REPORT OF THE WSCUC VISITING TEAM

SEEKING ACCREDITATION VISIT 2
For Institutions Seeking Initial Accreditation

To: University of Antelope Valley

September 30-October 2, 2015

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The team evaluated the institution under the WSCUC Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective judgment for consideration and action by the institution and by the WASC Senior College and University Commission. The formal action concerning the institution’s status is taken by the Commission and is described in a letter from the Commission to the institution. Once an institution achieves either candidacy or initial accreditation, the team report and Commission Action Letter associated with the review that resulted in the granting of either candidacy or initial accreditation and the team reports and Commission Action Letters of any subsequent reviews will be made available to the public by publication on the WSCUC website.
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SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution and Visit

Brief History and Background:

Marco and Sandra Johnson, Antelope Valley natives, founded a small company in the late 1990’s after Marco, a Los Angeles City Firefighter and Paramedic, observed too many preventable deaths. Responding to community demands for more classes, in addition to the CPR and First Aid classes offered initially, the Johnsons founded Antelope Valley Medical College (AVMC), which became accredited by the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools in 2002, just six months after its inception. AVMC was also granted approval to provide training in Emergency Medical Technology, and a variety of Allied Health programs, thereby expanding educational opportunities and hence employment opportunities for the citizens of the Valley.

In 2007, the founders began developing AVMC into a four-year institution and built the infrastructure and processes needed to seek WSCUC accreditation. With approvals in 2002-2 from ABHES and the Department of Education, and in 2009 from the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) in hand, AVMC became the university of Antelope Valley (UAV). In 2010, UAV relocated to its current 5.7 acre campus, which is a repurposed hotel and restaurant site that was completely remodeled to accommodate the needs of this growing university.

UAV is a for-profit institution offering master’s, bachelor’s, and associate’s degrees in addition to non-degree certificate programs in the fields of business management, criminal justice, education, nursing, fire science, health and fitness, healthcare management, hospitality management, sustainable energy technology, allied health, culinary arts, massage therapy, pharmacy technology, and vocational nursing. Its 1,258 current students may take classes during the day, evening, and in a number of programs online, and are taught by 12 full-time and 50 part-time faculty members. The main campus is located on North Sierra Highway in Lancaster, CA. Its Park View campus, also in Lancaster on West Avenue J, is home to its Sustainable Energy Technology, Health and Fitness, Vocational Nursing, and Massage Therapy Programs.
Its Rosamond campus, on Rosamond Blvd in Rosamond CA, is home to the Paramedic program.

**WSCUC Accreditation history:**

In April 2010, UAV applied for WASC accreditation eligibility. The Eligibility Review Committee suspended the application in order to allow the institution to prepare for pursuing accreditation under the new policy for applicants that hold accreditation with a USDOE-approved institutional accrediting agency. In late 2012, UAV resubmitted its application for eligibility and eligibility was granted for four years in April 2013. In January 2014, the Capacity and Preparatory Review for Candidacy was conducted following UAV’s submission of its candidacy application in June 2013. In March 2014, the university was informed of the visiting team’s recommendations and commendations via staff letter and that the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) for candidacy would take place in Spring 2016. The institution requested that the EER visit be moved to Fall 2015; in July 2014, the EER visit was changed to a Seeking Accreditation Visit following adoption by the Commission of new procedures for institutions seeking initial accreditation and the visit scheduled for Fall 2015. Since the team’s first visit, there have been no sub-change requests.

**B. The Institution’s Seeking Accreditation Visit Report: Quality and Rigor of the Review and Report**

The report submitted by the institution was well organized, highlighting the issues raised by the visiting team on its last visit and changes made to address these. In addition, the institution’s report reviewed and reported on each Standard and associated Criteria for Review (CFR). The report was written in a clear and concise manner and presented the institution as it was when the team last visited, its accomplishments since the visit in addressing the Standards for accreditation, and what its vision is for the future. At the conclusion of this visit, the team found that the report accurately portrayed the institution in terms of levels of compliance with the Standards.
The university reconvened its Self-Study Steering Committee to guide the review of the institution as well as its report preparation. The Committee was composed of thirteen faculty, five administrators, and two students. Members were oriented to the Institutional Report process and met regularly, using four sub-committees to review each Standard and CFRs. Recommendations for improvement were reported to the Steering Committee, which also reviewed preliminary drafts and approved the final report. In addition, a Report Writing Team composed of three senior leaders assisted in drafting the report, with the CEO and Steering Committee providing review and editing as needed. To ensure transparency, the report was published on the university’s OneDrive which is accessible to all. Finally, the university's Academic Quality and Institutional Standards Committee (AQIS), the Executive Leadership Council, and the Board of Trustees reviewed and approved the submission to WSCUC.

Again, at the conclusion of this visit, the team found that the evidence submitted at the time of the report as well as that requested by the team later, was appropriate, thorough and used in the self-review of the university by the participants. That said, many of the processes engaged in by UAV are new to the institution, so not all data could be considered complete at this time. However, the team found that the university is focused on gathering the right kinds of data and has established decision-making processes through its committees and shared-governance bodies to identify areas for improvement and methods for greater understanding.

C. Response to Issues Raised in Past Commission Letters

UAV took to heart the eight recommendations made by the Commission following the last visit and its report details the actions taken in response. These are briefly described below.

**Recommendation 1:** It was recommended that leadership functions in the areas of academic affairs and student affairs be separated into two positions, supported by development resources and provided appropriate authority. In addition, separation of the registrar and director of institutional research positions was recommended.

Following through on this recommendation, the university hired a dean of academic
affairs and the duties that had previously been held by the dean of academic and student affairs were split into two positions. In addition, the positions of registrar and director of institutional research have also been split. The changes that have taken place since these areas moved from two individuals holding multiple positions to now having four individuals holding single positions will be described in later sections of this report. It will be noted, for example, that the growth strategy of component of UAV’s strategic plan has been expanded to address new academic programs, new staffing models for faculty and support, and new physical and technology infrastructure. In addition, the role of the academic department heads’ group has been expanded to now function as the Faculty Development Committee and the faculty’s committee structure has been redesigned to create more transparent communication and collaboration.

In Student Affairs, the dean has implemented new initiatives in student retention and success. The registrar now plays a role in academic planning and forecasting and addresses key external reporting requirements as a typical registrar would. The director of institutional research and operations also chairs. The university’s Institutional Research Committee (IRC) coordinates UAV’s IR information gathering, synthesis and reporting model. UAV reflects in its self-study that is much stronger and more agile in its decision making by separating these important positions.

**Recommendation 2:** It was recommended that UAV expand the depth and breadth of the program review process, including implementation of a peer review process by creating a cross-disciplinary faculty program review committee. In acting on this recommendation, UAV rebranded its annual program review process as the Annual Program Assessment, and included a peer review process for program assessment results. UAV has completed two cycles of review under the new process and the results will be discussed in later sections of this report.

**Recommendation 3:** It was recommended that UAV expand service area outcomes review beyond measuring student satisfaction to include evaluating direct and indirect measures of co-curricular program effectiveness. The university identified and adopted
co-curricular learning outcomes and integrated these into its service area outcomes assessment process, completed twice annually.

Recommendation 4: It was recommended that the university develop a comprehensive demographic and preparatory portrait of entering students to guide program development, refine student services practices, and develop initiatives to improve persistence and graduation rates. Found in its Institutional Effectiveness Plan (IEP) and the university’s annual Fact Book, a comprehensive student profile has been created. In addition, a basic enrollment projection and forecasting model has been initially developed and the institution reflected that these additions have been particularly helpful. Use of the data for persistence and retention activities will be detailed later in this report.

Recommendation 5: It was recommended that the UAV Board be expanded to include members who represent the diversity of the student body and broader community, as well as those with higher education experience. The UAV Board has been expanded to include three new members since the team last visited who have extensive higher education experience. In its reflection on this recommendation, UAV noted that while the Board has always been very active, the addition of these new members has elevated the discourse of the entire board, as well as its guidance to leadership on key issues.

Recommendation 6: It was recommended that the university direct resources to improve its strategic plan by adding measures and benchmarks to ensure effective implementation. The original strategic plan and UAV’s planning, assessment and monitoring processes have been improved since the last visit. The new planning process includes the establishment of a five-year strategic plan (Leading the Pioneer Path), supported by annual plans for major areas of the institution (academic affairs, enrollment management, student affairs, institutional effectiveness and operations, and administration and finance), and 26 departmental “focus on improvement” continuous improvement plans. All are reviewed during the annual budget process. There are now
twelve assessment steps overseen by the IRC. Further description of the planning process is detailed in this report.

**Recommendation 7:** It was recommended that the institution create a standard method for forecasting student enrollment and a related staffing model. As noted above, the university has created an initial enrollment projection model, a staffing model and a faculty model.

**Recommendation 8:** It was recommended that the institution refine its policies and procedures to ensure open communication with and attention to the needs of adjunct faculty. A new adjunct faculty compensation model has been implemented at UAV. This rate per course model takes into consideration teaching, class preparation, office hours and tutoring time and has been tested to ensure fairness. The university held multiple meetings with adjunct faculty, explaining both the new compensation model as well as its new adjunct faculty contract process. These actions have ensured transparency in communication with these members of the UAV community.
SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE WITH WSCUC’S STANDARDS

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

Institutional Purposes

The board-approved mission of the university is clear and concisely describes its purpose. UAV has published its mission statement in its catalog, on its website, and posted printed copies conspicuously across the campus (including placement in every classroom). The university is clearly proud of its mission, and moves easily into a discussion thereof in many contexts, as was evidenced in the site visit. The values and character of the university are demonstrably imbedded in the teaching, student support and community-related aspects of the life of UAV. (CFR 1.1)

UAV has incorporated its educational objectives clearly and thoroughly in many contexts, and notably within each course. Both course and program learning objectives are evidenced in syllabi and linked to the university’s mission. Outcomes, including achievement, retention and graduation are disseminated and made public, including on the university’s website. (CFR 1.2)

The development of the Institutional Research Committee (IRC), in direct response to the 2014 site visit, is particularly impressive. It is an innovative approach to combining various university resources in order to collect, analyze and act upon key data in a way that ultimately enhances UAV’s ability to carry out its mission. At the same time, it makes possible a collaborative, effective approach to institutional data management and related decision-making. The IRC then assumes responsibility for publishing the annual Institutional Effectiveness Plan and the UAV Fact Book. (CFR 1.2)

Integrity and Transparency

UAV has adopted and gives every appearance of upholding an academic freedom policy. Faculty readily gave examples of academic freedom when visiting with the team. In addition, the university’s Steering Committee has recommended an annual review of this policy, which has been accepted. (CFR 1.3)
While The university has a natural proclivity toward diversity, given its demographic context, it has gone significantly farther in making diversity a key element embedded in the curriculum and co-curriculum. In addition, a Diversity Calendar of Events has been implemented, which provides focus on aspects of diversity throughout the year, evidence of which was apparent to the visiting team. (CFR 1.4)

In other areas of Integrity and Transparency, it should be noted that UAV is not affiliated with any governmental, corporate or religious entities. (CFR 1.5) The university provides evidence that it operates truthfully in its representation to students and the public, including timely completion of academic programs. Importantly, UAV worked diligently to improve its complaints and grievance processes, in response to the 2014 site team’s report. (CFR 1.6 and 1.7) In terms of CFR 1.7, UAV has taken steps to improve the quality of its auditing relationship, which is also discussed below under Standard 3.

UAV has taken the WASC process very seriously, as was evident to the team throughout preparation for and actual conduct of the site visit. Senior leadership and the Steering Committee provided excellent guidance to highly-motivated constituencies of the university in responding to the 2014 report and preparing for the 2015 visit. As noted in the commendations attached to this report, the university can be characterized as deeply committed and passionately engaged in becoming the best it can be, using WASC standards as guideposts, so that it may fulfill its enormous potential in an underserved community that is already benefitting from its efforts. (CFR 1.8)

**STANDARD 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions**

**Teaching and Learning**

UAV’s educational programs are designed according to recognized professional or industry standards, are appropriate in content, rigor, and nomenclature with clearly outlined measures of performance for the certificates or degrees awarded (CFR 2.1). Sufficient and qualified faculty, who are primarily adjuncts that have been practitioners in their fields, teach in the programs. Programs are subject to peer review with input
from advisory boards. It is suggested that the institution continue to analyze similar programs at other institutions and industry standards to ensure quality of programs.

UAV has articulated criteria for admissions for all the degree programs offered at the university in its catalog. Requirements for student achievement levels necessary for degree completion are also spelled out. The university catalog further underscores the requisite levels of student achievement necessary for graduation for each degree level. Requirements for academic progress are described including conditions for probation and dismissal. The catalog also states requirements and processes for admission, transfer, and readmission. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is regularly monitored by the dean of student affairs (DSA). The DSA informs students of their progress and where necessary assists in the development of plans to maintain progress towards graduation. Some programs are relatively new and faculty numbers will likely need to grow to support the programs (CFR 2.2).

UAV’s baccalaureate programs appears to meet WASC guidelines. The philosophy of the undergraduate programs is explained as a mechanism to engage students to be able to identify, locate, evaluate and effectively use that information for issues and problems that exist in day to day life.” The General Education (Gen Ed) requirements are evaluated across competencies articulated in terms of quantitative skills, critical analysis of data and argument. In addition, competencies around civic engagement, diversity and ability to work with others are identified. The university states in its report that “the General Education program also undergoes an annual program review as a mechanism to assess and continuously improve course content and student learning process and outcomes.” It is not clear, however, how the latter are evaluated to ensure congruence with the stated philosophy. Further, it appears implementation of how these competencies are measured is uneven (CFR 2.2, 2.6).

Per the visiting team’s recommendation from its previous visit, the Curriculum and Academic Policy Committee (CAPC) is tasked with creating a formal structure for curriculum mapping for all degrees offered at UAV. This process is still in a developing stage. Building on the assessment infrastructure implemented to date, the curriculum mapping and associated assessment could be strengthened by ensuring that learning outcomes are progressive for all degree programs and lead to the desired levels of
culminating competency at or near the time of graduation. Further identifying and articulating where Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) are introduced, developed, and mastered and how these are aligned with institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO) would also strengthen the assessment infrastructure (CFR 2.2 a).

Graduate level programs appear to meet WASC guidelines. A bachelor’s degree is required as one of the admissions criteria. UAV employs at least one full-time faculty member for each graduate degree program offered. Additionally, UAV has a system of Advisory Boards comprised of professionals in each of the program areas that it offers degrees. The Advisory Board serves in offering advice on changing expectations of the field as well as ensuring alignment with the standards and expectations appropriate for each of the professional degrees offered. While curriculum maps, CLOs and PLOs are in place, they could be strengthened by further defining measurable and level appropriate learning outcomes that are specific to the degree program. Implicit in this is the need for a more intentional effort in addressing the requisite resources and structures to sustain graduate programs as well as the fostering of a graduate culture and expectations (CFR 2.2b).

The institution’s faculty takes collective responsibility for establishing appropriate standards of performance and demonstrating through assessment the achievement of these standards (CFR 2.4). The newly formed Curriculum and Academic Policy Committee have enhanced the development, quality, and feedback loop for course learning outcomes. Course level learning outcomes are reflected in the syllabi and measured appropriately with rubrics at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Faculty creates inter-rater reliability through developing rubrics, evaluating student work, and collectively discussing the discrepancies of evaluation that may exist. Both direct and indirect measures of student learning are used and an improvement in assessment, based on the team recommendations, is evident. It is suggested that SLOs could be improved by striving to reach higher levels of learning as represented in Bloom’s Taxonomy.

In order to be cleared for graduation, students must meet minimum GPA requirements and complete specific sequences of courses. UAV addresses learning outcomes in annual program review and makes adjustments as needed. The university
has a thorough and well-planned assessment process with a strong “closing the loop” infrastructure (CFR 2.6).

Student learning outcomes have been established at the course, program and institutional level. SLOs are also included in course syllabi. The Academic Quality and Institutional Standards (AQIS) Committee is an elected faculty body that conducts peer reviews. Through this process, AQIS reviews program data and identifies program strengths and area for improvement/enhancement. Program learning outcomes are clearly articulated and the university expects course learning outcomes to be available on course syllabi.

The process of annual program reviews has become solidified and there has been demonstrated evidence of corrective action and or implemented improvements taken as a result of the outcomes of the review. For example, in January 2015 the review revealed that externship outcomes did not include incomplete or unsuccessful externships. A decision was also made to have Program Review data include 3-5 year trends of grades and learning outcome data. There was also corrective action to require that data be more holistic and include all dimensions. The review also identified a lack of data for the RN-BSN program and immediate steps were taken to provide the respective faculty with instructions and support to ensure regular submission.

UAV has made significant steps in the development of a robust assessment plan and process. The assessment process is still relatively new and implementation of this process is still in the developing phase so it is early to determine effectiveness. An area to pay close attention to is fine tuning the assessment of how graduates are meeting general education outcomes. The current efforts could also be further strengthened by the specific articulation of SLO standards in policies, advisement, library and information technology and documentation of an assessment plan to indicate congruence in these areas. Ensuring a sustainable mechanism by which programs “close the loop” by utilizing assessment results in program revisions and improvement will also be beneficial. It is not clear how UAV integrates program review into planning and budgeting. This area could also benefit from further aligning of critical areas that have direct implications for academic programs, course offerings, and course schedules. For
example, the registrar’s office could be more closely aligned with the office of academic
affairs (CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7).

The university has demonstrated institutional commitment to ensure that students
are involved in meeting their learning goals. Each semester a student success
workshop is provided to enable students acquire skills necessary for sustained
academic progress. There are efforts to engage students in the classroom, outside the
classroom in student clubs, and through community involvement. The library has been
transformed into a learning resource center and this has positively impacted student co-
curricular engagement and support of student learning outside the classroom. UAV also
has a well-developed and supervised out-of-class extern program for some of its
programs as appropriate. The extern program is assessed as part of the annual
program review process. An Externship policy is also outlined in the catalog. UAV has
stated SAP policies and procedures for both academic progression and financial aid
purposes (CRF 2.5)

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outcomes in annual program review and makes adjustments as needed. The university
has a thorough and well-planned assessment process with a strong “closing the loop”
infrastructure (CFR 2.6).

All academic programs offered by UAV are subject to systematic program review
(CFR 2.7). The program review process at UAV is now three years old and is becoming
better each year. The Academic Quality and Institutional Standards (AQIS) Committee,
with faculty representation from across disciplines, evaluates academic program
reviews. Areas of evaluation include program quality; academic policies and
procedures; program and course additions and changes; analyses of student
achievement of program learning outcomes; and retention and graduation rates. UAV
utilizes external advisory boards for program review. These external advisory boards
now have bylaws as per team recommendation. It was not evident that external
academic peer reviewers, as opposed to external practitioners on the advisory boards,
are utilized in the program review process. It is suggested that UAV consider adding
external academic peer review to its program review process. The program review
process is well-defined; it has added a peer review process and alumni survey as a part of the process as a response to the team’s recommendation. For further discussion on student learning outcomes and assessment, see discussion above.

**Scholarship and Creative Activity**

The institution supports scholarship and creative activity for both students and faculty. Those involved in student life offer many and varied activities for students, and the student community appears to be vibrant. As the Athletics program grows, for example, athlete scholars are expected to be student leaders and work in peer mentoring and tutoring programs, with these expectations set during the recruiting and admissions process. The university supports an array of student activities that provide outlets for active learning as well as service to the community. *(CFR 2.8)*

Scholarship is broadly defined and faculty engagement in scholarly activities appropriate to their discipline is tracked and supported. A mini-grant program is in place and all scholarly activities are tracked and reported on annually. Faculty have recently designed, and The university has adopted, a faculty evaluation process that accommodates the full life-cycle of faculty work, from initial onboarding through retirement. The evaluation process fully links scholarship activities to teaching, service and student learning at each step and the university follows the Boyer model. In designing the evaluation process, the faculty realized that as members of a teaching institution, teaching must be more heavily weighted in the evaluation process, but scholarship and service are adequately accounted for in the process. The new evaluation process, which adds in a 365 review to previous self-evaluation and student evaluation, development activities and the like, is in its first year of implementation. Once fully implemented, the university plans to allow for rank-style promotion. *(CFR 2.9)*

**Student Learning and Success**

The university has demonstrated commitment to providing student support in a variety of ways. These include advising, financial aid /scholarships, student government, the library and the learning center. A student handbook has been recently developed and provides guidance for students on various polices and resources. Additionally, UAV
has a well-developed student-athlete handbook that spells out expectations for eligibility, academic performance and the NIAA Champions of character competencies. All incoming student athletes have mandatory study hall. Advising-for degree students is scheduled every semester; for certificate students advising occurs every 12 units. This is a process the university is constantly reviewing to ensure they are responding to the progress students making in terms of meeting their academic goals and milestones. This is all undertaken by the dean of student affairs. The process is currently highly individualized and it will serve the university well to review the sustainability of this model as the university grows. (CFR 2.10, 2.11, 2.12)

The institution has a carefully designed process for collecting student data. This entails the work of the IEP and the involvement of IRC and University leadership. The IEP comprises three areas: retention, student learning outcomes, and graduate satisfaction. Some data collection has occurred. The IRC collects benchmark data from IPEDS annually and makes the information available to all campus constituents. The university has also strengthened the IR function to not only include data collection but also dissemination, and analysis to various stakeholders.

UAV has a stated set of aspirations in the areas of graduation rates, (maintain completion rate of 63%), keeping retention rate at the program level at 70% and above and overall university at 80% and above. These aspirations could be strengthened by the implementation of specific enrollment management strategies to get to these goals. The university has a well written SAP process and some survey of student satisfaction has taken place. The process is still new to UAV so it is difficult to ascertain its effectiveness. This area could be strengthened by disaggregation of the data collected by appropriate demographic categories and then using the information and analysis to inform improvements in both academic, advisement and other student support needs to facilitate student achievement. For example, understanding of a variety of student categories such as veterans, students with disabilities, first generation, and the like would be beneficial. Data collection on the level of preparedness of incoming students and the overall experience while at UAV as well as graduates will also strengthen this area (CFR 2.10).
UAV has made significant progress in articulating co-curricular learning outcomes (CCLO). The university has developed a robust CCLO plan and the associated metrics have been identified. The espoused plan demonstrates that UAV places the student at the center of its endeavors. However, the co-curricular learning outcomes are still in an aspirational and developmental stage. The university is in the process of implementing a Community Engagement Center (CEC). The CEC promises to be the hub for coordination, tracking and evaluation of student engagement.

Some assessment has taken place in the student life area. However, most of the data is still on student satisfaction. While this is important data, it would be prudent for UAV to now move to the next stage of measuring student learning outcomes for student services and support areas. Identifying benchmarks and best practices and using those to assess the effectiveness of student support programs will also strengthen this area. It appears that the data on student involvement is not being tracked consistently and the evaluation of student life and services is uneven among the respective areas. While there is evidence of student engagement, student involvement is scholarly activities, participation in community activities and professional growth opportunities, the data is not being tracked consistently (CFR 2.11).

Faculty and staff spend a great deal of time advising and supporting their students both in and out of the classroom (CFR 2.12). The advising that faculty do with students tends to be more reactive to students who need their assistance rather than proactively meeting with students to guide their course of study. New student advising is done during Orientation and is still developing. Suggestion: UAV should ensure that all students understand the requirements of their academic programs and receive timely, useful, and complete information about relevant academic requirements.

UAV provides a variety of academic and other student support services to meet student’s needs such as tutoring, financial aid counseling, career counseling and placement, residential life, services for students with disabilities, NAIA athletics, and other services and programs as appropriate, which meet the needs of the specific types of students that the institution serves and the programs it offers (CFR 2.13). The Pioneer Student Success Plan goes beyond the academic very nicely and broadly.
Suggestion: UAV should continue with ongoing evaluation of the needs of their students in order to grow services where necessary.

UAV has a published transfer policy. Transfer credit is also defined in the catalog and through articulation agreements. Requirements for admission are described as part of the application process. However, it is not clear how transfer student are provided information nor is it clear how advising differentiates student entry points, levels and needs (CFR 2.14).

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

Faculty and Staff

As mentioned above, UAV acted deliberately to separate the previously joined position of academic and student affairs dean, as recommended by the 2013 site visit team. This process involved various constituencies, including the Board of Trustees. While the new dean has only been in her post for some seven months, the team noted remarkable energy and a wide range of accomplishments in that short period. While many changes have been undertaken, and some completed, there are, of course, multiple opportunities for future development in the academic areas under the dean’s supervision, in conjunction with other leaders and the faculty in general.

One of these areas of opportunity is reflected in the Faculty Composite Report, provided by the institution, which indicates that there are no full-time faculty members in the disciplines of Business Management, Nursing (RN-BSN), Fire Science, and Paralegal Studies, and that part-time faculty outnumber full-time faculty at a rate of 3:1. While WASC does not require a specific number or ratio of full-time to adjunct faculty, or a requirement of full-time faculty in any given program or major, UAV is urged to continue to monitor the sufficiency of appropriate faculty resources and its relevance to student outcomes. The Staffing model indicates total employees numbering 168. (CFR 3.1)

The institution convened a Faculty Steering committee that is designed to develop a pay structure for adjunct faculty. A quarterly Faculty development workshop is held to include faculty voice. (CFR 3.1) In addition, the dean of academic affairs noted
that a faculty development committee meets each month to determine the needs of the faculty. A faculty survey was conducted to gather data from the faculty concerning their needs. (CFR 3.3)

Although the institution has adopted the Boyer Model, its evaluative processes are still emerging. In a meeting with the department heads, the team noted that not all faculty were familiar yet with the evaluation process. Some of the department heads have had a one-on-one meeting with the new dean of academic affairs to establish baseline developmental objectives. Since this is an emerging practice, some have not completed this initial stage of evaluation. (CFR 3.2)

The department heads expressed the need to embrace diversity in scholarship and teaching. This diversity initiative is supported by the convening of a diversity committee as noted by the CEO and CFO during a team discussion. (CFR 3.1) Further, institutional grants have been made available for those who wish to achieve more educational credentials and development.

The institution has developed staff and faculty mentor programs. This program is emerging. The next step is to develop an assessment of the mentoring program to determine its effectiveness.

The CEO spoke about the process to separate the dean of student affairs and the dean of academic affairs. He mentioned that the faculty were a part of the process. This action indicates an awareness of the need to ensure there is adequate human resources engaged in critical academic functions of the institution. The CFO expressed that the institution’s retention rate increase is due to the separation of the two positions. In addition, this change has had a significant positive impact on the morale of the faculty. To have implemented this change so quickly shows the commitment of the CEO to the needs of the faculty and student constituency of UAV.

The faculty manual and employee handbook both have instructions that support the development of policies to evaluate a faculty and staff employee. However, the practice is still emerging. The committee meetings revealed that not all faculty and staff have yet engaged in evaluative meetings with their supervisor. UAV will benefit from setting up consistent processes and procedures for evaluation to ensure that all parties have an opportunity to engage in this constructive activity. (CFR 3.3)
The Faculty Development Survey indicates 36 participants responded. This represents a 63% response rate which is considered a good rate based on institutional research. There are several recommendations noted in the document:

1. Review report with Faculty Development Committee and begin planning monthly sessions and identifying speakers, plan a year out.
2. Begin the Faculty Development Program by offering those items ranked highest in needs (Top 3-5 in each category).
3. Offer monthly sessions on topics identified in this assessment.
4. Develop and launch the Faculty Development website for communication.
5. Provide electronic resources to all faculty through the Faculty Development webpage pertaining to all topics.

It was not clear that these recommendations made during the past academic year had been implemented yet nor was a plan presented for future implementation. (CFR 3.3)

In addition, the Faculty Development Program Report indicates that there are budget implications. However, the budget the team received was not disaggregated so that a determination could be made whether these costs are being considered.

The Faculty Composition Report indicates that over the period 2011-2014 the total FT faculty has decreased by 20 faculty headcount. Also, the ratio of full time faculty to total faculty has decreased while the ratio of part-time faculty to total faculty has increased. There appeared to be no documentation to support why these releases took place; this indicates a need for an assessment of the evaluative processes.

**Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources**

A review of the auditors’ reports indicates that an unqualified opinion has been given to the institution over the last three years, i.e. 2012-2014. The team reviewed the balance sheet and determined that the institution has an opportunity to increase its liquidity ratio so that it may more effectively support the amount of debt that is being carried for short term as well as the long term operational needs. In addition, the team determined by its review of the debt and equity in the balance sheet that if the institution
continues to carry significant amounts of debt without corresponding resources to support interest and principal payments the institution may not be able to maintain long term sustainability. (CFR 3.4) (Audited Financial Statements dated 12/31/2014 Note. 5 and 12/31/13 Note. 9)

The team met with the Finance Committee, which consists of the CFO and the financial specialist. The institution would benefit from adding individuals to the financial leadership team who have a broader understanding and experience related to the type of complex financial matters that are impacting it.

The institution has an opportunity to monitor its cash more effectively by developing timely supporting reconciliations that reflect its ability to support current operational needs as well as respond to risk that might arise in the event of declines in enrollment and other possible risk management concerns such as loan servicing, theft, and so on. Enhanced financial leadership would be responsible for implementing these practices. The availability of additional cash reserves would also alleviate concerns in situations of unanticipated risk.

The team determined that the proprietary structure of UAV has compliance revenue requirements such as the 90/10 rule and the composite score. Consequently, UAV has an opportunity to develop a longer term, comprehensive budget model that better projects enrollment and revenues over multiple years. Further, the team determined that such projections would help the institution to better monitor, control, and manage allowances for uncollectable accounts. This financial practice is critical due to its potential impact on cash flow and the institution’s ability to address operational needs such as identifying the need for various streams of revenue to support the Title IV compliance rules. (Audited Financial Statements dated 12/31/2014)

In 2013 the institution changed auditors. The new auditor, Weworski and Associates, CPA firm, reported an unqualified opinion for the audited financial statements ending December 31, 2014 (dated 6/30/2015). In 2013, the previous auditing firm, Barry Glasser and Company, recorded a prior period entry of approximately $3.7 million. This entry was made to correct an overstatement of revenue recorded in 2012; overstating the retained earnings and net income in 2012. The
administration and Board of Trustees recognized the need for improved reliability from its audits and moved to a firm that has much greater experience in higher education.

After review of the auditors’ reports the team determined that the institution has an opportunity to improve its financial sustainability by developing internal control programs that are assessed on a regular basis. This practice will allow the institution self assess its processes and procedures and take corrective action to address any identified gaps that may cause negative exposure. The university’s growth and development have moved it into a realm where dedicated, experienced and appropriately credentialed leadership needs to be in place. The CFO position should be developed significantly to represent and lead at a level more typical of a university operating at a regionally-accredited level. Likewise, the presence of a CPA in the accounting area would add significant credibility and checks and balances to the entire management of the financial structures and management of the university.

Likewise, the university could benefit from this type of leadership in developing an integrated earnings projection model that would include enrollment, revenue projection, cash management and analysis, and expenses. A model of this nature would support the sustainability of an institution. (CFR 3.4)

The university has the opportunity to develop an integrated technological design that allows data to be extracted for more effective decision making. The university’s continual growth allows for a more robust data analytical system that integrates the various functions of the institution, such as enrollment, financial aid, budget and finance, and facilities and operations. (CFR 3.5) Computer equipped classrooms have up-to-date technology and students are surveyed annually on their technology needs. Team members visited the Park View and Rosamond instructional site locations (within a few miles of the main campus) and found them to be adequate for the programs offered at those locations, including classroom set-up, materials, computing resources and faculty oversight.

Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes
The university has developed and published an organizational chart that communicates its reporting structures. The independent audit report does not indicate any qualifier against the integrity of the management and leadership of the university. (CFR 3.6, 3.7)

The team’s meeting with the Board reveals that the institution’s leadership has an opportunity to immerse themselves in professional development activities that address the compliance matters of higher education and thus, gain an understanding of the implication of financial metrics that affect the sustainability for the institution. (CFR 3.4)

The university has developed a decision making structure that includes the executive leadership, faculty, and board of trustees. The Faculty Committee Structure report indicates a decision–making structure that rolls up to the Executive Leadership Committee (ELC). (CFR 3.7)

The university has both a full-time CEO and CFO. The educational background of each position meets the institution’s overall philosophy for qualification of faculty (at least one degree higher). However, the skill set needed to manage and lead an organization such as this has challenged the institution’s team as currently organized and staffed at senior levels. The complexities of the transactions that are affecting the institution as it has grown are not being captured effectively. (CFR 3.8)

The 2013 site visit report included a recommendation (number five) that “the Board should concentrate on expanding to include...securing at least one member with extensive higher education expertise, as well as participating in efforts to expand its own expertise in higher education.” The Board should be commended for its response to this recommendation, in that it successfully added not one, but two members with extensive experience in regionally-accredited higher education. Currently associated with two CSU campuses (Northridge and Fullerton), one member has also served as a board member and chair of a prominent private, WASC-accredited university in northern California. The experience of these two members directly addresses this recommendation and has already resulted in a broadening and deepening of the UAV Board’s capacity. (CFR 3.9)

While the UAV Board has engaged in at least one developmental exercise and a self-assessment, the site visit team is recommending a more extensive, deliberate
system for ensuring the professional development expectations for Board members. In particular, the team recommends a focus on compliance, regulatory and financial matters that related directly to the university’s sustainability.

The university has developed several academic committees that are embedded in the decision-making structure of the institution. These include the Curriculum and Academic Policy Committee, Program Review, Faculty (Department) Development Committee, and AQIS. It is suggested that the institution begin regularly assessing the work of these committees to ensure their ongoing effectiveness. The new dean of academic affairs has brought structure and clarity to the voice of faculty at the institution, particularly for the faculty role in academic leadership.

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

**Quality Assurance Processes**

UAV’s quality-assurance processes are developing and the institution has a process in place to ensure that its academic and non-academic processes are analyzed appropriately (CFR 4.1). The university has a solid annual program review process in place that includes mission, learning outcomes, assessment methods, student satisfaction, and employer and external and advisory board feedback. Through program review, the institution identified several challenges and it has outlined strategies for redress. For example, at the end of the program review process faculty submitted curriculum modifications to AQIS as a result of reviewing the data collected. The university is working on ways to improve student learning and help students achieve success, much of this helped by the program review process. It is suggested that the institution would benefit from benchmarking its retention and graduation rates against its own aspirations and peer institutions. (CFR 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5). In addition, ongoing conversation and planning about quality assurance in the co-curricular and student services areas should enhance development in these areas.

Responsive to the team’s recommendation on strengthening the role of Institutional Research, the Registrar and Director of Institutional positions and
responsibilities were separated and the Institutional Review Committee (IRC) was established. The creation of the IRC has enhanced the data-driven dialogue of continuous improvement and is an innovative approach to ensure that quality assurance conversations are taking place. UAV built a new Institutional Research model and data provided from the new model, which is overseen by the IRC, is incorporated into the Institutional Effectiveness Plan (CFR 4.2, 4.3). As a part of this model, the IR office circulates data to faculty, AQIS and the external Advisory Board for analysis.

**Institutional Learning and Improvement**

UAV has laid out an institutional committee structure that encompasses the Executive Leadership Committee, AQIS, Institutional Research Committee, Student Life, Curriculum and Academic Policy Committee, Faculty Program Review Committee, peer review, and external advisory board. With these various committee structures, the campus environment ensures that improvements are based on the results of inquiry, evidence, and evaluation and are incorporated into the institutional planning processes (CFR 4.3, 4.5). It is suggested that the university consider ways to strengthen and measure its co-curricular objectives as evidence of student learning.

With the addition of a dean of academic affairs, the university has strengthened its approach to assess the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. The assessment process is built into the core values held by UAV. The development of a clear plan for assessing and promoting these aspects of the university is evident. This process is strengthened through the formation and work of the Curriculum and Academic Policy Committee. The IRC disseminates data to faculty and collects evidence on how faculty are closing the loop with student learning assessment. There is a clear commitment to assessment that addresses academic achievement through an IEP with KPIs, and the entire student lifecycle. UAV is governed by a faculty committee structure to review the annual program assessment process and curricula/pedagogical standards for faculty (CFR 4.4). Improvements made then move to the university-wide committees overseeing strategic plan progress. (CFR 4.6)

The university’s growth plan lacks a market analysis assessing the needs of the institution given potential changes in regulations. The growth plan would benefit from an
economic analysis. Given the complexities of the for-profit higher education industry and its recent downturns, the university's growth plan lacks comprehensive analysis that anticipates the needs of the institution based on the changing higher educational environment. (CFR 4.7)

SECTION III. FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The team found that the University demonstrates compliance with Standards 1, 2, and 4. Recommendations to improve compliance with Standard 3 have been provided below, as well as in the team’s report.

Commendations:

The visiting team identified the following areas in which the University of Antelope Valley should be commended:

1. UAV has taken steps to educate its students on financial aid and has reduced its cohort default rate (CDR) year over year. (CFR 3.4)

2. UAV created the Curriculum and Academic Policies Committee that provides quality assurance in areas of academic affairs and faculty ownership of curriculum. (CFR 3.10)

3. UAV successfully separated the offices of student affairs and academic affairs, with positive outcomes as a result in both areas (CFR 3.8)

4. UAV successfully divided the registrar and institutional research functions; in addition, it created the Institutional Research Committee and a unique model of collaborative collection, analysis and distribution of institutional research. (CFR 4.1)

5. The university has adopted the NAIA Champions of Character program, with athletes as role models and mentors, and held to higher GPA requirements. (CFR 2.11)

6. UAV is commended on the commitment level and engagement of all faculty including adjunct faculty. (CFR 3.1)
7. The UAV community, from its Board of Trustees through its students, demonstrates a deep-seated loyalty and passion about the university that is refreshing and inspiring.

8. UAV has transformed its Library into the Learning Resource Center and has begun implementation of additional student and faculty support activities. (CFR 3.5)

9. UAV’s already strong board has been augmented by the addition of not one, but two, members with significant higher education experience. The board appears deeply-rooted in the community, is clearly and appropriately engaged, and willing to advocate for the institution.

Recommendations

The team provides the following recommendations to assist the University in its development:

1. In order to design and implement programs that support all students’ academic, personal and professional development, the university should continue its move to the next level of assessment that documents student learning outcomes for its non-academic areas and also identifies specific metrics to assess the effectiveness of its student support programs. (CFR 2.10, 2.11)

2. While UAV has undertaken significant steps in the disaggregation of student data, it is recommended that this work continues and broadens beyond ethnicity and age to enable the university to better understand student preparedness, support needs, and to implement effective support services. (CFR 4.1)

3. The University should commit additional resources to intentional professional development for the student affairs and related support services leadership team. It is critical for the university to implement best practices in order to enhance the entire student life cycle. (CFR 3.3)

4. It is strongly recommended that the University expand and deepen its capacity in the areas of financial analysis; cash management modeling; vigilance to 90/10 and composite scores; integration of its budget projection model with enrollment management, strategic planning, and revenue projections; understanding of GAAP, and financial accounting systems. (CFR 3.4, 3.5, 3.8)

5. It is recommended that the University continue to refine and strengthen its enrollment management, marketing, student advising and admissions models. (CFR 4.7)
6. UAV should further promote and sponsor regular engagement for both academic and non-academic senior and middle-management leadership with relevant professional associations so as to ensure currency of knowledge, standards, and compliance. **(CFR 3.3, 3.8, 4.7)**

7. The University should continue to assess its organizational structure and capacity as the institution grows in order to provide a closer alignment with academic programs and student support. **(CFR 4.7, 3.8)**

8. It is recommended that the Board of Trustees engage in additional professional development activities that will enhance their knowledge of higher education compliance matters and financial implications that affect the university’s sustainability. **(CFR 3.9)**
APPENDICES

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  
If so, is the policy or procedure easily accessible? Is so, where?  
In student handbook and in printed and online catalogs  
Comments: |
| Process(es)/ procedure     | Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints?  
☐ YES  
If so, please describe briefly: Both grievances and complaints are addressed by either the dean of student affairs or dean of academic affairs depending on topic of complaint; following resolution steps, a complaint will either be closed, or the student may file a formal grievance. Investigation occurs throughout each stage of process  
If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure?  ☐ YES  
Comments: |
| Records                    | Does the institution maintain records of student complaints?  ☐ YES  
If so, where? In director of operations office, in locked cabinet.  
Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time?  ☐ YES  
If so, please describe briefly: Annual summary is developed. As well, documents reviewed demonstrated that the institution appears to address certain issues immediately, such as those concerning student lounge or housing issues, faculty issues, etc.  
Comments: |

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

Review Completed By: Eileen Heveron
Date: September 30, 2015
TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY REVIEW FORM
Under federal regulations*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s recruiting and admissions practices accordingly.

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<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>
| Transfer Credit Policy(s) | Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit?  ☐ YES  
Is the policy publically available? ☐ YES  
If so, where?  
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  
Comments: |

*§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: Mary Oling-Sisay  
Date: October 2, 2015
Distance Education Review-Team Report

Institution: University of Antelope Valley  
Type of Visit: Initial Accreditation Second Visit  
Name of reviewer/s: Mary Oling-Sisay, Shawna Lafreniere, Eileen Heveron  
Date/s of review: September 30-October 2, 2015

1. Programs and courses reviewed (please list)

   - RN to BSN: Nursing 490, 400, 310, 320, 460, 492  
   - Master of Criminal Justice: CMA 502; CMA 500; CMA560  
   - Master of Education; MED 540  
   - General Education: ENG 202, SOC 301

2. Background Information (number of programs offered by distance education; degree levels; FTE enrollment in distance education courses/programs; history of offering distance education; percentage growth in distance education offerings and enrollment; platform, formats, and/or delivery method)

   - Number of programs offered by distance education - Currently three programs: Master of Education, Masters in Criminal Justice and Nursing (RN-BSN)  
   - Degree levels: Masters and Bachelor  
   - FTE enrollment in distance education courses/programs:  
     - Total 16 (1 RN-BSN, 11 Masters of Education, 4 Criminal Justice Masters).  
     - The Master’s in Criminal Justice and Education are both hybrid programs  
   - Percentage growth in distance education offerings and enrollment:  
   - Enrollment in distance education increased due to the implementation of the Masters in Criminal Justice and Education programs being Hybrid.  
   - From implementation in 2011 to current, the institution experienced a 100% increase (2011 enrollment=7 and currently 16)  
   - LMS platform, formats, and/or delivery method used: Moodle  
   - Any vendor contracts involved in distance education: Annual contract with Moodle

3. Nature of the review (material examined and persons/committees interviewed):

   Logged in to online platform and reviewed all course materials for the courses listed above. In a variety of meetings, spoke with faculty on course evaluation and development and verified findings.
### Observations and Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines of Inquiry (refer to relevant CFRs to assure comprehensive consideration)</th>
<th>Observations and Findings</th>
<th>Follow-up Required (identify the issues)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fit with Mission.</strong> How does the institution conceive of distance learning relative to its mission, operations, and administrative structure? How are distance education offerings planned, funded, and operationalized?</td>
<td>The institution has two hybrid and one fully online program, all of which have been planned and approved in alignment with normal academic offerings.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Connection to the Institution.</strong> How are distance education students integrated into the life and culture of the institution?</td>
<td>RN to BSN (only program fully online, others hybrid) students obtain advising from their faculty members, library resources online, and support through the faculty forums.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of the DE Infrastructure.</strong> Are the learning platform and academic infrastructure of the site conducive to learning and interaction between faculty and students and among students? Is the technology adequately supported? Are there back-ups?</td>
<td>Learning platform and infrastructure is conducive to robust interactions and fully supported.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student Support Services:</strong> What is the institution’s capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services, academic support and other services appropriate to distance modality? What do data show about the effectiveness of the services?</td>
<td>Student have access to online library resources and receive extensive support through the forums in each course. Rubrics are provided as is robust feedback.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty.</strong> Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? Do they teach only online courses? In what ways does the institution ensure that distance learning faculty are oriented, supported, and integrated appropriately into the academic life of the institution? How are faculty involved in curriculum development and</td>
<td>The same faculty who teach on ground courses also teach online. They receive orientation to the online platform and online teaching.</td>
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<td>Question</td>
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<td>assessment of student learning? How are faculty trained and supported to teach in this modality?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum and Delivery.</strong> Who designs the distance education programs and courses? How are they approved and evaluated? Are the programs and courses comparable in content, outcomes and quality to on-ground offerings? (Submit credit hour report.)</td>
<td>Faculty design, approve, and evaluate the online courses and these are comparable in content, outcomes, and quality to on ground offerings. (Credit hour report was provided during Visit 1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Retention and Graduation.</strong> What data on retention and graduation are collected on students taking online courses and programs? What do these data show? What disparities are evident? Are rates comparable to on-ground programs and to other institutions’ online offerings? If any concerns exist, how are these being addressed?</td>
<td>Online too new, No data since students have not yet completed their programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student Learning.</strong> How does the institution assess student learning for online programs and courses? Is this process comparable to that used in on-ground courses? What are the results of student learning assessment? How do these compare with learning results of on-ground students, if applicable, or with other online offerings?</td>
<td>Student learning assessed in a manner comparable to on ground courses. Programs and courses too new with too few students to do comparative reporting at this time. If enrollment in online and hybrid programs grows, The university will need to disaggregate its evaluation and satisfaction data to address online vs on ground</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Contracts with Vendors.</strong> Are there any arrangements with outside vendors concerning the infrastructure, delivery, development, or instruction of courses? If so, do these comport with the policy on Contracts with Unaccredited Organizations?</td>
<td>LMS is through a Moodle annual contract which comports with WASC policy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality Assurance Processes: How are the institution’s quality assurance processes designed or modified to cover distance education? What evidence is provided that distance education programs and courses are educationally effective?</td>
<td>Courses assessed in the same manner as on ground. Programs and courses too new with too few students to do comparative reporting at this time.</td>
<td>If enrollment in online and hybrid programs grows, The university will need to disaggregate its evaluation and satisfaction data to address online vs on ground</td>
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