REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM

For Reaffirmation of Accreditation

To California Northstate University

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

Reaffirmation of Accreditation

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

A. Description of the Institution and its Accreditation History, as Relevant

California Northstate University (CNU), founded in 2006 and granted WASC accreditation in June 2012, is a for-profit university located in Elk Grove, CA with additional facilities in Rancho Cordova, CA. Two professional doctoral degree programs are offered at the Elk Grove location, while a new undergraduate degree program is offered at the Rancho Cordova site. The College of Pharmacy (COP) matriculated the first class to the Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) degree program in the fall of 2008. The College of Medicine’s Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree program receivedWSCUC approval in June 2013 and enrolled the inaugural class in the fall of 2015. Following WSCUC substantive change approval for the College of Health Sciences (CHS) Bachelor of Science degree program in May of 2015, the CHS enrolled its first students in fall of 2015. CHS has also developed accelerated baccalaureate programs leading to MD and PharmD degrees and a non-degree program to prepare students for admission to medical school. CNU’s fall 2016 enrollment was 610 students. Over 92% percent are graduate students in professional doctoral programs (COP 413 students and COM 150 students) with the remaining 47 students being undergraduates in the CHS.

The Mission of CNU is to advance the art and science of healthcare and the institution’s vision is to provide innovative education and healthcare delivery systems. Institutional Core Values are Working as a team, embracing diversity and workplace excellence, Caring about students (who are also colleagues), staff, faculty, and profession, advancing the university, its goals, and the professions, responding to challenges that may impede
mission, and enhancing communication and partnerships (WeCare). It is noteworthy that the institution addresses current and anticipated changes within higher education and the health care delivery system as part of its Strategic Plan 2015-2020. Guided by Strategy 6.3, CNU will research viability of new programs that are consistent with its Mission for implementation (CFR 4.6, 4.7). CNU does not have any off-campus locations or distance education programs.

The PharmD and MD degree programs are accredited by their respective specialized accrediting bodies—the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (accredited with a focused visit in 2016-17) and the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (at Step 3, or accredited, preliminary status, of a five-step accreditation process).

B. Description of Team’s Review Process

The Team reviewed the Institutional Report and supporting documents as part of the OSR in September 2016 and identified six lines of inquiry: finance, organizational structure, enrollment management, quality assurance, value of integrating professional and regional accreditation, and institution-wide recruitment and retention efforts. Additional supporting documents were requested and subsequently made available by CNU.

The team also reviewed previous Commission actions as related to both CNU’s initial accreditation and subsequent substantive change proposals. At its meeting June 13-15, 2012, the Commission considered the report of the Special Visit team that conducted an on-site review for Initial Accreditation of CNU March 15-16, 2012. In the action letter dated
July 11, 2012, the Commission requested that the comprehensive review evaluator teams assess progress on the topics addressed in their letter both in the institutional report and during the fall 2016 OSR and spring 2017 AV. The team found that the Institutional Report was attentive to the Commission’s request to address: 1) continuing policy development; 2) formalizing a policy on academic freedom; and 3) building academic infrastructure. These items are addressed on pages 12-21 in the Institutional Report and are summarized in this report (pages 5).

Additionally, the Institutional Report addressed WSCUC Recommendations from an August 6, 2013, Action Letter that called for a review of the status of funded research for medical school faculty as well as outcomes of the first group or groups of graduates from the program. A response to the Commission’s request is found on page 22 of the Institutional Report and is addressed in this report on page 5.

CNU has been appropriately responsive to the WASC/WSCUC action letters. The institution has provided candid reflections on strengths and weaknesses—evidence of a rigorous inquiry, and plans to pursue additional questions as raised by ongoing institutional awareness—evidence of a learning organization (CFR 4.1-4.4). A confidential email account was made available for CNU students and employees to provide comments on their experiences at the Institution however no responses were submitted during the site visit.

The team arrived for the Accreditation Visit on the afternoon of March 6, 2017 and spent the next three days engaged with CNU stakeholders, including individual and group
meetings with campus leadership, students representative of all programs, full-time and adjunct faculty, staff, alumni, and board of trustee members. A meeting was also held with community partners who provide COP clinical placements and COM clerkships, as well as elected officials such as the Mayor of Elk Grove, City Council representatives, and a County Supervisor. The team had the opportunity to triangulate what was read in the Institutional Report with what was observed on the two campuses and what was heard from stakeholders during the site visit. The Institutional Report, combined with additional requested documents pertinent to the identified Lines of Inquiry, and the interviews with stakeholders during the site visit, provided the team with the necessary information to evaluate the overall condition of CNU.

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

CNU’s Institutional Report was well written and informative. The Team appreciates how forthcoming CNU was in acknowledging both strengths and weaknesses identified during their self-study process. The CNU Accreditation Steering Committee authored a document that educated the Team well during its preparation for the visit, and also served as a resource and guide to the Team during the visit (CFR 1.9). In addition, CNU provided additional documentation as requested.
SECTION II - EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS

A. Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions

As summarized above in SECTION I.B., CNU used the self-study process to respond to previous commission actions communicated in a July 11, 2012 Action Letter and an August 6, 2013 Action Letter. The 2012 Action Letter called for continuing policy development, formalizing a policy on academic freedom and building an academic infrastructure. The 2013 Action Letter called for a review of funded research by medical school faculty and outcome data pertaining to the first cohort of medical students admitted fall 2015 (Class of 2019). The OSR and AV confirmed sustained progress in the area of policy development, including a policy on academic freedom, as well as an evolving university infrastructure, which has included a number of new Vice President positions and a university Faculty Senate. Assessment plans are in place to monitor faculty scholarly activity in the new College of Medicine and this is an area identified by the President, leadership team and faculty as an area for growth in the years ahead. Research lab space and funding for intramural grants have been committed for this purpose and there is evidence of growing scholarly activity such as, peer-reviewed publications, professional presentations, and grant writing. At the time of the OSR and AV, outcome data for the COM Class of 2019, just in its second year, was limited. Retention rates seem acceptable and students report satisfaction with clerkship rotations scheduled for next year. Data from nationally normed standardized examinations are limited to one year and graduation rates are not yet available.
B. Component 2: Compliance with the Standards and federal requirements; Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators

CNU conducted a full review of WSCUC Standards and related Criteria for Review (CFRs) incorporating input from faculty, staff, the board of trustees, and students. A committee led by two Co-Chairs reviewed the Standards. Committee membership, representing an inclusive group of university stakeholders, completed the self-inventory that was accessible from a link on page 26 of the Institutional report. All CFRs were rated as “We do this well; area of strength for us” or “Aspects of this need our attention.” The team acknowledges that plans are in place to address CFRs where the institution identified a need for attention and follow up action. Areas of strength and areas requiring attention are summarized below.

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

CNU has clearly delineated Institutional, Program and Course Learning Outcomes which are consistent with the institution’s mission, vision and values. It has documented a strong commitment to diversity and community service that enrich academic programs and contribute to the public good (CFR 1.1, 1.4). The institution regularly collects, analyzes and makes public data about student achievement (CFR 1.2) and, with faculty input, has developed an Academic Freedom Policy (CFR 1.3). Areas to be addressed include development and publication of more centralized university policies (CFR 1.6, 1.7) and development and use of a data analytics system.
Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions

The institution is student centered, as evidenced by interactions with the Chief Executive Officer, Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community representatives. Students reported that they experience faculty support with an “open door policy,” that they know the institution has “students’ best interests at heart,” that they are actively engaged in learning, and they have opportunities to collaborate with faculty on research (CFR2.5, 2.8).

Continuous assessment and supporting student success are important to the institution. Examples of continuous assessment in the institutional report include a program review process, ongoing review of policies, alignment of PLOs to ACPE and CAPE outcomes in the College of Pharmacy; analysis of criteria predicting academic success to make changes in admission criteria in the COP; comprehensive assessments of various service areas (admissions, information technology, library); and use of findings from the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) annual student satisfaction and faculty satisfaction surveys.

The team observed intentional efforts to be innovative in curriculum and student and faculty research collaboration. Examples include Team Based Learning (TBL) in the COP and use of inter-professional case studies in an integrated COM curriculum. Selected poster presentations exemplified faculty, student, and staff collaboration in scholarly activity, and an Interdisciplinary Education Committee demonstrated collaboration among Colleges in an articulation effort.
Since the 2012 visit, CNU made progress on the Program Review Handbook (CFR 1.3, 2.7, 3.2) and the institution established a program review cycle. The COP reported that the 2011-12 program review provided a learning opportunity that impacted the 2016-17 program review in progress at the time of the AV.

Areas to be addressed in the future, based on the institution's Review Under WSCUC Standards, include further developing strategies to recruit and retain faculty (CFR 2.1) and maturing the culture that supports research, scholarship and creative activity of faculty and students, consistent with CNU's mission and educational innovation (CFR 2.8).

Moving forward CNU will need evidence of completed program reviews for the newly implemented MD program in the COM and six new programs in the CHS. At the time of the AV, outcome data was very limited or non-existent. The CHS programs are: 1) Traditional (4 year) Bachelor of Science; 2) Non-Degree 30-unit Post Baccalaureate Program; 3) Accelerated Track leading to MD (2 BS + MD and 3 BS + MD; and 4) Accelerated Track leading to PharmD (2 BS + PharmD and 3 BS+ PharmD). Retention and graduation rates are needed for all new programs as are results from standardized exams as appropriate, e.g., MCAT and USMLE. For the Post Baccalaureate Program, it will be important to track the percent of students accepted into doctoral programs after completion of the post baccalaureate coursework, as well as career opportunities after completion. Future program reviews should also include information related to sustaining quality out of class experiences, such as clinical rotations and service-learning opportunities (CFR 2.3, 2.7).
**Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability**

As a young institution, CNU has recruited a well-qualified and diverse faculty and staff. The faculty are developing promising areas for scholarship and are actively engaged in their profession and professional associations. Faculty Handbooks have been developed within each college and faculty and staff workload analyses have been initiated. The institution’s self-review process identified the following areas as needing further attention: Faculty recruitment, orientation, workload, incentives and evaluation (CFR 3.2); Enhance information technology resources to support academic programs and scholarship (CFR 3.5); Assess effectiveness of revised organizational charts and job descriptions for leadership positions (CRF 3.7); and Develop faculty academic leadership structure through university Faculty Senate (CFR 3.10).

As stated in the self-study and verified during the AV, CNU has an independent board of trustees providing oversight to the university. The board seems well briefed on strategic goals and objectives and assessment data supporting student learning and institutional growth and development. The team found resource allocations are linked to strategic goals and the institution has invested in new leadership positions to strengthen the administrative infrastructure.
Standard 4: Creating an organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement

CNU is committed to quality assurance, institutional learning, and improvement. The site team experienced a culture of assessment and improvement that was evident in all interactions with staff and faculty. The institution employs a Vice President for Institutional Research, Quality, and Assessment who spearheads most assessment efforts.

CNU has a published Program Review Handbook to insure program review is integrated into the assessment and quality assurance process. Since academic programs are relatively new, and the program review cycle is 5 years, program review reports were only available for the College of Pharmacy. A second program review for the COP was in process during the time of the AV. In addition to program review, CNU regularly conducts assessments of student learning. The team was able to review annual assessment committee reports for the College of Pharmacy (COP) and College of Medicine (COM), as well as college assessment plans. Each college has a Director of Assessment that is responsible for insuring that assessment processes are accomplished. Assessment plans utilize internal and external sources of data and are used to update courses and refine academic programs. Interviews with students revealed that their feedback and suggestions for improvement were taken seriously by university leadership and impacted academic as well as co-curricular actions (CFR 4.1). All levels of the organization are committed to data-driven improvement decisions, from the VP of Institutional Research, Quality, and Assessment to the college assessment committee chairs to departmental assessment team members (CFR 4.3). In addition, the Team noted that the board of trustees received regular assessment
reports focusing on student success as well as enrollment and fiscal factors; they seemed well informed as to developments within the university and committed to a quality assurance process.

CNU has institutional research capacity that seems appropriate for its size. Data is collected and analyzed for both academic and non-academic processes, and data gathering is periodically reviewed to ensure that relevant data is gathered. A good example of this is their “assessment of the assessment process” that was used to improve the program review process. It identified some data collected was unnecessary, there was a need for expanded assessment training, and a need to expand the use of external review consultants. CNU is investing in a programmer position to help the institution build a platform for predictive analytics and improve data-driven decision-making (CFR 4.2).

Individual student performance is compared to that of the class as a whole to assess overall learning. Grade performance of students on remediation is monitored after final exams and course completion. Each college’s assessment committee evaluates grade distribution in each course as a part of their annual report (CFR 4.4).

Amongst all of the information gathered by CNU for assessment, the institution also includes external constituent groups when appropriate. Alumni have been engaged to provide feedback, and the institution has used that feedback to improve educational programs. An example of this is expanding elective offerings in the PharmD program. CNU has also used feedback from the board of trustees to guide educational programming in
strategic directions and COP preceptor’s feedback to improve student performance. CNU’s very existence is supported by community feedback attesting to the need for pharmacy and physician training in the central valley of California (CFR 4.5 and 4.6). CNU intends to strategically add new programs in the future if there is evidence of external demand and congruence with institutional core competencies in health care education (CFR 4.7).

The CNU Institutional Report provides a link to a table: 2016 Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators for Reaffirmation of Accreditation. Institutional learning outcomes (ILOs) with evaluation rubrics have been developed and are published in the university catalog, student handbooks and annual assessment reports. Evidence is interpreted by designated campus leaders and used to improve curriculum, assessment, learning activities and learning outcomes.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs), Concentration Learning Outcomes (ConceLOs), and Co-curricular Learning Outcomes (CoCuLOs) have evaluation rubrics that are published appropriately and used to develop curriculum, assess learning activities, and student outcomes in the College of Health Sciences (CHS) undergraduate degree program. Similarly, the College of Pharmacy and College of Medicine utilize PLOs, Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and Co-Curricular Learning Outcomes (CoCuLOs) in curricular mapping and to guide assessment activities. As mentioned earlier, only the College of Pharmacy has completed a Program Review process. The COM is scheduled in 2019 and the CHS is not yet scheduled.
The Team’s finding is that the institution has demonstrated sufficient evidence of compliance with each of the four Standards. Final determination of compliance with the Standards rests with the Commission.

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

In the review of the document and in onsite meetings with multiple stakeholders it was evident that the University has a clear, shared understanding of the distinctive learning experiences across Colleges, and there is a palpable sense of institutional identity and commitment to mission (CFR 1.1, 1.2, 2.1. 2.2). In interviews with the CEO, faculty, students, alumni and community representatives, it became clear that the university is focused on the student and is engaged with the local community. Community partners have opportunities to assess College of Health Science programs and curricula for service learning classes and students and faculty participate in healthcare-related community service events (CFR 2.3, 2.9).

The institution sees the strategic plan as a “living document” and the Chief Executive Officer explained the approach to strategy, as “we can’t improve what we don’t measure.” A cascade of annual University wide retreats at the College and Department level inform the strategic plan (CFR 4.6). Although CNU will implement a new alumni engagement plan in May 2017, the team did not find alumni to be systematically engaged in strategic planning efforts. The plan creates a Director of Alumni Relations position, as well as an Alumni Association Board, and will create new communication channels and volunteer opportunities for alumni (CFR 4.6).
The institution explained processes that pertain to: admission requirements for entering students and metrics that each college uses to determine program quality and ensure student learning outcomes are achieved at the appropriate degree levels (CFR 2.2b). The admission process appears to be integrated with curriculum and quality assurance efforts. The institution provided evidence for admission requirements in the university catalog, as well as the College of Pharmacy admissions interview faculty rating form. In addition, the institution attached an AACP poster presentation “Assessing Critical Thinking and Written Communication Skills in the Admissions Process of a PharmD Program” as an example of the admission process (CFR2.2b).

The institution provided documents to demonstrate that student learning outcomes are achieved at appropriate levels. Examples include: CNUCOP PLO Mapping (June, 1, 2016); co-curricular outcomes for COM, COP, and CHS; CNU College of Pharmacy Assessments and College of Health Sciences new course proposals. During the 2014-2015 academic year, the institution implemented the use of a new software program (ExamSoft) to capture student learning outcomes. The institution explained the benefits of this software for selecting appropriate questions to assess student learning outcomes. The system also provided a visual display of exam results to reflect on curriculum improvement. Students can see the results of their performance and results disaggregated by learning outcomes and subject areas. Examples were provided of course learning outcomes reports sent to faculty.

The College of Pharmacy (COP) presented a matrix, with selected indicators on a 5-point scale, in which they evaluate the achievement of their mission, to advance the art and
science of Pharmacy. The COP also presented evidence of achievement of PLOs across classes (2012 to 2015), and how Program Learning Outcomes aligned with ACPE 2016 Standards and CAPE Outcomes 2013.

Multiple institutional stakeholders, including students and faculty, were involved in the development of the meaning, quality and integrity of degree document (MQID Appendix 3.1). The MQID document addresses distinct characteristics of each type of degree and the processes to determine how student achievement will be assessed (CFR2.4, CFR 4.6).

By clearly defining the admissions criteria, student learning outcomes and measures to assess students' achievement of program learning outcomes, the institution is on track to define the meaning of a degree from California Northstate University (CFR1.4, 2.2b, 2.12). The university conducts surveys and keeps records of CNU alumni and their employment status (CFR2.3).

Overall the institution has defined student learning outcomes at all levels. It has measures to collect evidence of learning at course, program and institutional levels and provided evidence of data that’s disseminated for assessment and program review and displayed in a Student Learning Assessment Dashboard. The institution presented examples of how assessment data informed decisions and actions. An example was how the College of Pharmacy used 2011-2012 program review data to assess the effectiveness of Team-Based Learning (TBL). Overall the institution also uses indirect measures to evaluate the
curriculum and update syllabi, as evidenced by course and faculty evaluations and student survey results (CFR 2.7, 4.2).

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

The institutional learning outcomes and their rubrics have been reorganized and reviewed by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, to align with the WSCUC core competencies (CFR2.2a). The programs and curricula state the learning outcomes and expected levels of proficiency are assessed with rubrics (CFR2. 3). The institution provided examples of validation of learning outcomes and the calibration of raters.

The institution presented evidence of a faculty training session on the WSCUC core competencies, student learning outcomes and assessment basics. In a meeting with the visiting team, the Directors of Assessment, College Assessment Liaisons and Program Review Committee members demonstrated shared responsibility for assessment and provided examples of “closing the loop” in an onsite meeting. Examples of decisions based on data are: increased study and laboratory space for students, extended campus hours and syllabi page updates (CFR2.4, 4.3). The Vice President of Institutional Research, Quality and Assessment also gave examples of professional development opportunities for institutional research staff to expand their responsibilities (CFR 4.2).

The institutional report provided numerous examples of rubrics to demonstrate assessment of core competencies at the program level. Examples included PLO1: core sciences and mathematics and PLO2: demonstrate understanding of how the arts and
humanities enhance health, well being, and healthcare practice and delivery. The institution also provided evidence that demonstrated capacity to assess students’ levels of proficiency at the end of their academic program. For example, the institution reported students during the 2014-2015 academic year across classes performed at a “proficient” level by the conclusion of the program. The institution also presented summary reports of the COP capstone exam administered to the Class of 2017. The institution provided an overview of capstone performance across classes (2012-2015) and an overview of the COP “milestone grades” for 2014-2015.

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

IPEDS data sheets for May 2016 show the COP Graduating Class of 2016 had a retention rate of 93.5% and a graduation rate of 81.8%. Retention rates for the Classes of 2017, 2018 and 2019 were 90.4%, 97.5% and 98.5% respectively. COP graduates from the first five classes (2012-2016) had an average pass rate on the North American Pharmacy Licensure Exam (NAPLEX) for first time test takers of 92.8%, and pass rates on the California Pharmacy Jurisprudence Exam (CPJE) that ranged between 88% and 98.5%. For candidates who took the CPJE in 2016, CNU COP had the highest pass rate (92.2%) of all eight schools/colleges of pharmacy in California. Graduate employment data for the five graduating classes show that on average, 98.4% of graduates had employment or a job offer at the time of graduation.

At the time of the AV, there were no graduates from the COM since the first class is not expected to graduate until 2019. The COM Annual Assessment Report for 2015-16
compared CNU COM students to a national benchmark and noted students were “comparable and sometimes better than the national standard in USMLE Step 1. The assessment report provided a sample of test scores for a variety of content areas, however there was no detailed analysis of the findings or suggestions as to how the COM curriculum and related learning experiences could be influenced by the results. This would be an area where follow-up activity should occur to make best use of this data. In addition, the assessment report identified 75% (45/60) students received at least one academic alert during the year and that 32% (19/60) students remediated one or more summative exams.

Follow up actions are planned which include reviewing the criteria for academic alert and collecting data on the extent to which faculty are approached for tutoring. It was noted during the visit that the COM currently has no Learning Specialists available to work with students who are challenged. As the program grows in size, this position might be a beneficial student resource.

Given the small number of students enrolled in the CHS during its first year (2015-16), retention data was not available to the Team. Interviews with CHS faculty suggested all students were retained from the first year and meetings with students suggested they were well supported by the faculty in a rigorous, science-based curriculum.

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

The Institutional Report and AV interviews document CNU has an effective assessment infrastructure in place which informs decision making and strives to improve instruction
and learning (CFR 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4). Faculty, students, staff, campus leaders and the board of trustees are involved in the quality assurance process and committed to insuring student success (CFR 2.4, 4.1, 4.3-4.6). The process of program review and annual assessment reports, along with analysis of data, are viewed as essential quality assurance tools that are linked to numerous curricular improvements, as well as strategic planning and resource allocation (CFR 4.7). Program Review and Assessment Handbooks were available for review and utilized to guide the quality assurance practices of the institution.

The Program Review process is coordinated by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) that is championed by an experienced Vice President for Institutional Research, Quality and Assessment. The office is actively involved in educating faculty as to their assessment responsibilities and mentoring of academic leaders who serve on Assessment and Curriculum Committees within each of the three colleges. The OIE conducts annual assessments of university service departments, e.g., accounting, admissions, financial aid, information technology, library, and registrar, and conducts 360 degree evaluations of key administrative positions. As ALO, the VP for Institutional Research, Quality and Assessment leads the self-study process for WSCUC accreditation and works closely with a WSCUC Steering Committee, and members of college Assessment and Curriculum Committees. The ALO has maintained close contact with WSCUC that includes multiple visits with WSCUC staff during her tenure.

An attempt is made to synchronize Program Reviews with timelines for accreditation by professional organizations, e.g., LCME and ACPE. At the time of the AV, only the College of
Pharmacy had a completed program review and a review was in progress for the College of Medicine. The College of Health Sciences, just in its second year of instruction, has yet to been scheduled for program review.

Besides the formal program review, there is an annual assessment process that includes measurement of student outcomes, course and teaching evaluations, and faculty, staff and student satisfaction surveys. A Student Learning Assessment Dashboard is used to communicate student learning outcomes to faculty, administrators and students (CFR 2.3). The Institutional Report provided examples of how assessment data was used to support actions, inform decisions and plan strategically. Based on a need for more sophisticated prediction tools, a programmer was hired to develop a plan for predictive analytics. The COP program review resulted in modifications in the review process to make it more relevant and an increase in faculty development in assessment of student learning. Preceptor feedback regarding clinical proficiency of COP students resulted in development of a longitudinal practicum experience (2.4).

The College of Medicine (COM) Annual Assessment Report for 2015-16 reported changes in the interview process for prospective students moving from faculty interviews to Mini and Group interviews that included current students. The report provided NBME (National Board of Medical Examiners) Summative Exam results for content areas in the COM curriculum though no detailed analysis of results or action plans were proposed. A high rate of students on academic alert prompted an examination of the review criteria for this
academic warning and demands for faculty and peer-led tutoring sessions were assessed in response (CFR 2.3, 2.4).

Though the College of Health Sciences is only in its second year of instruction, interviews with students suggested there are formal and informal ways that the college solicits feedback from students and makes prompt adjustments as needed.

G. Component 7: Financial viability; preparing for the changing higher education environment (CFRs 3.4, 3.7, 4.1, 4.3-4.7)

CNU is a financially healthy institution. The consolidated financials show positive operating income for the years evaluated (2014-2016), and a positive overall bottom line in its most recent year. The balance sheet is strong, with a 3.67 current ratio and enough cash and equivalents to retire 96% of its long-term debt. The College of Medicine will enroll its third cohort in the fall of 2017 and is projected to have a positive net income for calendar 2018. The institution prepares financial forecasts that go 10 years into the future, and it forecasts strong net income for all periods projected.

As with all tuition dependent institutions, CNU’s financial future will only be as good as its ability to generate student enrollments. On this front, the future is bright. CNU’s two graduate degree programs are currently competitive, and they experience applications that outweigh available seats. Initial indications for the undergraduate programs are that demand will be strong, and they can function as a feeder mechanism for the two professional doctoral degree programs in pharmacy and medicine. While there is, and has
been, a fair amount of uncertainty in the field of health care, there is little question that it is a growing field, and that demand for healthcare practitioners will grow in the future. Professional accreditation organizations, like ACPE and LCME, have helped to define the professional competencies that program graduates will need to demonstrate in the future. These are closely incorporated into curriculum and related learning experiences. They impact assessment practices as they help define student success measures and they impact strategic planning within the academic colleges.

The allocations of resources at CNU appear to be aligned with institutional priorities. The most noticeable priority is students. Interviews with staff, faculty, and administrators all revealed a common theme—the first question asked when considering resource allocation is, “how does this affect students?” To that end, students’ needs are always considered first. The first goal in the strategic plan is “Student Success and Educational Effectiveness,” and the budget process includes processes for verifying that requested resources are aligned with the strategic plan. Processes for quality assurance, accountability, and improvement are strong as evidenced elsewhere in this report.

CNU quality assurance processes are deeply embedded in the culture of the institution. The Vice President of Institutional Research, Quality, and Assessment leads the charge for assessment and review processes, but it’s not a job this VP does alone. Interviews with members of the WSCUC Steering Committee and Assessment Committees suggested this is a team effort that is widely understood and supported.
The institution uses new technologies to their fullest, as evidenced by appropriate information technology support, well-designed classrooms and science laboratories, contemporary simulation environments, and newly designed and equipped science laboratories and classrooms for the College of Health Sciences. The institution plans to continue to monitor national and global trends in health care delivery, and educate students for the health professions, while keeping an eye on demand for its programs in the local community.

Looking ahead with a focus on innovation and service, CNU will pay close attention to new developments in health care and education and the unmet needs of the geographic and professional community. The institution monitors local, national and global trends in health care delivery and is committed to preparing graduates to function in a rapidly changing, high tech world. The Institutional Report expresses this well as it commits CNU to remaining “relevant and viable” following specific principles: 1) educational programs must be in demand by the general public, 2) programs must lead to gainful employment while serving humanity or society’s needs; 3) programs must be affordable; 4) programs must be deliverable by multiple learning modalities/media and able to reach learners of the future; and 6) CNU must continue to address diversity and access issues in education.

H. Component 8: Optional essay on institution-specific themes N/A

I. Component 9: Reflection and plans for improvement
The self-study process concluded that a strength of the institution is the use of assessment data to impact strategic planning and measure student learning. Most of the student success data is linked to the College of Pharmacy since it is the inaugural college at this institution. The development of a culture of assessment was evident to the Team in the review of the Institutional Report, supplemental documents requested after the Offsite Review, and interviews during the Accreditation Visit.

Research and scholarship goals were identified in the institutional report as a measure of advancing the art and science of healthcare, part of the CNU Mission. As a young institution, the faculty are moving forward with peer-reviewed publications, grants, professional presentations at conferences and external recognitions of achievement.

Community engagement is a strength of the institution. Students and faculty participate in a variety of community-based health events and there is a concerted effort to bring the community into the university family through offering of STEM courses for local students and teachers and sponsoring mentoring activities for youth.

The university has identified faculty recruitment and retention as an area for focused attention and action. While some improvement is noted in recent years, recruitment and specifically retention, will be an area to address as an ongoing challenge. Similarly, the need to improve communication within the university and develop campus leadership will remain important priorities as the university matures. As the number of graduates grows in the years to come, cultivating alumni engagement through participation in university
activities, such as strategic planning, new student orientations, and commencement ceremonies, will render benefits. Moving from a single academic college to a true university is a complex process that challenges organizational structure and communication channels. The Institutional Report addressed this challenge and recognizes the need to assess the effectiveness of new processes, policies and positions as it moves forward.

SECTION III - OTHER TOPICS, AS APPROPRIATE: N/A

SECTION IV – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TEAM REVIEW

The Team finds that CNU completed a comprehensive review as it prepared for Reaffirmation of Accreditation. The Institutional Report, supplemental documents, and evidence gathered during the Accreditation Visit demonstrate the self-study process was an important institutional priority. The Team thanks the campus leadership team and larger campus community for approaching the reaffirmation of accreditation process with openness and a desire to promote quality improvement in a young and growing institution. Commendations and Recommendations from the Team are listed below.

Commendations:

1. CNU has a palpable sense of institutional identity and commitment to mission. (CFR 1.1, 1.2)
2. Community engagement is deeply embedded in the culture of CNU students, faculty, staff and administration. (CFR 1.1)
3. CNU is a student-centered learning institution, as evidenced by interactions with all stakeholders. (CFR 2.10)

4. There is an intentional spirit of innovative educational practices. (CFR 2.5, 2.8, 4.4)

5. A carefully planned infrastructure expansion is in progress. (CFR 3.4, 3.5)

6. The Board of Trustees demonstrates engagement with evidenced based decision-making and accreditations processes. (CFR 3.7, 3.9, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7)

Recommendations:

1. Mature a graduate-level culture of scholarship that is linked to mission. (CFR 2.8, 2.9, 3.4, 3.5)

2. Further develop strategies to recruit and retain faculty, staff and administration to ensure continuity and long-term sustainability. (CFR 3.1, 3.3, 4.6)

3. Critically examine organizational structures including roles, responsibilities, reporting structures, and communication expectations, to ensure that CNU continues to achieve its mission. (CFR 3.7)

4. Systematically engage alumni. (CFR 4.5, 4.6, 4.7)
APPENDIX A. FEDERAL COMPLIANCE FORMS (for California Northstate University)

OVERVIEW
There are four forms thatWSCUC uses to address institutional compliance with some of the federal regulations affecting institutions and accrediting agencies:

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

During the visit, teams complete these four forms and add them as an appendix to the Team Report. Teams are not required to include a narrative about any of these matters in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings, Commendations, and Recommendations section of the team report.

1 - CREDIT HOUR AND PROGRAM LENGTH REVIEW FORM
Under federal regulations, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s credit hour policy and processes as well as the lengths of its programs.

Credit Hour - §602.24(f)
The accrediting agency, as part of its review of an institution for renewal of accreditation, must conduct an effective review and evaluation of the reliability and accuracy of the institution’s assignment of credit hours.

(1) The accrediting agency meets this requirement if-
   (i) It reviews the institution's-
       (A) Policies and procedures for determining the credit hours, as defined in 34 CFR 600.2, that the institution awards for courses and programs; and
       (B) The application of the institution's policies and procedures to its programs and coursework; and
   (ii) Makes a reasonable determination of whether the institution's assignment of credit hours conforms to commonly accepted practice in higher education.

(2) In reviewing and evaluating an institution’s policies and procedures for determining credit hour assignments, an accrediting agency may use sampling or other methods in the evaluation.

Credit hour is defined by the Department of Education as follows:
A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than—

(1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or

(2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

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

Program Length - §602.16(a)(1)(viii)
Program length may be seen as one of several measures of quality and as a proxy measure for scope of the objectives of degrees or credentials offered. Traditionally offered degree programs are generally approximately 120 semester credit hours for a bachelor’s degree, and 30 semester credit hours for a master’s degree; there is greater variation at the doctoral level depending on the type of program. For programs offered in non-traditional formats, for which program length is not a relevant and/or reliable quality measure, reviewers should ensure that available information clearly defines desired program outcomes and graduation requirements, that institutions are ensuring that program outcomes are achieved, and that there is a reasonable correlation between the scope of these outcomes and requirements and those typically found in traditionally offered degrees or programs tied to program length.

Rev 03/2015
# Credit Hour and Program Length Review Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material Reviewed</th>
<th>Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy on credit hour</td>
<td>Is this policy easily accessible? □ YES □ NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If so, where is the policy located? CNU Catalog page 17, College Handbooks and Websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A sample of course syllabi also revealed statements on Credit Hour Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process(es)/ periodic review of credit hour</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)? □ YES □ NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? □ YES □ NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments: Reviewed during Program Review for COP. COM scheduled for Program Review in 2019, CHS schedule pending. CHS has Curriculum Committee which reviews Credit Hour expectations when new courses are developed.</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? □ YES □ NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments: Course Syllabi provide dates and times for classes; schedules posted in public areas of campus were noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses</td>
<td>How many syllabi were reviewed? □ YES □ NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</td>
<td>What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What degree level(s)? □ AA/AS □ BA/BS □ MA □ Doctoral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What discipline(s)?</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? □ YES □ NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No online or hybrid courses offered.</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) Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</td>
<td>How many syllabi were reviewed? □ YES □ NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What kinds of courses?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What degree level(s)? □ AA/AS □ BA/BS □ MA □ Doctoral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What discipline(s)?</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? □ YES □ NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)</td>
<td>How many programs were reviewed? 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What kinds of programs were reviewed? Lecture, Lab and Seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What degree level(s)? □ AA/AS □ BA/BS □ MA □ Doctoral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What discipline(s)? COLL 100-Student Success Seminar, Biol 110-Inheritance, Evolution and Diversity of Life, COM 612 Masters Colloquium, CAS 806-Pharmacotherapy, COM 551-Neuroscience, PBS 604-Pharmacokinetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? □ YES □ NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**2 - MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT REVIEW FORM**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material Reviewed</th>
<th>Questions and Comments: Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this table as appropriate.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Federal regulations**| Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students?  
bullet YES  
bullet NO  

Comments: California Northstate University provides no incentive compensation to employees or third party entities to insure success with student enrollment. |
| Degree completion and cost | Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree?  
bullet YES  
bullet NO  

Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree?  
bullet YES  
bullet NO  

Comment: Time to Degree is communicated in COP Student Handbook, COM website, and CHS website. Overall cost of each degree and non-degree program/track are provided online and in print materials. |
| Careers and employment | Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable?  
bullet YES  
bullet NO  

Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable?  
bullet YES  
bullet NO  

Comments: There is a comprehensive careers website where current students and alumni may schedule a session with the Career Services Coordinator for: Career Assessment and Counseling, Mock Interviews, CV/Resume Development, Career Search Advice, and Career Development Resources. Information on the website also includes: Job search engines, Professional organizations, Professional development resources, Retail pharmacy, Hospital, Clinic and Government Agencies. Information also available on college websites. |

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*§602.16(a)(1)(vii)

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

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

<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>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Policy on student complaints | Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints?  
 **YES** ☐ NO  
 If so, is the policy or procedure easily accessible? Is so, where?  
 Policy and procedure for reporting student complaints can be found on the institution's website and in the General Catalog listing for each college.  
 Comments: |
| Process(es)/ procedure     | Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints?  
 **YES** ☐ NO  
 If so, please describe briefly:  
 If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure?  
 **YES** ☐ NO  
 Comments:  
 The institution is relatively new, and has not had many complaints. Complaints submitted to date have been handled in a compliant fashion. |
| Records                    | Does the institution maintain records of student complaints?  
 **YES** ☐ NO  
 If so, where? In the Office of Student Affairs and in the Office of the Assistant or Associate Dean charged with responsibility for addressing student complaints within a college.  
 Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time?  
 **YES** ☐ NO  
 If so, please describe briefly: Tracked by Student Affairs and by Assistant/Associate Dean with this delegated responsibility.  
 Comments: |

*§602-16(1)(1)(ix)  
See also WASC Senior College and University Commission’s Complaints and Third Party Comment Policy.

Review Completed By: Tom Arendt  
Date: March 9, 2017
4 – TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY REVIEW FORM

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

<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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Credit Policy(s)</td>
<td>Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit? ☒ YES ☐ NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If so, is the policy publicly available? ☒ YES ☐ NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If so, where? General Catalog. For College of Health Sciences pages 7-8. For College of Pharmacy page 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the policy(s) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education? ☒ YES ☐ NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments: College of Medicine does not currently accept transfer students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

(1) Are publicly disclosed in accordance with 668.43(a)(11); and

(2) Include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education.

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

Review Completed By: Marilyn Hopkins
Date: March 20, 2017