify employment equity. Annual attitudinal surveys indicate that faculty and staff consider FIDM a fair and equitable workplace.

3.2 Faculty policies, practices, and evaluation well developed and applied
FIDM’s employment practices are systematic and fair. Job descriptions for all positions are posted on TeamPlaces, where they are reviewed and updated annually. Employment policies are clearly documented in TeamPlaces Policy Place. FIDM recruits for open positions using all channels available, including advertisements and referrals.

FIDM’s annual new staff orientation, hosted by the president, acquaints new employees with FIDM’s mission, policies, and procedures. Upon hire, staff receive a copy of the Employee Handbook which is also available on the ePortal. Similarly, conducted on all four campuses by the Education Department, quarterly orientation prepares newly hired faculty for the upcoming quarter and explains policies, services, and resources. The orientation provides advice and tools for effective classroom instruction. Orientation for eLearning is available for faculty new to online teaching and FIDM provides faculty with a nine-page service agreement that clearly outlines the duties and responsibilities of online faculty. FIDM’s Faculty Channel on the ePortal contains policies, benefits, and college information.

Based on their job description, faculty receive a formal, annual performance evaluation by their department chairs, with whom they may also discuss faculty incentives such as promotion, leaves of absence, and flexible scheduling. FIDM combines peer, administrative, and student evaluation to assess instructors’ effectiveness and ensure that all facets of an instructor’s performance are
considered. On the branch campuses, instructional specialists mentor new faculty, evaluate faculty in conjunction with department chairs, and share strategies for improving teaching and learning with the faculty.

FIDM policy requires that each instructor be evaluated by students for each course taught at least once a year. New instructors are evaluated during their first quarter. The Institutional Research Office processes instructor evaluation forms to provide data aggregated at the instructor level and returns results to the department chair to use to improve instruction.

3.3 Faculty and staff development planned and evaluated
Each FIDM academic department creates and organizes its own professional development program, which is documented in its program review. Professional development activities vary but often include conferences and on-site departmental meetings. FIDM has started to use collaborative software to include faculty and staff from all campuses simultaneously, and to more cost-effectively share industry and educational webinars, tutorial software for building computer technology skills, and increase discipline-level faculty collaboration sites. Teleconference and web meetings achieve broad participation and supplement numerous face to face meetings.

FIDM sponsors institution-wide professional development activities to assist instructors in remaining current with industry trends, use of effective classroom management techniques, and the annual curriculum presentation, which disseminates vital information about changes in the curriculum.

In the area of curricula, the faculty responsibilities include developing program learning outcomes, course content, curricular structure (including sequencing), instructional strategies, departmental rubrics, designs for signature assignments, and assessment plans. Furthermore, faculty, in conjunction with department chairs, determine the use of assessment results for program improvement.

Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources

3.4 Financial stability, clean audits, sufficient resources; realistic plans for any deficits; budgeting, enrollment and diversified revenue sources
As evidenced by its financial statements, FIDM is a financially stable institution, with high liquidity in available cash reserves and sufficient working capital ratios. It is in compliance with Financial Responsibility Ratios as prescribed by the US Department of Education. The budget process includes participation from department staff, department budget controllers, vice presidents, chief financial officer, and president. Together, the process allows for review, approval, and regular reevaluation of budgets to ensure that anticipated spending is aligned with specific program needs and that resources are allocated accordingly with institutional planning.

Financial statements and supplemental schedules are reviewed in detail by the CFO, the director of accounting, and the financial analyst. FIDM’s financial statements are prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and are audited each year by an independent accountant and also in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. The audits are consistently issued with “unqualified opinions.” No material weaknesses or significant deficiencies have been identified. In each of the last three years, the institution has been profitable.

The monthly internal financial review practices include detailed, long-range planning of expected revenues and expenditures. This review includes an examination of enrollment changes, cash flow
projections, revenues, and short-term and long-term spending requirements. Long-term liabilities are monitored through regular review of lease schedules, loan agreements, and contract obligations.

The budget process includes a forecast built upon estimates of future enrollments, tuition rate changes, etc. Parameters used appear to be based upon a conservative set of assumptions. There is a slow increase in the 5-year forecast; however, it ends with a FTE below the high in 2008-09. FIDM is forecasted to remain profitable at all times.

FIDM is a tuition-dependent institution with approximately 60% of the tuition revenue being paid for by Title IV funding. There are very limited financial aid scholarships (approximately $2.4 million). The financial aid is awarded by the Admissions and the Student Advisement offices. The scholarships are awarded to second-year students who meet GPA requirements, have three faculty recommendations, and have financial need. The Financial Aid Office is primarily concerned with processing loans and assuring compliance with various federal and state programs. It was indicated that approximately two-thirds of all students receive federal financial aid with approximately one-half of those students Pell Grant eligible. There are approximately 800-900 Cal Grant recipients. There could be a significant financial issue if the school was to lose Title IV eligibility.

FIDM does not expect to solicit nor receive donations for the institution’s support. There are two non-profit organizations associated with FIDM that are independent of FIDM and together provide approximately $600,000 in scholarships to FIDM students.

3.5 Sufficient information resources/library, aligned and adequate; technology supported
FIDM makes information resources available to students primarily through its student service departments: the IDEA Center, the Library, the Career Center, and eLearning. In addition, print and electronic resources are available through the academic program departments, each of which includes an information literacy program learning outcome. In addition to the above, Lynda.com, an online tutorial library, is available to students, faculty, and staff.

In the Annual Student Satisfaction & Campus Climate Survey, students remarked that they access the Library more than any other service on the FIDM Portal, that they are building information literacy skills, and that they are satisfied with the IDEA Center, the Library, and the FIDM Portal. In a recent survey, faculty responded that they can locate material easily on the Faculty Channel on the ePortal.

All degree programs have a program learning outcome devoted to technology. Interviews with instructional technology staff verified that FIDM ensures that students and content area instructors have access to all industry-standard software appropriate to their major, including Microsoft Office and Adobe’s Creative Suite.

Online courses, cross-curricular project websites, and web-enabled course websites, are all offered through the eLearning system. FIDM has an eLearning Planning Committee that is involved with resource allocations. There are seven instructional technology staff members in Los Angeles and two in San Francisco who are on the Academic Computing team. Again, in interviews with instructional technology staff, instructional developers aligned learning outcomes and provide support materials to support the teaching and learning process. A 24-hour help line is available to instructors and students for eLearning system support.

FIDM rotates its desktop and other instructional technology equipment on a 3-year cycle. In order to assist it in evaluating the network security, the department secured IBM to assess the networks at all FIDM locations—there were no serious issues found.
The on-going area of concern includes the need for additional bandwidth to support the increasing demands on the network. FIDM is rolling out a policy that will permit each authorized faculty, staff, or student to be authorized to connect one personal device to the FIDM network. FIDM has a director of security and compliance which is a critical element to having a secure network.

Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes

3.6 High performance, responsibility, and accountability for the leadership system
The team found a continuation of the strong FIDM leadership that was found by the visiting team in 2011: “The boards, administrators, faculty, staff, and students share a common vision of creativity and the goal of student learning and achievement. The college leadership has set the expectation of engagement and participation by all its constituent groups.” (2011 ACCJC Visiting Team Report) The leadership has a clear and insightful vision of the institution’s role within American higher education and the 21st Century. The team heard and observed a consistent pattern of openness, cooperation, communication, and collegiality among faculty and between faculty, staff, and administration.

All employees are accountable for maintaining high performance at FIDM by researching and implementing best practices in teaching and service. While FIDM’s stable leadership and high level of employee satisfaction are hallmarks of the institution, the leadership is acutely aware of national changes in higher education, responsibilities of accountability, and systematic attention to documented student learning.

3.7 Clear, consistent decision-making structures and processes; priority given to institutional academic goals
All constituents of FIDM’s organizational structure repeatedly affirm the central purpose of the institution – to prepare students for the professional positions in the industries served and to prepare leaders of that industry who are capable of crossing differentiated roles and cultural boundaries. In multiple interview sessions faculty and staff describe their particular work as supporting the students’ learning and success. Policies governing the decision-making processes are located in the TeamPlaces Policy Place. Faculty, staff, and administrators describe an open infrastructure that allows cross-program, cross-service unit discussion and problem solving when needed. The team observed that this flexible and open collaboration is working well for the institution. The team does recommend, however, that the institution strengthen its ability to sustain its present level of effective decision making by documenting the procedures currently being used to establish its high level of cooperation, collaboration, and communication.

The FIDM student body also has a voice in institutional decision making through the ASSCCS and FIDM’s open door policy. In addition, FIDM’s Student Council may formally present issues to the Board of Administration for consideration.

3.8 Independent governing board with proper oversight; CEO hiring and evaluation
The current 12-member Governing Board, composed of community and industry leaders, includes a Finance Council and an Executive Council that provide oversight of long-range financial planning and academic and student service programs at FIDM. The Governing Board meets quarterly and delegates authority to the Board of Administration (the president and the three vice presidents) for day-to-day operations. The Governing Board also reports to an ownership group (corporation board) which meets annually and as needed. The Governing Board performs a self-evaluation biannually and evaluates the CEO biannually in an informal process.
In interviews with Governing Board members, the team found a more loosely coupled relationship between the Governing Board and the ownership group. The team encourages the institution to review WASC standards to assure that the Governing Board has an autonomous delegation from the ownership group to make decisions on behalf of the institution, separate and apart from the interests of the founders and supporting corporation. The team also recommends that clear by-laws be written to establish the responsibilities and role of the Governing Board to include professional development workshops.

3.9 Full-time CEO and a full-time CFO; sufficient administrators and staff
FIDM’s president is a full-time chief executive officer and the Vice President of Finance is also a full-time officer of the institution. The organizations charts and personnel listings from the four campuses evidence that the administrative infrastructure is strong and well-staffed at the Los Angeles campus and adequately staffed at the three branch campuses.

3.10 Faculty exercise effective academic leadership
The faculty role at the institution is primarily defined in faculty job descriptions and contracts. By auditing committee membership and minutes, and through interviews with administrators, staff, and faculty, the team found that faculty are significantly involved in critical committees of the institution. Two faculty members co-chair the Accreditation Steering Committee which also holds the responsibility for reviewing annual reports, program reviews, and reports on graduation and retention rates. Institutional policies governing workplace, benefits, harassment, and discrimination were readily available through the ePortal but the institution does not, at this time, have a formal Faculty Manual.

Faculty and administrators stress the open-door policies of the institution and persuasively describe freedom to discuss issues at any time. Faculty also describe timely responses to their concerns using this open communication environment. However, the team found no further formal structure for broader cross-institution faculty discussion of institutional initiatives or concerns. In regard to curricular innovation, faculty are the authors of the curriculum and can efficiently amend or revise curriculum by department discussion and ad hoc colleague discussions. However, faculty have no assigned responsibility to review and approve cross-program oversight of the curriculum in the institution and have not yet been challenged with competing curricula or unacceptable initiatives within the institution.

The team suggests that the faculty and administration investigate potential appropriate structures that might enable and sustain faculty oversight of the full curriculum including discussions of potential new programs and shared curriculum among programs.
Standard 4: An Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement

Quality Assurance Processes

4.1 Quality assurance processes; assessment and tracking; comparative data; use of results to revise/improve

Responding to the Commission’s concerns of July 2011, the Office of Institutional Research has strengthened its deliberate set of quality-assurance processes in both academic and non-academic areas at FIDM. Functions have been enhanced to include data collection, dissemination, and analyses to various campus stakeholders. Tracking processes and management systems are in place for assessment and program review that allow for the use of results to revise and improve curricular and program revisions. Exhibits offered as evidence included a program review calendar for the 3-year cycle; program review flowcharts; learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels; program assessment plans; program reviews; and methods used for data collection on student learning.

As evidenced, program review at FIDM occurs on a 3-year cycle. All departments conduct a comprehensive report during year one followed by two annual assessment reports. For both the comprehensive and annual assessment reports, institutional research provides aggregated and disaggregated student and faculty data and a template to each department. Disaggregated data is broken down by race/ethnicity, gender, program type, major, campus location, state of residence, age, prior college, and disability. For the comprehensive report, institutional research also includes updated learning maps, curricular alignment frameworks, current organizational charts, and student placement information.

Industry partners, such as members of advisory councils, also play a valuable role in quality assurance. As a participant in quality of programs, they serve to ensure that the curriculum remains current and reflective of industry trends. Additionally, NASAD also has defined competencies that specific FIDM programs must meet successfully to maintain specialized accreditation. From the president, board, department chairs, branch directors, and nearly all student support area managers, all acknowledge the strength of the FIDM relationship with industry as one of the most successful components to its student success.

4.2 Institutional research capacity; used to assess effectiveness/student learning; review of IR effectiveness

With the full support from senior administration, FIDM has made a commitment to its institutional research by developing its capacity to responding effectively to the college’s needs. Academic programs regularly receive student data to better inform the faculty when making decisions or monitoring progress. FIDM uses consistent definitions for such categories such as attrition, retention, graduates, and placement.

In concert with academic and student support service departments, institutional research supports student learning by coordinating assessment, facilitating the program review process, ensuring compliance with governmental and accreditation standards, designing research and assessment strategy, collecting and interpreting data, advocating best practices, and working with all departments to determine how to use assessment findings for continuous improvement (referred to as “closing the loop”).
It is clear that institutional research provides information and reports to support the planning and decision-making processes across the university, and during the site visit, institutional research made available multiple additional documents to the team. As FIDM moves into the culture a 4-year institution and offers additional bachelor’s degrees, it is anticipated that the role for the Institutional Research Office will only become more integral to moving FIDM forward from its already established success.

Institutional Learning and Improvement

4.3 Leadership and faculty committed to improvement; faculty assesses teaching and learning; climate and co-curricular objectives assessed
In accord with their job descriptions, institutional leaders at all levels perform a significant function in this process. Department chairs and managers lead the program review process, evaluate assessment results, identify possible future directions, and project resource allocation expenditures.

Faculty and staff participate in the program review process by creating and implementing assessment strategies, studying the findings, and developing plans to improve student learning. The assessments are recorded in the program review document, analyzed to identify trends, and incorporated into the resulting department plan.

The administration’s role in program review is evaluative. The vice presidents consider proposals’ feasibility, their support of FIDM’s mission, and their correlation with the long-term goals of the college. If approved, the proposals become part of the institution’s strategic and resource allocation plan.

4.4 Inquiry into teaching and learning leads to improvement in curricula, pedagogy, and assessment
FIDM’s faculty are responsible for managing curricular content, for employing effective pedagogies, and for ensuring that students achieve the program learning outcomes.

Discussion of these responsibilities among faculty has been facilitated by in-service meetings in which speakers address these and related issues, and by faculty meetings in which the results of learning studies are discussed. Because these studies compare students’ performance by campus and learning mode, faculty can explore the reasons for the relative effectiveness of different teaching methods. They also consider questions of course content, pace, sequencing, and availability of resources as possible keys to improving student performance. Three instructional specialists contribute to the ongoing inquiry on the practice of teaching and learning. Their influence is important to the institution overall. In addition, the eLearning instructional specialist researches the practice of online teaching and regularly shares information on best practices with online faculty.

The Faculty & Staff Survey asks respondents to rate the effectiveness of the teaching techniques to which they have been exposed. Using this, and other data, institutional research compares student judgments of teaching techniques with those of the faculty. The results are distributed to all faculty members and included in faculty meeting agendas as a means of further stimulating discussion about pedagogy.

As noted throughout this report, faculty also contribute to the advancement of student learning by creating rubrics for signature assignments—that is, assignments in which students demonstrate their understanding of core course concepts. Rubrics constitute an important method of assessing student attainment. General Studies rubrics, when applicable, are modeled upon VALUE rubrics,
which are vetted, statistically reliable, and nationally benchmarked. Standards of student performance by course are established at the department level through PLOs and SLOs, documented on the alignment framework and learning map, and detailed on rubrics. Institutional research offers workshops in rubric writing. Aggregate ratings from institution-wide learning studies help the faculty judge student progress against expected performance levels and point to areas for improvement.

In 2012, FIDM introduced three new assessment tools, partly in response to the WASC Commission Letter of July 5, 2011. These assessment tools are:

- Student Assessment of Learning Gains, in which students rate their level of progress against the learning outcomes of the course or program. When paired with a signature assignment, data from these two assessments can be used for triangulation—a test of validity;
- A meta-analysis covering three years of general education learning studies, which identified performance strengths and weaknesses across the campuses and curriculum; and
- An inter-department expert adjudication of student writing.

In spring 2013, FIDM had 68 sections of 50 individual courses with 1,679 enrollments, the highest number ever. The FIDM IDEA Center is a highly developed student support service that provides individualized tutoring and other academic support services for students on a campus. In 2012 the percentage of purely online students at FIDM was 2%. However, as the number of fully online students increases, FIDM will need to provide the same levels of support to online students that it currently provides to its students on campus by assessing the needs of its online students and creating appropriate delivery systems. FIDM has clearly expanded its academic programming into its eLearning environment, and it is clear that resources and personnel have been dedicated to its development including thoughtful planning and creative design. However, tutorial and other appropriate student services do not appear to be as fully developed, an action that was also referenced in the WASC July 5, 2011, Commission Letter.

4.5 Stakeholder involvement in regular assessment of institutional effectiveness
FIDM’s strong partnership with industry stakeholders has been noted previously in this team report and past accreditation reports. Academic programs have industry advisory councils that review curriculum and student artifacts. Members of the faculty and staff belong to professional boards or are members of organizations within their industry, keeping them aware of current industry trends.

Industry professionals involved in FIDM assessments often use department rubrics to evaluate student work. Industry assessments establish performance benchmarks for evaluating FIDM’s educational programs. Particularly instructive are industry adjudications of capstone projects. Alumni often participate in the classroom as guest speakers, as industry adjudicators, and as evaluators of the curriculum. Students benefit from this close relationship through curriculum that reflects current industry practices, internships that provide real-world exposure, and challenging employment opportunities.

4.6 Reflection and planning with multiple constituents; strategic plans address key priorities and future direction; aligned with purposes; plan monitored and revised
FIDM’s institutional planning is inclusive, self-reflective, and broad-based. In the most recent Faculty and Staff Survey, 79% of faculty and staff respondents agreed with the statement “I am included in decisions that will make positive changes at FIDM.” Data are used for triangulation purposes to validate the broadly participative nature of assessment and the program review process.
As the institution considers the full impact of additional 4-year programs that may include additional faculty, facilities, staff, library holdings, infrastructure, and other ancillary costs, strategic planning with multiple constituents and formal monitoring of the process is encouraged.

4.7 Anticipating, responding to, the changing higher education environment
The challenge of informed decision making at FIDM has increased over the past several years due to the rapidly changing nature of higher education policy at the national and state levels. In the higher education regulatory environment, FIDM systematically analyses each regulation and proposed change considered by state federal governments to ensure that FIDM can proactively meet all regulatory requirements. For some 30 years, FIDM has staffed a full-time representative in Washington, D.C., to both anticipate and influence federal legislation that may impact higher education. The team applauds the institution's senior leadership for its ability to actualize an extraordinary vision for FIDM and to create an innovative place for FIDM in American higher education.
SECTION III – FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Commendations

The team commends the institution for the enviable legacy of commitment from administrators, staff, faculty, and board members. The stability, constancy of vision, trust, and devotion evident at FIDM is rare in higher education. It creates a wonderful place to work, but even more importantly, FIDM is an excellent place to learn.

The team commends FIDM’s copious use and assessment of learning outcomes that are consistently informed by and validated through the use of external industry professionals. Partnerships with outstanding industry members validate the institution’s learning outcomes and provide a level of authenticity to assessment which is seldom matched in higher education. FIDM students are the direct beneficiaries of an excellent selection and assessment of learning outcomes! Placement rates in and above the 90th percentile are some of the highest in the nation.

The team commends the institution for its ability to complete the program review initiative across all student services areas and academic programs. Since the last accreditation review in 2011, FIDM has designed and implemented the 3-year cycle for program reviews and made significant progress in providing a sustainable process for the future.

The team commends the institution’s support of student learning and faculty development through the use of instructional specialists, library personnel, and tutoring services in the IDEA Centers at each of the four campuses. The team found these professional services are delivered at the highest level of best practice. Each service engages in syllabi review prior to each quarter. Instructional specialists review syllabi to create pedagogical suggestions for any faculty requesting assistance. Library personnel review syllabi and prepare to assist students with materials development, resources, and research holdings. The IDEA Centers review the course schedule to assign tutors needed for each subject area.

The team commends the well-designed and thoughtful use of the ePortal which provides access, transparency, and communication for all internal constituents of the institution. The organization of the ePortal and its readability were user friendly and comprehensive in scope.

The team commends the exceptional institutional support for instructional technology personnel in both academic and administrative computing. The team recognizes a significant turn-around from the previous 2011 Commission Letter. Faculty are engaged with and responsible for the online learning enterprise. Assessment of online learning is commensurate with face-to-face instruction, and all face-to-face classes have a web component to support learning. Online student learning outcomes are equivalent to and sometimes more notable than those in face-to-face courses. As web-based and online endeavors grow, the team is confident FIDM will find ways to enhance additional student support services for its online students.

The team commends the institution for providing exceptionally high quality facilities for students, faculty, and staff. The facility provides for student comfort and inspiration while maintaining a learning-centered atmosphere. Facility management provides preventive maintenance and cost efficiency.

The team commends the institution’s financial management for insightful and competent planning and fiscal oversight. The institution has demonstrated fiscal prudence in reacting to adverse financial exigencies while maintaining operational stability.
The team commends the institution's senior leadership for its ability to actualize an extraordinary vision for FIDM and the leadership's ability to create an innovative place for FIDM in American higher education. Along with that vision, the team commends and is deeply impacted by the persistent insight of senior leadership to recognize the broadest of social, economic, and political contexts within which higher education.

Finally, WASC Senior College and University Commission is currently and critically focused on the accredited institution's purpose, mission, and contribution to the public good. The team found that FIDM is making an unstated yet highly visible and unique contribution to the public good. That contribution emanates from the cultural and social norms of the institution itself: respect, professional teamwork, collaboration, cooperation, and communication. From the administrative leadership and at all levels throughout the institution, the intentional openness, transparency, and open-door policies are equipping students to have the personal and communicative skills of mature workers and future leaders. Please know that FIDM provides a model of collegiality which is highly coveted in higher education. It is the conclusion of the team that the distinct and pervasive environment at FIDM in which the FIDM student is immersed in, is, a significant component of the institution's contribution to the public good.

**Recommendations**

In light of the increased scrutiny of for-profit institutions by policy makers and the public, FIDM would do well to ensure that its governance structures comply fully with the WASC Senior College and University Commission’s Policy on Independent Governing Boards. In particular, the bylaws should be reviewed to ensure that the relationship between the ownership group and the Governing Board delegate sufficient authority to preserve the autonomy of the governing body to act consistently on behalf of the institution and its mission.

As the institution continues its transition from being primarily a career-oriented school toward fully becoming an institution of higher learning within the WASC Senior College and University Commission, the institution's governing board should review the WASC Senior’s Standards for expected responsibilities and activities. This includes completing the required committee structures of the governing board by developing an education committee, an audit committee, and a membership or nominating committee. Adding one or more individuals with extensive experience in higher education and other specialties as called for should be a high priority. Pursuing professional development opportunities for the governing board such as those provided by the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) will add strength and credibility to the governance structures.

The institution's leadership has recruited a faculty of highest quality and commitment to not only the disciplines within FIDM but also with a commitment to mentoring aspiring professionals and a commitment to innovative and inspiring classroom teaching. It is the team’s recommendation that faculty participation and involvement in decision making at the institution, which have been evidenced as continuous and significant, now be more formalized. The team recommends that the institution investigate appropriate faculty structures that would ensure an aggregated faculty voice in the open dialogue regarding future directions and initiatives of the institution.

The team has observed a plethora of creative best practices at this institution. It was obvious that FIDM has given extraordinary thought to the procedures and practices in place in academic departments and student support services throughout the institution. The team recommends that FIDM now establish written documentation of those procedures in order to transition, grow, and enable sustainability over time. All academic, student support, and financial procedures and practices should be recorded and reviewed periodically.
The team found an intense student loyalty and appreciation of FIDM. However, the team also found a repeated and clear student concern across campuses regarding how, where, and when to obtain information related to financial aid and scholarships. The team recommends that the institution address this student concern by clarifying and communicating to the students the differentiated roles between admissions, advising, financial aid, and scholarships at the institution.

The team was impressed by the innovative use of Professional Designation Programs (PDP) for students who desire additional education in a specified field. However, the team recommends that the faculty consider seriously the potential detriment to PDP students when they are placed in the same classes as traditional AA students. While PDP students may enhance the educational experience of the AA students in class, the PDP students report that they need more challenge in this program. The team encourages and recommends that FIDM reassess delivery methods for the PDP program students.

The team recognizes the expansion of FIDM academic programming into its eLearning environment. Resources and personnel have been dedicated to its development including thoughtful planning and creative design. Given the extraordinary care and concern the institution gives all FIDM students, the team urges FIDM to assess the learning, tutorial, and other appropriate service needs of online students.

The team recommends that as the institution considers the full impact of additional 4-year programs which might include additional faculty, facilities, staff, library holdings, infrastructure, and other ancillary costs.

It is visibly evident to the team that the faculty of FIDM are engaged in their disciplinary specialties in a variety of important ways. It is also evident that creative teaching and engaging, authentic project work in classes is an outstanding characteristic of this institution. One of the roles of higher education is to disseminate those creative endeavors—both inside and outside of the classroom. The team recommends that faculty and administration establish, support, and recognize appropriate expectations of faculty in scholarship and creative activity that includes the dissemination of that work to industry and other institutions of higher education.
## Credit Hour Review

**Institution:** Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising (LA, OC, SD, and SF campuses)

**Type of Visit:** Pathway B

**Date:** July 16-19, 2013

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report for all CPR, EER and Initial Accreditation Visits. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material Reviewed</th>
<th>Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)</th>
<th>Verified Yes/No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy on credit hour</td>
<td>Does this policy adhere to WASC policy and federal regulations?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process(es)/periodic review</td>
<td>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)?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the institution adhere to this procedure?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments: Credit hour assignments are reviewed during the class schedule proposals and program review processes.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet</td>
<td>Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments: Class schedule displays 2 hour 45 minute course modules. All courses offered at all four (4) campuses are identical in time allotment and time offered. One credit hour review from the master course schedule serves as verification for all campus offerings.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses</td>
<td>What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? How many syllabi were reviewed? What degree level(s)? What discipline(s)?</td>
<td>Online Two Bachelor Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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)</td>
<td>What kinds of courses? How many syllabi were reviewed? What degree level(s)? What discipline(s)?</td>
<td>Indep. Study One Associate Fashion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments: Students must have a 3.0 GPA and are permitted only one independent study during their program.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Student Complaints Review

**Institution:** Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising  
**Date:** July 16-19, 2013

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report. 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.

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<th>Yes/No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy on student complaints</strong></td>
<td>Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments: FIDM’s Student Grievance process is readily available for review on the Student Handbook, the College Catalog, and on the website.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process(es)/procedure</strong></td>
<td>Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the institution adhere to this procedure?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments: Procedures, timeframes, and responsible parties are listed within the Student Grievance process. Staff are well-versed in FERPA regulations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Records</strong></td>
<td>Does the institution maintain records of student complaints?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments: Student grievances, complete with final decisions/resolutions are archived/filed and were reviewed on site.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Distance Education Summary

Institution: Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising
Type of Visit: Pathway B
Name of reviewer/s: Patricia E. Potter
Date/s of review: July 16-19, 2013

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report for all comprehensive visits to institutions that offer distance education programs¹ and for other visits as applicable. 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. (If the institution offers only online courses, the team may use this form for reference but need not submit it as the team report is expected to cover distance education in depth in the body of the report.)

1. Programs and Courses Reviewed (please list)
   Bachelor of Science in Business Management (BUMT)
   A.A. Professional Designation in Merchandise Marketing (AA PD MMKT)

2. Background Information (number of programs offered by distance education; degree levels; FTE enrollment in distance education courses/programs; history of offering distance education; growth in distance education offerings and enrollment; platform, formats, and/or delivery method)
   FIDM has two fully online programs (shown above); one is a bachelor's program, the other an associate's program. The fall 2012 enrollment data indicated 70 FTE in the BUMT program and five students in the AA PD MMKT; spring 2013 web only FTE is reported at 106 FTE. Additionally, there has been significant growth in the number of onsite students who are enrolling in online courses. Online learning at FIDM began in spring 2010. There were 40 sections offered and 603 students took at least one online class. In spring 2013, 782 students took at least one class online and the number of sections offered had grown to 68.

   The FIDM online course platform is SAKAI, an open source delivery system that has been customized to the institution's needs. The eLearning department reports to the vice president of Education and has a staff of seven instructional designers. eLearning is also closely aligned with the Information Technology Department, which has a staff of 70 including a significant number of software programmers who are tasked with developing and enhancing the SAKAI platform.

   The eLearning department also works closely with faculty members teaching in the classroom to create web-enabled courses that allow faculty to supplement the “live” experience by uploading handouts, documents, videos and other materials to the web.

¹ See Protocol for Review of Distance Education to determine whether programs are subject to this process. In general only programs that are more than 50% online require review and reporting.
Faculty can also communicate with students electronically, post schedules, announcements, the syllabus and grades.

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

Interviewed were the: Dean of Education, Director of eLearning, chair of the BUMT program; chair of the AA PD MMKT program; and Chief Information Officer.

Materials examined included the FIDM Curriculum Development Process; the agendas and notes of the eLearning Planning Committee from June 2011 to June 2013; the FIDM eLearning Instructor Site Training Guide; the FIDM eLearning Faculty Duties and Responsibilities; the Regular and Substantive Interaction Standard for faculty; the Web-Enabled Instructor Training Agenda and Workbook; a sample eLearning Course Revision Schedule; eLearning student and faculty demographics; master course outlines and individual faculty syllabi for the BUMT and PDMM programs

**Observations and Findings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines of Inquiry</th>
<th>Observations and Findings</th>
<th>Follow-up Required (identify the issues)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fit with Mission.</strong> How does the institution conceive of distance learning relative to its mission, operations, and administrative structure? How are distance education offerings planned, funded, and operationalized? (CFRs 1.2, 3.1, 3.5, 3.8, 4.1)</td>
<td>Distance learning is fully integrated into the institution’s mission, operations, and administrative structure. Course offerings are carefully planned by the eLearning Committee and funding for online course development is part of the budget.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connection to the Institution.</strong> How are distance education students integrated into the life and culture of the institution? (CFR 1.2, 2.10)</td>
<td>The number of students who are taking 100% of their program online is quite small. There is no data that speaks to the “integration” of these students into the FIDM culture.</td>
<td>Team recommendations speak to the need to be attentive to student support and “integration” of 100% online students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of the DE Infrastructure.</strong> Are the learning platform and academic infrastructure of the site conducive to learning and interaction between faculty and students and among students? Is the technology adequately supported? Are there back-ups? (CFRs 2.1, 2.5, 3.7)</td>
<td>The learning platform is outstanding. The resources FIDM commits to its technology infrastructure and custom software development is impressive (70 members of the IT dept. and eight staff in the eLearning dept.). All systems are backed up.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Support Services. CPR:</strong> What is the institution’s capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services, academic support and other services appropriate to distance modality? <strong>EER:</strong> What do data show about the effectiveness of the services? (CFRs 2.11-2.13, 3.6, 3.7)</td>
<td>The FIDM Portal is impressive and would provide students with access to a number of services. The Library houses an impressive number of online databases. There is no data accessing the effectiveness of academic and other student services for fully online</td>
<td>As noted above, the team report includes a recommendation related to these CFRs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Faculty.** Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? Do they teach only online courses? In what ways does the institution ensure that distance learning faculty are oriented, supported, and integrated appropriately into the academic life of the institution? How are faculty involved in curriculum development and assessment of student learning? How are faculty trained and supported to teach in this modality? (CFRs 2.4, 3.1-3.4, 4.6)

In calendar year 2012, 39% of online instructors were full-time; 44% part-time and 17% “quarterly” - the FIDM designation for “occasional” part-time faculty. Faculty must teach three quarters onsite at FIDM before they are allowed to teach online. FIDM has an impressive array of orientation and support materials for faculty (see document list above). Faculty are fully involved in the curriculum development process and all FIDM assessment processes and procedures are integrated into online courses. In addition, the work of the eLearning dept., with onsite faculty to create web-enabled courses means that FIDM has created a methodology for introducing all faculty to web-based teaching, thereby overcoming initial or ongoing resistance.

**Curriculum and Delivery.** Who designs the distance education programs and courses? How are they approved and evaluated? Are the programs and courses comparable in content, outcomes and quality to on-ground offerings? (CFRs 2.1-2.3, 4.6) (Submit credit hour report.)

Programs and courses are designed by faculty who are the SME’s and work in close conjunction with the instructional design team in the eLearning dept. All programs and courses are comparable to on-ground offerings and all outcomes and assessment measures are the same.

**Retention and Graduation.** What data on retention and graduation are collected on students taking online courses and programs? What do these data show? What disparities are evident? Are rates comparable to on-ground programs and to other institutions online offerings? If any concerns exist, how are these being addressed? (CFRs 2.6, 2.10)

The eLearning dept., working with IR has data on retention and tracks students who drop courses by week. 84% of students in online courses are retained. There is a 93% completion rate for the BUMT and 95% placement rate. The completion rate for the AA PD MMKT is 89% and the placement rate is 100%.

**Student Learning. CPR:** How does the institution assess student learning for online programs and courses? Is this process comparable to that used in on-ground courses?

**EER:** What are the results of student learning assessment? How do these compare with learning

Student learning in online programs is assessed using FIDM’s on-ground course assessment approach. BUMT is offered online.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Results of on-ground students, if applicable, or with other online offerings? (CFRs 2.6, 4.6, 4.7)</strong></th>
<th><strong>and on-ground. Comparative Data exists.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Contracts with Vendors.** Are there any arrangements with outside vendors concerning the infrastructure, delivery, development, or instruction of courses? If so, do these comport with the policy on **Contracts with Unaccredited Organizations**?

| **Contracts with Vendors.** Are there any arrangements with outside vendors concerning the infrastructure, delivery, development, or instruction of courses? If so, do these comport with the policy on **Contracts with Unaccredited Organizations**? | All contracts with vendors appear to be through the IT department and there do not appear to be any contracts for the development or instruction of online courses. |

**Quality Assurance Processes:** **CPR:** How are the institution’s quality assurance processes designed or modified to cover distance education? **EER:** What evidence is provided that distance education programs and courses are educationally effective? (CFRs 4.4-4.8)

| **Quality Assurance Processes:** **CPR:** How are the institution’s quality assurance processes designed or modified to cover distance education? **EER:** What evidence is provided that distance education programs and courses are educationally effective? (CFRs 4.4-4.8) | Quality assurance processes are not modified for distance education. The array of materials to train and prepare faculty is impressive and the institutional expectations for faculty teaching online are highly developed. Graduation and placement rates for the two fully online programs are high as are the placement rates. |
Off-Campus Site Summary 1

Institution: Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising (San Diego campus)
Type of Visit: Pathway B
Name of reviewer/s: Patricia E. Potter
Date/s of review: July 16, 2013

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report for all visits in which off-campus sites were reviewed. 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
   Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising
   350 Tenth Avenue, 3rd Floor
   San Diego CA, 92101

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 regional center or off-campus site by WASC)
   The FIDM San Diego campus was established in 1985 and is designated by WASC as a branch campus. It occupies a new facility overlooking Petco Park in downtown San Diego. The facility occupies one floor of a leased building and was designed by renowned architect, Clive Wilkinson. The site and classroom design is outstanding, fostering creativity and communication, and the physical space and furnishings are boldly reflective of the FIDM mission and brand. The six students who were interviewed at the branch described it as “their second home.”

   For fall 2012 student enrollment was: 174 (96%) full-time and 7 (4%) part-time overall. Of the 174 full-time student enrollments, 72 (41%) were first-time, 49 (28%) were transfer, and 53 (31%) were continuing. There are 3 full-time faculty members and 23 part-time faculty and 26 staff including the director.

   This site is designated an off-campus site by WASC. There is only one program offered in total at the San Diego branch campus: the AA in Merchandise Marketing. It is noteworthy that the most recent graduation rate data for students in this program at this campus was 100 percent (March 2013). Students at this campus may complete only the first year of the following four AA degree majors and must then transfer to the Los Angeles campus:
   1. Beauty Industry Merchandising and Marketing
   2. Merchandise Product Development
   3. Fashion Design*
   4. Visual Communications*

   *Also accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design.

3 See Protocol for Review of Off-Campus Sites to determine whether and how many sites will be visited.
3. Nature of the Review (material examined and persons/committees interviewed)
Interviews were conducted with the Campus & Admission Director, the Education Director, the Career Development Director, and the Campus Librarian. Two full-time and three part-time faculty were also interviewed along with six students. A tour of the facility was conducted, and graduation, retention, and drop/withdrawal reports were reviewed. All curricula materials for the AA in Merchandise Marketing was reviewed online through the FIDM ePortal prior to the visit. One master FIDM class schedule that included San Diego courses offered was reviewed for the institution’s credit hour appendix.

Observations and Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines of Inquiry</th>
<th>Observations and Findings</th>
<th>Follow-up Required (identify the issues)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fit with Mission.</strong> 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)</td>
<td>Fully aligned with the mission, operations, and administrative structure of the main campus. The site is well planned and fully operationalized.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connection to the Institution.</strong> 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)</td>
<td>This is FIDM LA in miniature! Though all students are “off-campus” students, the small size of the branch does create an even deeper “FIDM Family” connection.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of the Learning Site.</strong> 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)</td>
<td>The current director has 23 years of experience with FIDM. She and her staff and faculty fully embody the</td>
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<td><strong>Student Support Services.</strong> CPR: What is the site’s capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services and other appropriate student services? Or how are these otherwise provided? EER: What do data show about the effectiveness of these services? (CFRs 2.11-2.13, 3.6, 3.7)</td>
<td>All student support services are available on this campus. The high graduation rate underscores the effectiveness of FIDM San Diego student support services.</td>
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<td><strong>Faculty.</strong> Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? In what ways does the institution ensure that off-campus faculty are 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)</td>
<td>Courses are taught by full-time and part-time faculty. All faculty members are active participants in the institution’s curriculum development and assessment processes and in eLearning processes.</td>
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**Curriculum and Delivery.** 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) [Also submit credit hour report.]

Courses and programs at this campus are designed in accordance with FIDM’s course development processes. Faculty members on this campus are full participants (as an example, the recent institution-wide required Gen Ed course on Critical Thinking was developed for online by one of the full-time faculty members at the San Diego campus). All programs and courses are comparable in content to those on the main campus.

**Retention and Graduation.** 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)

Retention and graduation data is collected by quarter at this branch. There are weekly reports on permanent withdrawals and leaves of absence. Drop statistics for the winter 2012 quarter at this campus were zero and for summer 2012 six students dropped (8.2%). There are no significant disparities between data here and the main campus.

**Student Learning. CPR:** How does the institution assess student learning at off-campus sites? Is this process comparable to that used on the main campus? *EER:* 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)

The SD campus uses the same learning assessment processes and procedures as the main campus. Learning results are comparable to or exceed those at the main campus.

**Quality Assurance Processes: CPR:** How are the institution’s quality assurance processes designed or modified to cover off-campus sites? *EER:* What evidence is provided that off-campus programs and courses are educationally effective? (CFRs 4.4-4.8)

There is no modification to FIDM’s quality assurance programs at this campus. Again, evidence of educational effectiveness is evident in the graduation and retention rates at this campus.
Off-Campus Site Summary 2

Institution: Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising (San Francisco campus)
Type of Visit: Pathway B
Name of reviewers: Karen Graham, Stephanie Bangert, Susan Clapper
Date/s of review: July 16, 2013

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report for all visits in which off-campus sites were reviewed. 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
Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising
55 Stockton Street
San Francisco CA, 94108

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 regional center or off-campus site by WASC)
The FIDM San Francisco campus was established in 1973 and is designated by WASC as an off-campus branch site. It is located in the heart of the historic Union Square district and features creative a spacious classrooms, common areas, and a new library. The site and classroom design is outstanding, fostering creativity and communication, and the physical space and furnishings are boldly reflective of the FIDM mission and brand. The ten students who were interviewed all validated the creative and engaging physical learning environment provided to them by FIDM.

For fall 2012 student enrollment was: 651 (87%) full-time and 99 (13%) part-time overall. Of the 651 full-time student enrollments, 128 (20%) were first-time, 155 (24%) were transfer, and 368 (56%) were continuing. Twenty percent of the faculty are full-time, with 80% part-time.

There are five associate of arts degree programs; six professional designation associate of arts degree programs; and one bachelor of science degree programs offered in total at the San Francisco campus. Four of the associate of arts degree and four of the professional designation degree programs are accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). Students at this campus may complete only the first year of the following three AA degree majors and must then transfer to the Los Angeles campus:

1. Apparel Industry Management
2. Beauty Industry Merchandising & Marketing
3. Merchandise Product Development

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4 See Protocol for Review of Off-Campus Sites to determine whether and how many sites will be visited.
3. **Nature of the Review** (material examined and persons/committees interviewed)

Interviews were conducted with the campus director, the education director, the career development director, the campus librarian; coordinators from the academic, advising, and IDEA Center; and instructional specialists. Full-time and part-time faculty were interviewed along with ten students who represented a broad range of the San Francisco student. A tour of the facility was conducted, and graduation, retention, and drop/withdrawal reports were reviewed. All curricula materials for the degree programs were reviewed online through the FIDM ePortal prior to the visit. All courses are identical in offering to those at the main Los Angeles campus. One master FIDM class schedule that included San Francisco courses offered was reviewed for the institution’s credit hour appendix.

### Observations and Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines of Inquiry</th>
<th>Observations and Findings</th>
<th>Follow-up Required (identify the issues)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fit with Mission.</strong> 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)</td>
<td>The SF branch fits directly with mission, programs, and purpose. The campus administrator is in direct communication with and participates in collaborative planning with the central campus in LA. The campus administrator is also involved in institutional planning and decision making. The connection to full institution appears strong and positive.</td>
<td>None.</td>
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<td><strong>Connection to the Institution.</strong> 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)</td>
<td>The culture, ethos, and passion of FIDM as an institution are visible, deep and compelling at the SF campus in that faculty/staff demonstrate a unified commitment to student-centered learning. Students appear happy, relaxed, respected, engaged, cared for by those entrusted to educate and mentor them. The learning environment is so well designed and blended – the physical spaces, student work, the aesthetic of classroom, studio, office, services, lobby, gathering, public art – that being a part of the SF campus could not be experienced as anything other than undeniably FIDM. Students are integrated at the admissions stage but most student services are delivered at the local level.</td>
<td>No follow-up is required because the observations regarding the SF campus became clear and focused after seeing and experiencing first-hand the dynamic, creative force of the home LA campus.</td>
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<td><strong>Quality of the Learning Site.</strong> 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)</td>
<td>The physical facility is of highest quality and functionality. Student work is displayed professionally. Student lounge and library conducive to learning focus and inviting. Campus management team is reviewed and supervised by central office on continual basis.</td>
<td>None.</td>
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### Student Support Services. CPR:
What is the site's capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services and other appropriate student services? Or how are these otherwise provided? EER: What do data show about the effectiveness of these services? (CFRs 2.11-2.13, 3.6, 3.7)

The SF campus provides its students with the same, rich array of services (advising, counseling, library, computing) as LA. Personnel is qualified, professional, intelligently engaged with educational outcomes and a focus on student success. Career services are appreciated.

2012 student satisfaction and climate data for SF indicates that the effectiveness of financial services remains lower (2.95) than scores for other services (3.0-3.76).

Student survey data and interviews indicate that students continue to ask for longer building and studio hours to complete required projects and coursework. Additionally, increased access to computers, printers and WiFi especially during peak times (capstone, finals), is needed!

Student support in tutoring, co-curricular activities scheduled and diverse, computer lab as well as computers available in library, library holdings, electronic databases and multi-media services available with 6-member library staff. Student Council active.

The LA campus provides its students a deeper level of service perhaps because its critical mass in number of staff and resources is greater. Given the robust development ongoing in the centralized IT function in LA, it would be useful to return to SF and the other sites to validate that as FIDM expands its technology all sites receive the same level of excellence.

Follow-up on providing SF students with expanded access to building spaces and services.

### Faculty.
Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? In what ways does the institution ensure that off-campus faculty are 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)

20% FT and 80% PT faculty. Faculty describe phone conference calls with faculty at other campuses, staff meetings each quarter, department meetings locally as well as cross-campus, faculty also describe specific examples of faculty-driven curricular changes and development. Faculty are invited to main campus for department meetings and annual whole institution meetings.

A more formal structure for faculty approval of curriculum across programs (e.g., an academic council).

Who completes the annual assessment reports to the administration and how are the results of assessment (especially program assessment and institution LO assessment) shared with all faculty?

### Curriculum and Delivery.
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) [Also submit credit hour report.]

All coursework is taught from standard syllabi across all campuses and approved by department faculty.

Faculty approval and oversight of curriculum across programs?

### Retention and Graduation.
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)

IPEDS data including retention and graduation exists for each of the 4 campuses. SF and LA graduation rate data nearly the same, no disparities.

Leaves-of-absence and permanent withdrawals data is collected by the Registrar for the SF campus and provided to the campus director weekly. The campus could benefit from disaggregated data that shows info by program at each campus.

IPEDS data for 2011 suggests that SF campus students may require more financial aid than LA. Given the dissatisfaction with financial services counseling and the data reporting number of students receiving loans and other aid, this issue should be examined more closely at SF.

Receiving information from IR that more readily shows data disaggregated by program and campuses for comparison would benefit the SF campus administrators.
**Student Learning. CPR:** How does the institution assess student learning at off-campus sites? Is this process comparable to that used on the main campus?  
**EER:** 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)

| Assessment at the SF branch is identical to assessment at LA campus and all campuses in the system. Assessment is coordinated by the main campus. | None. |

**Quality Assurance Processes: CPR:** How are the institution’s quality assurance processes designed or modified to cover off-campus sites?  
**EER:** What evidence is provided that off-campus programs and courses are educationally effective? (CFRs 4.4-4.8)

| The assessment protocol for the whole institution includes all campuses including SF.  
Campus faculty, department chairs and external industry professionals review the capstone assignments using calibrated rubrics. Results are submitted to IR, which aggregates results for programs across campuses and by individual campus.  
An identical process is used for student services at the individual campuses. | None. |