REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM
For Reaffirmation of Accreditation

United States International University – Africa
Nairobi, Kenya

Campus Visit
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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 1 – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

Description of the Institution and Accreditation History

USIU-Africa is the oldest private university in Kenya, founded in 1969 as part of the USIU system, headquartered in San Diego. In 2001, USIU merged with the California School of Professional Psychology to form Alliant University. USIU-Africa (USIU-A) negotiated its independence in 2005, in order to continue with its WSCUC accreditation, which it has had since 1981.

The university is located in Nairobi, Kenya, approximately 12 km from the city’s business center. Its current student population is approximately 7000, consisting of both undergraduates and graduate students. Fourteen undergraduate programs are offered, eight master’s, and three doctoral programs, in six academic schools —Chandaria School of Business, School of Science and Technology, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, School of Communication, Cinematics and Creative Arts, and the School of Graduate Studies, Research and Extension. In addition to WSCUC accreditation, the university has also been accredited by the Kenyan Commission on Higher Education, since 1999.

The mission of the university is to “Promote the discovery and application of knowledge, the acquisition of skills and the development of intellect and character in a manner which prepares students to contribute effectively and ethically as citizens of a changing and increasingly technological world”. The institution operates with an annual budget surplus, relying mainly on student fees. Fifteen percent of the student body is international, with 73 different nationalities represented. Scholarships are available to students from marginalized areas of Kenya, and the school participates in study abroad exchanges.

USIU-Africa was first accredited by WSCUC in 1981, while still part of the USIU system. Independence was acquired in 2005. Based on a 2009 interim report, the commission commented on
the need to address strategic planning, and the development of assessment. In 2012, a substantive change was approved to offer the degree of Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), and in 2013 a PhD in International Relations, and a Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) was approved. It was anticipated that the next accreditation visit would pay special attention to these new graduate programs. The commission lauded the impressive developments on the campus, and indicated that the university pay special attention to general education, strategic planning and budgeting, and new doctoral programs prior to its 2018 accreditation visit.

**Description of Team’s Review Process**

The team completed its offsite review on January 30, 2018. The accreditation visit was held September 18-20, 2018 at the Nairobi campus. During the two-day visit, the team met with and interviewed the Vice Chancellor (the CEO of campus) and all his leadership team, administration and faculty leaders, deans, advisors, graduate and undergraduate students, permanent and adjunct faculty, library staff, Registrar and Admissions staff, alumni, members of the Board of Trustees, and the University Council. We reviewed the many documents provided to us in advance, and many more onsite. The team had access to the campus’ learning management system, Blackboard, in order to view syllabi and course materials. The confidential email account was monitored regularly.

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

The institution’s report was well-written, organized, and clearly presented. Although it accurately portrayed the conditions of the university, there is no substitute for a site visit to allow the team to acquire a more fully developed understanding of the campus, its environment, the students and faculty, and the challenges faced. The report was prepared by the Self-Study Team — a group of more than a dozen faculty, deans, Quality Assurance staff, Institutional Research and Library representatives, and the ALO. The Self-Study Team met frequently,
starting in 2016. Through committees, they interacted with campus to collect the information needed to draft the report. At that stage, the report was presented to campus management before it was finalized for submission to WSCUC. It is clear that the process of preparing the self-study report led to the campus having a greater understanding of its effectiveness. The data and evidence support claims made by the institution, though in some cases they have not yet made maximum use of the data available to them to drive decisions.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS

Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions

The Institutional Report contained a lengthy section on USIU-A’s response to previous Commission action letters. The University described a strong relationship with WSCUC and a deep commitment to WSCUC quality assurance standards as supportive to its capacity to respond. USIU-Africa’s accreditation history demonstrates improvements following accreditation visiting teams’ recommendations, close attention to WSCUC Standards, successful substantive change proposal submissions, and institutional progress with regard to Commission recommendations.

The Commission letter of March 2009 summarized the issues that USIU-A needed to pay attention to including strategic planning, strengthening the institutions commitment to assessment, and addressing new Commission Standards. By all accounts, USIU-A has complied with these suggestions, as evident in the progress noted by the conclusions of the Interim Report Committee and the Special Visit (2013/14) Commission letter. The Special Visit team commended the University for progress in General Education program, advances in program assessment, and the approval of implementation of new degree programs. However, specific recommendations were made regarding General Education, in particular the need to preliminarily assess GE for the next comprehensive review, strategic planning and budgeting and the assessment of new doctoral programs.

In the area of General Education, USIU-A explained some progress in rolling out GE course and administrative structure and pedagogy. However, changes in the academic division delayed the
establishment of the new GE structure. The committee appointed to evaluate progress of GE reform concluded that aspects of GE implementation were not flowing smoothly and that some aspects, for example the importance of engaging faculty from all schools in teaching GE courses and pedagogical training, were difficult to implement without requisite GE administrative structure changes. The committee’s Formative Review Report summarized findings and were key to helping the University establish a GE administrative unit.

Action in response to recommendations for strategic planning and budgeting seem to have progressed as captured in the divisions monitoring reports and the Vice-Chancellors Annual Report to the Board and Council for the Academic Year 2016-2017. Three new doctoral programs were identified for review, and the USIU-A Institutional Report documents the attention that the University has paid to quality and rigor, doctoral culture and resources to foster a doctoral culture among doctoral students and faculty. Finally, the Institutional Report describes the institutions’ response to substantive change review recommendations, noting progress across four areas including budgeting, staff and faculty hiring and development, enrollment, retention and graduation rates, and the assessment of student learning. Although all these issues have been addressed by the institution, most are still in progress and are discussed as ongoing issues in this report.

Component 2: Compliance with the Standards and Federal Requirements; Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators

The WSCUC standards, federal requirements, and the inventory of educational effectiveness indicators provide common ground across institutions to ensure that “quality, integrity, accountability, and transparency” will be represented throughout a student-centered focus on learning (2013 WSCUC Handbook of Accreditation, p. 10). This section documents the team’s findings regarding USIU-Africa’s compliance under the WSCUC standards.
Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives. The team’s finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has demonstrated sufficient evidence of compliance with Standard 1. USIU-A clearly expresses its vision and core values and has a well-disseminated and articulated mission to: “Promote the discovery and application of knowledge, the acquisition of skills and the development of intellect and character in a manner which prepares students to contribute effectively and ethically as citizens of a changing and increasingly technological world.” The institution defines its purposes and establishes educational objectives aligned with those purposes. The institution has an explicit sense of its essential values and character, its distinctive elements, and particularly, its contribution to higher learning in East Africa. It functions with integrity, transparency, and autonomy to achieve its mission through selected high quality undergraduate and graduate academic programs that result in the achievement of six outcomes: higher order thinking, literacy, global understanding and multicultural perspective, preparedness for career, leadership and ethics, and community service and development.

The team’s review of the Institutional Report and published documents found that the campus had stated a commitment to exposing students to global and multicultural perspectives through its formal curricula and the experiences of studying, working, and living cooperatively in a racially, ethnically and culturally diverse environment. This purpose follows from the well-designed mission and vision statements displayed on the institution’s website and the Academic Catalogue. The mission statement and six outcomes explicitly articulate the institution’s unique position in Africa to offer a broad base of knowledge through a general education program that provides a foundation for more specialized degrees. In addition to its unique commitment to general education (the only East African university to deliver this program) the institution has also enacted its belief in applied learning and career preparation through required community service and internship experiences.

The campus has established well-defined learning goals for all of its programs. At the time of the team’s visit, most programs (but not all) had reviewed outcomes data to assess the extent to which
students had achieved learning goals. While the team found the campus transparent about its learning outcomes, particularly the establishment of program learning outcomes (PLOs), it also concluded that the assessment of programs and outcomes needed further development. In addition to completing its annual program-level assessment process, the institution is also working through its cyclical (every 5 year) program review process (CFRs 1.2, 2.7).

The university presented most of its policies in supporting documents, such as the Academic Catalogue and on the institution website. These included a mission statement (CFR 1.1), educational objectives (CFR 1.2), academic freedom policy (CFR 1.3), commitment to diversity (CFR 1.4), and policies regarding student grievances and complaints or records retention (CFR 1.6). Consistent with WSCUC standards for sound business practices and the regular evaluation of performance, USIU-Africa’s finances were rigorously audited by qualified independent reviewers (CFR 1.7).

USIU-A demonstrated a commitment to diversity in the identification of the outcome “global understanding and multicultural perspective”, which is also expressed across programs in courses and outcomes. Diversity is celebrated at USIU-A in the student population, with 15% international students representing 73 nationalities and all the 47 Counties in Kenya. More recently, the university formed a special taskforce with the specific tasks of reviewing disability practice, benchmarking against best practices nationally and internationally and developing comprehensive policies and procedures to make USIU-Africa a disability friendly institution.

To further examine the institution’s commitment to diversity, the team requested disaggregated student success data and received a report analyzing enrollments by gender. However, in accordance with the WSCUC Graduation Rate Dashboard it may be helpful for USIU-A to disaggregate by race, ethnicity and gender, or by degree program. Even more, several members of USIU-A administration and staff noted and the team agrees that there is
more to do to assure equity of experiences and outcomes. The team encourages further attention be dedicated to efforts including an assessment plan for diversity and equity aligned with the university mission (CFRs 1.4, 2.10).

USIU-Africa’s commitment to undertaking the accreditation review process with seriousness and candor is perhaps its most outstanding quality (CFR 1.8). The widespread and thoughtful participation of administrators, faculty, staff, students and external stakeholders in meetings during the team’s visit demonstrated a strong belief in the value and purpose of accreditation. The institution has chosen to undertake WSCUC accreditation because it believes in the importance of quality assurance and improving educational effectiveness. The strength of its Institutional Report and demonstrated quality assurance activities signal an abiding commitment to Commission policies and procedures. From the highest level of institutional administration through to students, the team noted appreciation for what WSCUC accreditation meant to the institution.

Given the recency of USIU-Africa’s legally required changes to its organizational structure and institutional governance as mandated by Kenya’s Universities Act 2012, it is not surprising that descriptions and understandings of the role of its governing board are in flux (CFR 1.5). The creation of a University Council separate from the Board of Trustees, and changes in faculty senate have implications for assuring that the institution has education as its primary purpose and operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

**Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions.** The team’s finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has demonstrated sufficient evidence of compliance with the majority of elements of Standard 2. However, as USIU-A acknowledged in its Institutional Report, the University has not made significant progress on several dimensions related to teaching and learning including general education and program review.

**Teaching and learning.** USIU-Africa’s educational programs appear appropriate, conforming with recognized professional standards, in terms of their length and content (CFR 2.1). The
institution’s 14 undergraduate degree programs require a minimum of 120 semester units, with 39 of these units in general education (GE). It is noteworthy that the GE component is distinctive within the context of Kenyan higher education. In addition to its distinctive GE program, USIU-Africa is regarded as a leader within East Africa in the development of student learning assessment, both in the classroom and in co-curricular activities. The institution has developed a unifying set of learning experiences for all students, including internships and community service.

Institutional learning outcomes include higher order thinking; competence in oral, written, quantitative, and technological skills; respect for diversity; career preparedness; corporate social responsibility; and leadership and ethics (CFRs 2.2, 2.2a). Program learning outcomes (PLOs) have been established for each program that are consistent with the institutional learning outcomes, and each course specifies course learning outcomes on the course syllabus (CFR 2.3). The institutional learning outcomes and PLOs are publicized in the university catalog as well as in student and faculty orientation materials. The PLOs were developed by disciplinary faculty and the faculty take collective responsibility for students’ achievement in the assessment of these outcomes (CFR 2.6). The visiting team commended the institution on the development of learning outcomes and on the vertical alignment of PLOs.

The implementation and assessment of the institution’s revised GE program has been challenging, as was noted in the 2013/2014 Special Visit Action Letter. The institution’s Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI) reports that GE review ended in 2013, at which time a revised GE program was to be implemented. Based on problems with the implementation of the revised GE program, in 2016 the GE program was again changed. The original assessment plan, of having the department in which GE courses were taught conduct the assessment, was abandoned in favor of annually assessing students on one of WSCUC competencies. Written communication competency was assessed in 2016. The assessment
results revealed that only about one in five students achieved this standard and the institution has established specific follow-ups to address these findings.

After years of revisions of the GE program and its assessment plan, the institution has now developed a university-wide structure, which includes the establishment of a separate GE department, and this new structure holds promise for delivering a strong university-wide GE program and enabling assessment of the program. The visiting team recommends that the university support this new structure to enable its success.

The graduate programs, consisting of eight masters and three doctoral programs, also have established PLOs (2.2b). The doctoral program format includes graduate coursework, the amount of which varies by program, as well as a culminating comprehensive exam followed by dissertation research. There is a stated requirement of doctoral students publishing at least two peer-reviewed publications prior to graduation, although there appears to be a problem regarding an unintended consequence of this policy. In an effort to quickly meet this requirement in order to graduate, some students have placed their work in so-called “predatory” journals. Attention needs to be given to the quality of the journals to assure that they are indeed peer-reviewed.

The institution has established a system of program review (CFR 2.7). However, there have been numerous problems in the implementation of the scheduled program reviews. Since the 2015/2016 academic year, it appears that only one program review has been completed. All of the remaining scheduled program reviews since then are either ongoing, delayed, put on hold or awaiting the appointment of external reviewers. During the site visit it was explained that a primary reason for this delay was the lack of qualified external reviewers. Although this is a real problem in the region, alternative methods, such as a distance reviewer, should be developed such that these program reviews can move forward. Emphasis needs to be placed on the changes and budgetary requests that occur following the program review to enhance the quality of the program and to “close the loop”.

**Scholarship and Creative Activity.** Enhancing the research agenda is a strategic objective in
the institution’s 2015-2020 Strategic Plan (CFRs 2.8, 2.9). To enhance student research, undergraduate students have been involved in training in order to be able to work as research assistants and to participate in the recently established Student Research Fair. Thanks to the mentorship and care from faculty, undergraduate as well as graduate students have conducted research with faculty. Students have made presentations at professional conferences, but due to the cost of such participation it is hoped that the university would develop assistance to the students for securing financial support for research and conference participation. Faculty standards for promotion and tenure include expectations for research. In these expectations, placing publications in peer-reviewed journals should be stressed.

**Student Learning and Success.** The institution uses a Graduation Rate Dashboard to monitor that students make timely progress toward the completion of their degrees and that an acceptable proportion of students complete their degrees in a timely fashion (CFR 2.10). The most recently reported absolute 4-year graduation rate for 2015-16 was 59%. These data were disaggregated only by gender. No benchmarking nor aspirational rates for retention nor graduation have been established.

The institution provides numerous academic support services to its students (CFRs 2.11-2.13). Each school has dedicated academic advisors to assist students with course registration and their degree requirements, and full-time faculty have 10 hours weekly of office hours. Students have ready access to information about degree requirements, course offerings and the cost of attendance. In addition, there are counseling services, financial aid services and recently established disability support services. The library has the capacity to operate virtually such that students can access its resources through their smartphones. In addition to reference services, the librarians also provide instructional programs. During the visit, students were effusive about the library, both in terms of its current collections, its online availability and the extreme competence and helpfulness of the library staff. Additionally, a Writing Lab (also
called Language Support Unit) provides support to students in the development of their written communication and is staffed by full-time and adjunct faculty. A peer tutoring program also is available to assist students.

In terms of transfer students, the university reports that its transfer policy has been in effect for many years, but that it is currently undergoing review to comply with credit transfer guidelines from the Kenyan Ministry of Education. Beyond direct academic support services, the university provides its students access to recreational facilities, an internet café, cafeteria services, laundry services and health services.

**Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability.** The team’s finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has demonstrated sufficient evidence of compliance with Standard 3.

The Institutional Report and its supporting exhibits indicate a 2015-2020 strategic plan goal of improving the management of human resources so that the university can better assure that it can achieve, support, and retain a sufficient, qualified, and diverse faculty and staff (CFRs 3.1 – 3.3). In response to this strategic plan goal and related efforts, the University commissioned the 2016 Novatek Study. Interviews with members of the university community indicate that the recommendations contained within the Novatek study have been or are being implemented and that the increasing of the ratio of full-time faculty has not yet been achieved (CFR 3.1). Interviews and a review of documents also indicate that faculty and staff are regularly evaluated and have access to university policies in respective handbooks and policy manuals (CFR 3.2). Finally, interviews with members of the university community indicate that there is existing support for professional development as evidenced by the reinstatement of the center for excellence in learning and teaching (CFR 3.3).

**Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources.** USIU-Africa has a long history of operating budget surpluses, which were accomplished while funding its capital improvements through operating surplus (CFR 3.4). A review of audited financial statements for the four years ended August 31, 2017
(FY 2016-2017) indicate that the University’s total fund balances (reserves) grew by 18.7% to $58.6 million (Kenyan shillings converted to U.S. Dollars: one Kenyan shilling equals 0.0099 U.S. dollars) and included an endowment fund that grew by 51.1% to $7.3 million. The audited financial statements also indicate that total operating revenues grew by 16.5% to $24.4 million with tuition and fee income growing by 24.5% to $18.9 million, which represents 77.4% of total operating revenues in FY 2016-2017. Finally, the audited financial statements indicate that total operating expenditures grew by a 34.9% to $21.2 million with non-instructional costs increasing by 40.1% to $14.7 million, which represents 69.4% of total operating expenses in FY 2016-2017.

The accelerated growth of operating expenditures in comparison to operating revenues, the relatively high dependency on tuition and fee income, the high rate of increase in non-instructional expenditures in comparison to instructional expenditures, and a desire for continued growth in academic programs and enrollment have resulted in the adoption of 2015-2020 strategic plan goals to expand and diversify revenues. (CFR 3.4).

Interviews with senior administrators and members of the university council indicate that the university is pursuing multiple efforts to expand and diversify revenues including offering new academic programs, improving alumni involvement, and building fundraising capacity. As noted above, however, these efforts have yet to have a significant impact on revenue diversification with tuition and fee revenue equaling 77.4% of total operating revenues in FY 2016-2017 (CFR 3.4).

The team found that the university has no external debt, a history of unqualified (i.e. clean) external audit opinions by Deloitte, a very active and effective internal audit function, and a university council and board of trustees that meet regularly with the external financial statements auditor (Deloitte). The team also found that the university commissioned a very detailed forensic audit report by KPMG in May 2017 that was recommended by the
university’s disciplinary committee and followed the discovery of fraudulent activities in the university’s health services unit through internal audit processes. Finally, the team found that the 150-page forensic audit report encompasses all university operations and systems and that the numerous recommendations in the report are being addressed by various university offices with implementation tracked by update reports that are prepared by internal audit staff and reviewed by the management board and the audit committee of the university council (CFR 3.4).

The team found that the university’s budgeting process and system appear to be collaborative, informed by the strategic plan and using conservative and data-based assumptions to generate annual budgets. The team also noted, however, that the university is not generating rolling multiple year budget projections on an annual basis, but plans to do so as part of the next strategic planning cycle.

The property and facilities of the USIU-Africa campus appear to be adequate for the institution’s operational needs and reflect recent strategic additions and improvements including a new student center. The team observed that the facility improvements and additions completed and planned are linked to the implementation of the 2015-2020 strategic plan. The team also noted that the university is seeking additional sources of revenue for future facility improvements and additions as future operating budgets are projected to be less able to fully fund these items (CFR 3.5).

Interviews with faculty, staff, and students confirmed the general adequacy of campus facilities and technology with some exceptions including requests for more general and specialized classroom spaces as well as updated and expanded student housing resources. The team noted that the additional facility improvements identified in the interviews are expected to be addressed by the phased implementation of the 2015-2020 strategic plan (CFR 3.5).

**Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes.** In response to the requirements of Kenya’s Universities Act 2012 and the resultant 2014 guidelines and standards of Kenya’s Commission for University Education (CUE), USIU-Africa recently adopted a two-tier governance structure with a three to seven-member (currently five-member) board of trustees and a 15-member
university council. Review of the university’s charter from the CUE, minutes from board of trustees and university council meetings, and interviews with members of the council and board, indicate an engaged, supportive, and committed group of council members and trustees performing their respective duties in accordance to the university’s revised charter with the board of trustees demonstrating appropriate levels of operating independence (CFR 3.9).

Evidence of vice chancellor evaluation by the university council was also provided through a review of assessment documents and through interviews with university council members and the vice chancellor (CFR 3.9).

Although two members of the 7-member management board (the vice chancellor and the deputy vice chancellor – academic and student affairs) of senior administrators have been hired since 2014, all members of the management board appear to be qualified, engaged, and have the confidence of the university council and board of trustees (CFRs 3.6, 3.8). It also appears that the members of the management board have been using data and shared governance structures to inform the development and implementation of the 2015-2020 strategic plan as evidenced by interviews with senior administrators, faculty, and staff (CFR 3.7).

Interviews with faculty, along with a review of the university’s charter from the CUE, the faculty handbook, faculty orientation manual, and minutes from the university senate and faculty council, provided evidence of academic leadership by the faculty. These interviews also revealed another aspect of the university’s compliance with recent CUE standards and guidelines that entailed the establishment and integration of a university senate structure into USIU-Africa’s existing systems of shared governance. The team noted that the establishment of the university senate has the potential for eroding the academic leadership by the faculty and should therefore be carefully reviewed and modified as necessary (CFR 3.10).
Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement. The Report of the Special Visit 2013-2014 notes the critically important need to focus on the quality of interconnections within and among plans and to connect planning to results. An effective planning cycle requires an integration of efforts and enables planners to close the loop on a cycle before opening the next. The team’s finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has not provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate full compliance with Standard 4. More attention to planning than to the quality of outcomes characterizes institutional practice.

Quality Assurance Processes. The institution has put in place quality assurance processes, as described in the Revised Quality Assurance Handbook. It is not evident, however, that processes are functioning or that data are being tracked over time, used comparatively, or applied to make improvements. The Institutional Report observes that the “monitoring of the implementation of improvements” is “unsystematic” and emphasizes the point in the institutional discussion of Areas in Need of Improvement (CFR 4.1).

Responsibility to conduct processes is in practice decentralized to the schools and to other units, as noted in the Institutional Report. The recent acquisition of Taskstream software for assessment management is cited as evidence that in the future, data will be used more efficiently. While the Quality Assurance (QA) office and IR office have added staffing since the composition of the Institutional Report, the two offices have been unable to support essential work on program review. The “Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Plan Status as at June 2018” [sic] provides evidence of understaffing and limits to the authority of the QA office. Minutes of University Council from 2016 note the following: “Gaps also noted in implementing the mandate of the [QA] department in program review and assessment and conducting regular surveys of course files and grading patterns to ensure quality” (dated 7/14/7/16--Audit Committee Report, 15). The QA office appears to be held responsible for program review and assessment but lacks the authority to fully execute the processes.
Acknowledging the role of the academic units, the Vice Chancellor expects every school and department in the future to create a program review committee.

USIU-A’s Educational Effectiveness Committee plays a role in annual program assessment (one or two program learning outcomes assessed each year) but not in the larger program review process. The Institutional Report looks to the future, noting that the QA Handbook has been revised to incorporate guidelines for training review teams to monitor the implementation of improvements. The institution continues to demonstrate a need to complete the assessment and planning cycle, including budgeting and hiring cycles. There is a need to systematically follow up on the implementation of improvements resulting from holistic assessment of student learning through program review, including General Education (CFR 4.1).

The institution reports that it has invested to improve capacity of the IR office. No documentation exists to show how the IR function has been assessed, but the Institutional Report candidly addresses the needs of the office. The Institutional Report identifies the need to establish a central repository system that faculty can access for assessment (CFR 4.2).

**Institutional Learning and Improvement.** USIU-A’s commitment to improvement is energetic and aspirational. The IR office produces fact sheets and trend analyses and administers various surveys that are reported to inform decision making. A new business intelligence platform is intended in the future to support decision making by senior management. Alignment of co-curricular programs to mission outcomes and assessment of out-of-class learning are distinctive in local context. While program review has not progressed sufficiently in the last five years, its structure and achievements at the outset, a decade ago, stand out in local context and are seen as models for the region. Two examples of action to improve the campus environment are reported under the heading of institutional learning and improvement—a new sexual harassment policy and the implementation of university-wide
meetings called *barazas* (CFR 4.3).

The role of governance bodies in assessment, alignment, reflection, and planning is evolving with the reorganization made over the past two years. The Center for Effectiveness in Learning and Teaching (CELT) had been closed and reorganized to become the Quality Assurance office. Again, while the QA office appears to be effectively supporting annual program assessment, it is not advancing program review. The course file system is said to ensure that faculty are prepared and that the preparation is aligned to student learning outcomes at all levels. Sample paper course files include an inventory of activities related to effective teaching and learning. The team learned that course file materials also appear on Blackboard but were unable to gain access to active files. How course files are used systematically for improvement remains unclear.

The functions of the CELT have recently been moved to the oversight of the Educational Effectiveness Committee (a subcommittee of the Senate). Leadership for improvement based on inquiry, especially incorporating results of the annual assessment of learning, needs more investment. Beyond the annual assessment process, limited resources and incentives exist to support inquiry into teaching and learning. Faculty receive few points (6%) in their annual appraisal for course file and assessment activities. New faculty are invited to participate separately in workshops on effective teaching. Reliance on the technology infrastructure (Taskstream and Blackboard, for example) appears to stand for action, but evidence of improvements is lacking (CFR 4.4).

The administrative and governance structures for General Education are newly functioning, which should enable the institution to progress on assessment of General Education. Lack of progress on program review signals an apparent lack of commitment to inquire into teaching, learning, and curricular improvement—yet the process of annual assessment of one or two program outcomes a year signals a commitment that offers promise. Programs are making their own decisions on these matters. Internships, for example, are a required feature of all academic programs, but internships have not been assessed for quality and integrity across the institution (CFR 4.4).
The institution makes use of environmental scanning and stakeholder involvement in program development. It remains to be seen in what way the University Senate is involved in regular assessment of institutional effectiveness. Attachment 1.10 (20 September 2016) states that the newly established Senate—a body that includes relatively few faculty—will in the future take responsibility for academic matters of institutional effectiveness (CFR 4.5). After recent reorganization, the Faculty Council appears not to be functioning in the manner laid out in the constitution of that body, taking responsibility “to consider and act or recommend action, as appropriate on all matters affecting the academic and professional concerns of the faculty and the university” (Attachment 1.11: Constitution, Faculty Council, revised 2012). The constitution will need to be revised and role of the Faculty Council redefined. The contributions to institutional wellbeing of an inclusive faculty governance body need to be considered.

The self-study process was helpful to participants in that it led to increased appreciation of institutional diversity and the distinctive culture of the university. Within the region, the institution stands apart because it has sufficient resources to keep classes a reasonable size and to offer a strong technological infrastructure. The use of barazas to engage the university community in institutional reflection, planning, and communication is distinctive. As described, there is an open, structured, and transparent process for involvement in quality assurance processes. The degree to which units participate in the processes or take advantage of opportunities at the institutional level varies. The flow of actions, reviews, and oversight through governance is still evolving. The Vice Chancellor explained his intention to begin a 360° review of governance (CFR 4.6).

Following the 2013/2014 Special Visit, the WSCUC team recommended that for the next cycle of strategic planning, the institution designate a university administrator who, with
input from the Vice Chancellor, appoints an internal strategic planning task force that creates a draft strategic plan after extensive reflection and conversation across the University. Once that plan has been approved, the task force (or an implementation group) should create a reporting structure to oversee and monitor the progress on strategic priorities. The University Council, Management Board, and Senate are involved in oversight of the current plan, with operational oversight by the Director of University Advancement, and all will be involved in the next, according to the Vice Chancellor (CFR 4.6). Although existing partnerships and collaborations have not been systematically assessed, creation of the School of Graduate Studies, Research, and Extension has now offered an opportunity to align and assess criteria and performance across projects and programs, according to the dean of the school.

Looking ahead, the institution gives priority to enhancing student learning and success. The team learned that many faculty and staff recognize that the “youth bulge” in Africa and Kenya and growing diversity among Kenyan institutions should motivate the institution to grow, change, and compete. Internationalization is also cited as a motivator for change, as students become more mobile and different types of institutions and new learning technologies broaden competition. The need for growth, innovation, and change in the curriculum and co-curriculum is evident. The institution is confident that the mission-driven outcomes model for student learning will serve students into the future (CFR 4.7). The institution prioritizes development of new programs to meet the needs of a changing student population and to anticipate and respond to a changing environment. The Institutional Report cites the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, the African Union’s Agenda 2063, and Kenya’s Vision 2030 as guidance.

**Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI).** The institution’s Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI) appears current, accurate and complete. As noted in Standard 2 and in other relevant CFRs, USIU-Africa has developed formal learning outcomes at the institutional level, for the general education (GE) program, and for each individual degree program. These outcomes are publicized through the university catalog, on the website and in individual course
sylabii.

The assessment procedures to provide evidence that graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for each degree is uneven and for many programs remains largely a work in progress. Following years of revisions, the new GE program now appears poised to make substantial progress in assessing its stated learning outcomes. Individual program reviews have fallen far behind their stated schedule, often because of the challenge of finding an appropriate external reviewer. This delay has presented problems in that a new assessment cycle is often begun before the previous cycle has been completed, allowing no time for needed reflection on the assessment results nor the resultant introduction of possible program improvements. The team suggests that external reviewers might conduct reviews remotely, using all available relevant documentation and video technology, to help eliminate the current backlog of program reviews.

**Component 3: Degree Programs: Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of Degrees**

The institution has defined what it means for a graduate to hold a degree from USIU-A through six institutional student learning outcomes and five core values. Documents provided with the Institutional Report demonstrate how program and course outcomes are aligned with mission learning outcomes for all degrees. General Education is an integrative feature of USIU-A undergraduate programs. The undergraduate degree builds on common signature courses and experiences that engage General Education and program faculty. The team found widespread support for the multidisciplinary and integrative design of General Education and for the shared responsibility programs take for it.

The institution has drawn up schedules to assess the meaning, quality, and integrity of USIU-A degrees. Delineation of the process and standards it uses to measure meaning, quality, and integrity has been outlined. The Revised Quality Assurance Handbook (May 2017) offers lists of criteria for course and program creation and approval, describing responsibilities of the deans and governance committees, including the Educational Effectiveness Committee and the
University Senate. The handbook also outlines institutional processes for program review.

Schedules and delineation of processes notwithstanding, the Institutional Report provides inadequate supporting or analytical explanation of program review. Program review is on the calendar for each program but is not progressing. The Institutional Report cites two departments for completing program reviews within the last five years: Information Systems and Technology (2012, with external review in 2014; and the master’s [MSc] program in 2016) and Applied Computer Technology (APT) in 2013-14.

The report acknowledges frankly that the General Education program has yet to be fully assessed, as WSCUC specified in the Special Visit Action Letter 2013/2014. The letter asks the university “to deploy the program and to at least preliminarily assess its effectiveness in time for the report prepared for the next comprehensive review.” The team found that essential program elements are effectively deployed, but General Education has not been assessed to establish its effectiveness. The leadership has continued to use small-scale studies guided by the five WSCUC competencies in place of the planned comprehensive assessment. These studies have produced results, but on a limited scale. Small sample studies of oral communication (2014), critical thinking (2015), written communication (2016), and information literacy (2017) have been done, with mixed results. There have been some appropriate changes to address these findings. Relatively weak student performance on assessment of written communication (2016), for example, helped the assessment team understand the need to develop writing-intensive courses in the disciplines. It was concluded that it is important to use the results of assessment to improve learning across all programs and to advocate for horizontally aligned standards across programs as well as vertical alignment of each program with mission outcomes. The team concurs and stresses the importance of horizontal alignment.

The team has confirmed that General Education governance is now functioning effectively. The General Education standing committee has recently completed a draft of the Research Methods course, for example. The time has come for holistic and formative program assessment of General Education
to begin—beyond the sequential assessment of one General Education program learning outcome per year. Incremental review of program outcomes does not substitute for holistic assessment. The projected review of General Education in 2020-2021 must begin at once. Review of integrative elements of General Education needs to proceed, including both the horizontal design and assessment of signature courses and experiences and the alignment and assessment of General Education courses in the majors.

The team found that two offices have responsibility for providing quantitative and qualitative data and support—the Institutional Research (IR) office and the Quality Assurance (QA) office (formerly the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning). The two offices are situated in different units, but staff from both provided examples of ways in which they complement each other. A recent discovery that retention rates were a problem, for example, led to action in the form of a new mentoring program, according to QA and IR staff. The two offices are allowing the process of their interaction to evolve. QA provides faculty workshops, while IR provides enrollment data. A more functional formalization of responsibility and authority for both offices needs to be achieved, particularly in view of reorganization.

Reorganization of governance bodies and administrative positions has recently been completed. The Deans’ Committee and University Senate are new; department chairs were appointed in July 2018. The team found it difficult to understand how new positions and bodies are expected to function in, for example, the approval process for new programs (CFR 3.10). Because the responsibility and authority of the evolving structures and new titles is absent from the Institutional Report, it was also difficult to pinpoint the cause of delays in program review. According to the Institutional Report, both assessment and program review “are in the hands of the faculty in the program/school”. Governance bodies including the Faculty Council need clearer charges and functional processes that interconnect the work of quality assurance and support the integrity of degrees.
Interviews with faculty and administrators revealed that there is an annual program assessment, in which all but the newest programs participate. While the Institutional Report does not explain the process, the annual assessment appears to be well developed in many programs—as sample reports indicate. Each program typically assesses one learning outcome each year and reports results at an annual symposium. The annual assessment may produce results, as for example in the case of the new teaching kitchen. The team found that the Educational Effectiveness Committee (EEC), with representatives from the schools, is supporting workshops to improve teaching and assessment. But the annual program assessment is not connected to program review in the schools. Thus the cycle of review and closing the loop has stalled. Faculty reported to the team that they regard the two processes as separate.

Representatives of selected departments explained to the team that they understand the cycle of assessment and could incorporate the annual program learning outcome assessment into a holistic program review. Some programs—psychology is an example—are using results of the annual assessment to improve the program incrementally. Most departments do not believe that they have resources for formative or summative program review, including resources to provide for travel they believe to be required for external reviewers. Virtual visits could well be considered as an option. In addition, few members of the faculty and the newly appointed program chairs recognize a need to connect budgeting and program review processes.

The Institutional Report notes the lag in assessment of student learning and the lack of standards across programs, together with need for “systematically following up the implementation of the improvements resulting from the assessment of student learning”. Reliance on adjunct faculty remains steady and heavy, a fact that could also explain some of the delays in assessment of General Education and completion of program reviews. A number of faculty and administrators reported to the team that program review is thought to require more effort than can be handled by full-time faculty in addition to program assessment. Waiting for more full-time faculty to be hired, as a number of faculty
suggested, will not in itself solve the problem. Linking program assessment and formative review, including a point of reflection on the sequential annual assessments, is essential and demands consideration (CFR 4.1, 4.3, 4.4). Leadership to connect review and budgeting processes is likewise essential.

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

Since 2006 the faculty have had established program learning outcomes (PLOs) in all degree programs, and they are aligned vertically with the mission and university-wide outcomes. The PLOs in most programs have been revisited and reconsidered in recent years, often with an eye toward streamlining. Each program has also developed an assessment plan, which is updated annually and used in the five-year review cycle (CFRs 4.1, 4.3). The program review process is discussed in more detail in Component 6.

The five core competencies are assessed within the General Education program, using the required capstone course, SEN 4800, in order to gather results that include a representation of students from all undergraduate degree programs. Currently, one of the five core competencies is assessed each year. Standardized direct methods (common multiple-choice questions and essays) and indirect methods (focus group interviews) are devised for the competency being reviewed. Rubrics are used to score the direct results, and scorers are trained/normed (CFR 4.1).

Most recently, Information Literacy was assessed in 2017, and Written Communication in 2016. In both cases, the review team set four categories of performance – Below Expectation, Approaching Expectation, Meets Expectations, and Exceeds Expectation – with 70% Meets/Exceeds Expectation as the measure of success. The results for both of these core competencies rated ~20% of the students in the Meet/Exceeds Expectation category. To address the low performance, the reports were shared widely for discussion with the faculty teaching in the GE Program, the QA staff, and the Dean and Associate Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (CFRs 4.2, 4.5).
reports include considerable detail about competencies and recommendations for improvement.

In the case of Written Communication, the GE reform proposal calls for all degree programs to designate writing intensive courses beyond the GE. In the case of Information Literacy, a list of recommendations involve faculty working with the librarians to include more library exercises in assignments, greater exposure to literature research skills, and specific classes/workshops in information literacy. The visiting team did not yet see these recommendations in place, which highlights two issues with the current core competency assessment plan. First, until the recent creation of the GE department with a chair, there was no academic unit with responsibility and authority for GE overall. Rather, it was until recently, a shared responsibility, which meant that it was not necessarily “owned” by the many degree programs. Thus, recommendations were made, but not followed up, and the loop of assessment was not closed. Second, the somewhat piecemeal and serial assessment of the core competencies, while useful, should not replace the integrated, holistic, assessment of the GE program.

While a number of course changes, new course additions, and suggestions of new faculty and staff hiring are outcomes of various assessments (CFRs 4.3, 4.4), there is still a need to complete every cycle of review. Assessment is not complete until the reflection has taken place, improvements have been set in place, and the next cycle of review begins. This requires sharing the results of competency assessment more widely than just the GE faculty. The academic programs university-wide must share ownership of the results, and the improvement process, with the GE program.

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

USIU-A’s commitment to student access and success is evident in its stable enrollment rates (despite increasing competition in the Kenyan higher education sector) and maintenance of a graduation rate of 71%. Support for student success is represented in its array of support programs for students, including academic advising and formalized faculty-student mentoring, financial assistance, early warning system, disability services, and the relatively new Freida Brown Student Center, which
is equipped with counseling support services and special facilities including a teaching Kitchen Laboratory and Restaurant. The Student Center seems to be well-established as a hub for student success and assistance. The Library and Information Center is a particularly dynamic partner for student success, and the video-conferencing, hot spots for high speed network connections, and study rooms for both collaborative learning as well as private study were praised by students and faculty with whom the team met during the visit (CFR 2.13).

Support structures exist across campus to promote and facilitate student engagement in two distinctive applied learning experiences, community service and internships. These largely curricular-based endeavors are also complemented by a diverse array of co-curricular efforts (CFR 2.11). The integrative General Education program supports student success and is widely endorsed by the faculty. The design is scaffolded, building on a common first-year experience and requiring major programs to participate in applied learning and capstone experiences as well offering General Education electives. USIU-A likewise demonstrates a clear commitment to student learning and success through co-curricular programs, ranging from clubs and sports, and community outreach-oriented organizations that advance selected thematic areas and the academic disciplines offered by the institution. Student affairs described their efforts to establish student learning outcomes in their program and to help students develop such essential skills as teamwork, discipline, and commitment. Combined, these programs offer a holistic approach to student success and achievement.

However, although these curricular and co-curricular initiatives seem beneficial, USIU-A has yet to assess the quality of curricular and co-curricular programs, or more broadly, student satisfaction and student engagement. Quality assurance and institutional research efforts have mostly focused on the assessment of individual program learning outcomes and other information about educational quality with limited emphasis on the formal collection of
evidence about the student experience over time and use of data to broadly improve student success. Although students with whom the team met expressed deep appreciation for the quality of their experience and the provision of support for their success, longitudinal and comprehensive data collection activities may provide USIU-A with additional evidence of what works as well as more actionable information to enhance the student experience.

With respect to the WSCUC Graduation Rate Dashboard data, USIU-A shows an average Absolute Graduation Rate (AGR) of 60% and an average Unit Redemption Rate (URR) of 76%. Trend data demonstrate that the number of undergraduate degree recipients has increased over the last 8 years. While these rates seem healthy and reasonable given the student population and enrollment, USIU-A has committed to exploring these rates in the face of current changes in the Kenyan higher education context, and has appointed a committee to come up with retention and graduation targets. The team encourages USIU-A to continue to monitor retention statistics, as the Quality Assurance and Institutional Research offices have recommended and begun to do, and to disaggregate retention and graduation data beyond gender—identifying and tracking principal student groups or sub-populations—to develop a deeper understanding of completion (CFRs 1.2, 4.1).

Other evidence of student success includes information about post-graduation outcomes. USIU-A has conducted student surveys and studies to track employment status of its graduates. According to the 2017 Employability Survey Report, the University is doing quite well in imparting the skills needed in the job market. USIU-A graduates hold senior positions in leading organizations locally and internationally, some run successful businesses while others are thriving in the sports and creative art industry. This evidence suggests that USIU-A is ensuring that students complete their programs and graduate with practical skills that translate into desirable post-graduation outcomes.

Institution-level success efforts for graduate students have also been developed in recent years to complement academic-program-specific efforts. Through the mentorship and care from faculty, graduate students have conducted research with faculty and have made presentations at professional
conferences. Graduate students with whom the team met were appreciative of library services and other faculty and administrators who provided personal support and mentorship.

Faculty and staff were described by students as approachable and available. The “open door” policy of faculty, staff and administrators was a strong value at USIU-A. Similarly, faculty explained that one of the most important things they do to support student success was to be helpful to students. Administrators complimented faculty on the quality of student-faculty relations, noting the ways that faculty mentored and cared for students. These qualities combine to create a strong culture for student success (CFRs 2.10, 2.13). The decision to develop the new mentoring program attests to the commitment.

The strength of USIU-A administrators, faculty and staff support for the success of all students is particularly noteworthy. For example, faculty and staff characterized students as talented, motivated and dedicated to pursuing their degrees, acknowledging the long journeys that many students make daily to and from campus. During a large group meeting with administrators and quality assurance staff, everyone nodded when someone explained that “student success is our focus.” Faculty in criminal justice were quick to point out that when they discovered students did not have sufficient practical experience, they implemented experiential forensic work, and have made plans for establishing a full crime scene lab. Administrators, faculty and staff shared many positive stories of students’ accomplishments. Although this may not sound unusual, it is striking that faculty did not complain about students lack of preparation or motivation, or described the hardships they faced as deficiencies. Rather, USIU-A faculty were quick to point out students’ achievements in spite of challenging odds. In addition, faculty and staff expressed a strong commitment to enriching their understanding about what will improve student success. A number of faculty expressed interest in deepening discussions of diversity, equity, student thriving, and culturally responsive teaching as ways to open new avenues for practice.
Component 6. Quality Assurance and Program Improvement: Program Review; Assessment; Use of Data and Evidence

There have been several examples in which the results of program review or assessment processes have been used to inform decision making with the goal of improving student learning (CFRs 4.3, 4.4). The university reports, for example, that the review of IST, which was conducted from 2012-2014, resulted in partnerships with industry and with the offering of professional certificates as well as the establishment of teaching laboratories. Additionally, that review made recommendations resulting in the hiring of an additional faculty member and technologist as well as the acquisition of dedicated hardware and software. Similarly, the review of the Hotel and Restaurant Management Program revealed that the facilities that were being utilized at the time of the review did not provide the desired learning outcomes, and thus a new learning kitchen was constructed. The Criminal Justice Studies program review conducted in 2015-2016 resulted in the acquisition of a forensic laboratory and software to enhance teaching.

The overall processes for quality assurance and program improvement have been evolving at the university. The former Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching was renamed the Quality Assurance Office in 2011, and reports to an Associate Deputy Vice Chancellor-Academic Affairs. Assessment teams of faculty are appointed by deans annually for each degree program, and these teams receive training and support from the Quality Assurance Office. The Educational Effectiveness Committee, which also works with the Quality Assurance Office, reviews the assessment results and these results are shared in an annual symposium (CFR 4.1). Additionally, there is an Institutional Research Office, under the Division of University Advancement and in 2017 the university hired a Principal Research Officer to improve the office staffing. The Institutional Research Office prepares institutional fact sheets, tracks the performance indicators of the Strategic Plan, and administers and
interprets surveys, such as the employability survey (CFR 4.2). It is unclear how these various offices and committees interact and collaborate to share data and effectively support and inform institutional decisions and program improvement.

Problems with timely program review of general education and of individual degree programs persist. Part of this problem might be the normal revision of assessment plans during implementation. As assessment is implemented, it often becomes evident that some planned activities need to be abandoned or changed. USIU-A’s Institutional Report makes references to the need for greater faculty engagement in the assessment process and candidly reports that faculty have not considered assessment as part of their responsibility. In an effort to address this concern, the University has included assessment in the annual faculty evaluation. It may also be that there is a need to develop data that would be of more direct use to faculty in making decisions about the program. It appears that although assessment structures and procedures and handbooks have been established, more needs to be done to develop a culture of using the results for programmatic improvement.

**Component 7: Sustainability: Financial viability, preparing for the changing higher education environment**

As detailed in an earlier section (Component 2, Standard 3) of this report, USIU-Africa has a long history of operating budget surpluses, no external debt, unqualified audit opinions from Deloitte, and a robust internal audit function. However, the university remains highly dependent on tuition and fee revenues and has recently experienced an increase in operating costs at a rate higher than the growth in tuition and fee revenues. As the university leadership is aware, these revenue and expenditure trends have effectively reduced the size of operating surpluses, which the university has in recent years used to fund key strategic capital improvement projects.

Although the expenditure trends and use of operating surpluses for capital projects
reflect strategic decisions and have positioned USIU-Africa for continued growth, the university realizes that these expenditure trends are not sustainable into the future. The university has, therefore, included goals within its 2015-2020 strategic plan to expand, diversify, and efficiently manage its resources to meet its long-term capital and operating requirements (CFRs 4.6, 4.7).

As noted earlier in this report (Component 2, Standard 3), these multiple strategic efforts have yet to have a significant impact on revenue diversification with tuition and fee revenue equaling 77.4% of total operating revenues in FY 2016-2017. The team is therefore concerned that the current pace of implementing these strategic efforts may prevent the university from effectively pursuing its mission and fully implementing its strategic plan. This, in turn, could hamper USIU-Africa’s ability to quickly respond to the changing nature of the higher education environment and to remain financially viable (CFRs 3.4, 4.7).

**Alignment with Institutional Priorities.** USIU-Africa is clear about its mission and values (CFR 1.1) and has used them to inform the development of the 2015-2020 strategic plan. This clarity appears to be helping the university align its mission and commitments with its resources. For example, the team found evidence that the implementation and monitoring of the strategic plan is being used by the USIU-Africa to prioritize the allocation of its financial, human, and physical resources so that they are focused on institutional priority areas including student learning and success as well as faculty and student research.

Interviews with senior administrators and a review of documents indicate that the 2015-2020 strategic plan is being regularly monitored and assessed and that the university’s institutional research capabilities are expanding (CFR 4.2). These actions should help assure an institutional focus on sustaining institutional capacity and on improving educational effectiveness (CFR 3.7).

**Higher Education Environment and Institutional Response.** The process used by USIU-Africa to develop its 2015-2020 strategic plan was both comprehensive and collaborative (CFRs 4.5, 4.6). The university engaged its many constituencies to assess changes taking place globally,
regionally (i.e., Africa), and nationally (i.e., Kenya) in both higher education and society. These engagement and assessment efforts identified seven major trends that were scanned and determined likely to impact the university including Africa’s demographic youth bulge, increasing collaboration among tertiary institutions, the internationalization of higher education, technology enhanced learning, changes in regulations, affordability concerns, and international terrorism (CFR 4.6). These trends, along with a SWOT analysis, resulted in a list of 12 key strategic issues and five thematic areas that formed the basis for the five major goals in the 2015-2020 strategic plan.

In addition to pursuing objectives to achieve the five strategic plan goals, the team notes that USIU-Africa is also engaged with continuous identification and enhancement of the competencies that students will need to succeed in the future through its development of new curriculum, program reviews, assessment of student learning, faculty development efforts, and engagement with industry through means such as career fairs and employer surveys (CFRs 4.3, CFR 4.4). Despite delays in implementation, the team also noted that the university has established a quality assurance (QA) office to help ensure that educational effectiveness is continually assessed (CFRs 4.1, CFR 4.2) and is also pursuing nine strategic plan objectives to enhance its capacity for research and innovation ranging from the acquisition of digital technologies to establishing a school that focuses on graduate studies, research, and extension.

Interviews with members of the university council and board of trustees, members of the senior administration, faculty, staff, and students indicate that the university’s capacity to adapt to a changing higher education environment has been enhanced by the implementation of the 2015-2020 strategic plan. These interviews also indicate that the continued implementation of the 2015-2020 strategic plan and the upcoming development of a new strategic plan are necessary to assure that USIU-Africa can continue to effectively respond to changing global, African, and Kenyan higher education environments (CFR 4.7).
Component 8: Reflection and plans for improvement

The institution did summarize its findings, interpretations, and plans as a result of its self-study and Institutional Report. USIU-Africa’s summary demonstrated its capacity for celebrating success in affirming its mission and identity, managing resources for teaching and learning and student support, strategic planning for sustainability, and commitment to student learning, with a balance of thoughtful introspection about areas for improvement. The Institutional Report straightforwardly stated specific areas in which work has been stalled or is still in progress, including GE reforms and program assessment and review. The institutions’ candid reflections are addressed in each section of this team’s report. In general, the institution showed a recognition of the areas in which it needs to improve. Gaps in this recognition, or needed emphasis in effort or timing, are listed in the recommendations below.

SECTION IV – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The team wishes to thank USIU-A for their welcoming manner, for responding to numerous requests for more information, arranging so many interviews, and for cheerfully and willingly sharing their precious time. It was very clear to the visit team that USIU-A conducted a comprehensive, productive, and successful internal review. The hard work dedicated to assembling the Institutional Report and responding to requests for documents was also evident. As a result of this visit, the team can confidently say that we better understand the mission, educational approach, and perhaps most importantly, the passion and dedication that USIU-A faculty, staff, students, and boards have for the university.

Commendations

The team commends USIU-Africa for the following:
1. A long history of operating surpluses, lack of external debt, a series of unqualified (i.e. clean) audit opinions, a robust internal audit function, and the commissioning of a forensic audit to improve operations, and systems university-wide.

2. The requirement of General Education, community service, and internships as distinctive elements of undergraduate education.

3. Contributions to improving and enhancing higher education that are respected in East Africa.

4. The establishment of assessment plans and learning outcomes for all programs, with vertical alignment.

5. The extraordinary commitment to students exhibited by the faculty, staff, and administration.

Recommendations

The team has identified the following recommendations for on-going and future efforts:

1. To assure the university’s long-term financial viability, USIU-Africa should strive to advance the timeline in its strategic plan to expand and diversify its financial resources (CFRs 3.4, 3.5).

2. The University has completed a preliminary assessment of General Education and developed a viable organizational structure that promises to assure a cross-cutting, multidisciplinary GE program. The team recommends that the University redouble its efforts to fully implement General Education by supporting the new administrative structure and deepening its approach to GE assessment (CFRs 2.2a, 2.4, 4.1, 4.4).

3. To complete the cycle of assessment and program review—essential to quality assurance—USIU-A must connect the two activities. Program assessment informs program review. Program review would be strengthened by dedicating time to reflection and to completing the review before beginning the next cycle. Program
review leads to actions and shapes requests for resources that improve student success and enhance teaching and research (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4).

4. Accelerate efforts to increase the number of permanent faculty, and reduce the reliance on adjuncts for teaching (CFR 3.1).

5. Many structural changes have been put in place recently — for example, the Board of Trustees, University Council, University Senate, formation of departments with Chairs, and the Deans’ Committee. The many moving parts have produced a need for a clearer understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each new unit, and a need to clarify the role of the Faculty Council (CFRs 3.7, 3.10). This is important to retaining the ethos of USIU-Africa.
## APPENDICES

### 1 - 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&lt;br&gt; If so, where is the policy located? Attachment provided to team – Approved 2012, FP-01-2010.&lt;br&gt; Comments: The university operates a Course File system to ensure that the planning of teaching takes this into account.</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&lt;br&gt; If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? ■ YES □ NO&lt;br&gt; Comments: The university operates a Course File system to ensure that the planning of teaching takes this into account, all instructors submit comprehensive course files at the beginning of semester, indicating all the planned in-class and out-of-class learning engagements.</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&lt;br&gt; Comments:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses <em>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</em></td>
<td>How many syllabi were reviewed? 10&lt;br&gt; What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? All face to face.&lt;br&gt; What degree level(s)? □ AA/AS □ BA/BS □ MA □ Doctoral&lt;br&gt; Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? ■ YES □ NO&lt;br&gt; Comments: Team reviewed syllabi on Blackboard site.</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) <em>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</em></td>
<td>How many syllabi were reviewed? 5&lt;br&gt; What kind of courses? Internship courses in IST, IBA, BUS, PSY and Journalism, and labs&lt;br&gt; What degree level(s)? □ AA/AS □ BA/BS □ MA □ Doctoral&lt;br&gt; What discipline(s)? IST, IBA, BUS, PSY and Journalism; Biochemistry&lt;br&gt; Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? ■ YES □ NO&lt;br&gt; Comments: Team reviewed syllabi on Blackboard site. Students log hours for internships and supervisors/faculty review and approve. Lab hours reflected in syllabus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)</td>
<td>How many programs were reviewed? 2&lt;br&gt; What kind of programs were reviewed? Criminal Justice, Business&lt;br&gt; What degree level(s)? □ AA/AS □ BA/BS □ MA □ Doctoral&lt;br&gt; What discipline(s)? Criminal Justice, Business&lt;br&gt; Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? ■ YES □ NO&lt;br&gt; Comments: Team reviewed syllabi on Blackboard site and in Academic Catalog.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Review Completed By: Nancy Marlin and Jillian Kinzie  
Date: September 19, 2018
# 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?  
☑ YES ☐ NO  
Comments: Although USIU – Africa does not participate in Title IV Programs, it substantially follows federal regulations on recruiting students including the prohibition against incentive compensation to employees and third-party entities for their success in securing student enrollments. This was verified by University representations and interviews with senior admission staff. |
| Degree completion and cost | Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree?  
☑ YES ☐ NO  
Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree?  
☑ YES ☐ NO  
Comments: The University’s Academic Catalog, its public website, and its program brochures provide information about time to degree and overall cost of the degree. |
| Careers and employment | Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable?  
☑ YES ☐ NO  
Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable?  
☑ YES ☐ NO  
Comments: The University’s Office of Placement and Career Services provides detailed information about the types of jobs and careers held by its alumni. |

*§602.16(a)(1)(vii)

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

Review Completed By: Peter A. Michell  
Date: September 20, 2018
# 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? If so, where?  
| | The institution has a standard operating procedure to receive complaints at the office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs and the deans' offices.  
| | Comments:  
| | The institution conducts student satisfaction surveys and monitors social media for complaints. |
| Process(es)/ procedure | Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints?  
| | ■ YES □ NO  
| | If so, please describe briefly: The Deputy Vice Chancellor handles complaints and works with deans' offices.  
| | Comments:  
| | If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? ■ YES □ NO |
| Records | Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? ■ YES □ NO  
| | If so, where?  
| | Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? □ YES ■ NO  
| | If so, please describe briefly:  
| | Comments:  
| | There is no systematic long-term tracking, but resolved cases are posted on an online portal. |

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

Review Completed By: Susan Albertine  
Date: September 20, 2018
# 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>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Transfer Credit Policy(s) | Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit?  
  - YES ☐ NO  
  If so, is the policy publically available?  
  - YES ☐ NO  
  If so, where? The University’s Academic Catalog and its public website.  
  Does the policy(s) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education?  
  - YES ☐ NO  
  Comments: The University’s Transfer Policy includes its criteria and limits for the acceptance of transfer credits as well as the basis for accepting credits from accredited U.S. institutions of higher education. |

*§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: Peter A. Michell  
Date: September 20, 2018