

REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM
SPECIAL VISIT

University of the Pacific

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Team Roster

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

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SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution, Accreditation History, and Visit

University of the Pacific (Pacific) was founded by Methodist ministers in 1851, and provided California with its first chartered medical school (1858), first coeducational campus (1871), and first conservatory of music (1878) before becoming an independent institution in the 1960s. Pacific offers 68 bachelor's, 35 master's, and 13 doctorate programs through nine schools and colleges across three campuses in Stockton, Sacramento, and San Francisco. Fall 2021 enrollment was 6066, with 3306 undergraduates, 71% of whom came from Northern California. Pacific proudly reports that they were tied for 6th in *US News & World Report* for ethnic diversity, that they serve 37% Pell recipients, 31% first-generation students, are currently classified as a non-majority Asian American and Native American, Pacific Islander-Serving Institution, and that they are very close to also becoming a Hispanic-Serving Institution. According to WSCUC Key Indicators, the university's 8-year outcome measures include a 75.8% graduation rate, 15.7 transfer-out rate, and 8.4% attrition rate. With respect to faculty, more than half are full-time, and 85% of those faculty hold a terminal degree.

The university is in good financial standing despite enrollment declines during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Enrollment dropped as low as 6%, but a significant emphasis on yield and retention, alongside one-time expenditure reductions in operational costs and strong fundraising efforts have allowed the university to stabilize the budget. Pacific reportedly has confidence in their outlook for fall 2021 based on a new enrollment strategy and seven new degree programs, some of which are offered online.

Important and significant changes that have occurred since the 2019 reaffirmation review, such as new leadership positions, the introduction of a new data dashboard, and the implementation of a radically different budget model. The most dramatic change that has taken place was the transition of former President Pamela Eibeck and the inauguration of President Christopher Callahan in 2020. Other critical hires followed, including a new Vice President for Strategic Enrollment; Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Vice President for Student Life; and new deans of the Thomas J. Long School of Pharmacy, the School of Engineering and Computer Sciences, and the School of Health Sciences. Alongside these leadership transitions, President Callahan also implemented a new gain-share budget model in order to empower deans with greater autonomy, well as responsibility, for their school budgets. In addition, it must be noted that this new model transforms the way the university is

managing recruitment and enrollment. Finally, Pacific also implemented a new internal dashboard, which includes 83 key metrics. This dashboard increases transparency about the state of the university, and holds the potential to increase data literacy and data-driven decision making on all three campuses.

WSCUC accreditation reaffirmation was granted for eight years in 2019, with a request for a Special Visit. During the reaffirmation visit the team requested a Special Visit in order to follow up on five specific items: (1) implementation of the shared governance matrix, (2) communication with all university constituents, (3) implementation of the new chart of accounts, (4) consultation with faculty, as appropriate according to the university's shared governance principles, and (5) implementation of the Diversity Plan. While the new chart of accounts might have been easily reviewed within a progress report, it's connection with communication, transparency, and strong shared governance convinced the team that a Special Visit would be the most effective means with which to measure progress. Prior to developing the Institutional Report, the university ALO and WSCUC VP liaison agreed that Pacific could combine areas 1 and 4, and the team further condensed their lines of inquiry to focus on four primary areas: shared governance; communication; the new chart of accounts; and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

B. Description of Team's Review Process

The meeting schedule for the Special Visit followed a standard visit protocol of meetings with the board of regents, president, provost, chief financial officer, president's cabinet, Academic Council, Special Visit steering committee, deans, and open meetings with faculty and staff. In addition, the team met with the newly hired Vice President for DEI, as well as the university committee on DEI. Overall the team interviewed approximately 110 members of the university community, including 12 faculty and 75 staff during the open meetings. In order to mitigate the potential spread of COVID, several meetings were held remotely. Three meetings were held in advance of the site visit, condensing the in-person meetings to one day, with a second day on campus to meet with the president and conduct the exit meeting. The team also reviewed three emails delivered to the confidential email account. Apart for the Institutional Report and appendices provided, the team requested—and promptly received—budget reports demonstrating the effectiveness of the new chart of accounts.

One team member served on the previous team who conducted the reaffirmation review, and provided continuity between the two visits. At the reaffirmation visit the team identified a need for the university

to better engage the campus in shared governance, particularly in order to clarify lines of authority and decision making. A decision matrix had been developed, and the team suggested that this be implemented as a possible way to accomplish this goal. In addition, based on campus interviews and confidential emails, the team also identified a need for the university to establish a culture of clear and effective communication as a means to enable shared governance. The team had encountered financial-reporting issues due to an inability to sufficiently drill down to the department level. As a way to streamline the collection of financial information and enhance budgetary control, increase transparency, and expand the capacity for appropriate financial oversight, a new chart of accounts was recommended. And importantly, although a thorough and thoughtful DEI plan had been established, little progress had been made at the time. Therefore, the team recommended that the university move forward with fully implementing the DEI plan. These team recommendations were reiterated by the Commission in the university's Action Letter.

C. Institution's Special Report: Quality and Rigor of the Report and Supporting Evidence

The Special Visit team was impressed with the clarity of Pacific's Institutional Report, and noted the university's serious attention to Commission recommendations and demonstrable commitment to WSCUC Standards. The quality of the report indicated substantive engagement from the university community, which was largely confirmed during the visit. Each recommendation was addressed and supported by evidence, and each major section was concluded with thoughtful reflection leading to further actions. A source of data that would have been helpful would have been climate studies demonstrating the current state of perceptions about campus relations in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion (further discussed below). Ultimately, it was the team's view that the information, progress, and positive sentiments expressed in the report were appropriately reaffirmed during the visit.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF ISSUES UNDER THE STANDARDS

A. Implementation of the shared governance matrix; and Consultation with faculty, as appropriate according to the university’s shared governance principles, to plan and implement change (CFRs 3.7, 3.10, 4.6)

Between the 2019 reaffirmation review and the 2022 Special Visit, Pacific has experienced significant changes, further highlighting the importance of effective consultation and shared governance. As occurred with all higher education institutions, COVID-19 forced major and immediate changes in providing quality and remote instruction to a remote student body. Prior to the COVID-19 onset, Pacific was experiencing an opaque budgeting process, enrollment volatility, contentious relations between faculty and administrative leadership, and searching for a new president who would take office July 2020.

Launched in 2014, a shared governance matrix had been developed, but not yet implemented, during the 2019 visit. Its objective was to provide a clear summary of responsibilities in Pacific’s decision making based upon the existing Faculty Handbook. While adopted by the administration and the board of regents, the shared government matrix was never adopted by the Academic Council which serves as the university’s faculty senate.

The Institutional Report serves as a concise and candid discussion of the recent history and improvements made toward creating improved shared governance and consultation while instituting ongoing change. The interviews and discussions from the visit further confirm ongoing progress in improving shared governance. While the process is still developing and major changes in administrative personnel, course offerings, and budgeting are continuing, conversations with faculty leaders indicate a much greater satisfaction and participation in decision making and information sharing.

The pace of change since the arrival of the new president in July 2020, has been swift and rapid. Shortly after his inauguration, the president reached agreement with the Academic Council, essentially the faculty senate, to discard the controversial shared governance matrix. All parties agreed to reaffirm the existing language in the Faculty Handbook. At this point, the president, board of regents, and academic council seem to be able to navigate important decisions with this existing structure. The Faculty Handbook may lack clarity in some cases for upcoming decision making, but all parties acknowledge the potential of revisiting it. The faculty professional relations committee has assumed full responsibility for

revising the Faculty Handbook as opposed to the previous practice of the provost appointing a revision committee.

The Special Visit team focused on three important elements that are necessary for effective shared governance: process, participation, and product (or outcomes). As these new measures become embedded in Pacific culture, it will be necessary to develop means of assessing the effectiveness in each of the three elements (CFRs 3.7, 3.10, 4.6). For example, is the Faculty Handbook serving the decision-making process or will further clarifications be needed? Is participation inclusive, and is there participation by all parties? And do the outcomes demonstrated align with the university mission and vision?

Faculty, staff, administration, and the board of trustees have created numerous processes for improved governance, consultation, transparency, and communication. New opportunities include regular meetings between the Academic Council leadership and the president and provost, and board of regents. The Faculty Governance Office was also moved from a remote part of the campus to close proximity to the provost's office; resulting in more informal consultation and collaboration. Additionally, regular informal gatherings, such as a monthly coffee events hosted by the provost and deans, are occurring. A staff member observed, "now it feels like I can reach out directly to deans or the provost". He also reported being contacted by Pacific leadership for his advice. He cited a new attitude of "merge out of your lane...and get the job done"; an attitude that was similarly expressed by President Callahan.

Members of the board of regents, including the chair, affirmed their commitment to this new era of improved shared governance and consultation. To be more responsive, the Academic Council also revised its committee structure. With these new processes in place, participation seems to be high, and nearly everyone who was interviewed expressed satisfaction at improving shared governance and consultation. While these changes are still in early stages of becoming part of the university culture, early indications are promising. The outcomes of these changes will become evident soon as Pacific continues to implement its numerous DEI initiatives, recruit new administrative leadership, address different faculty workloads across departments, and institute a new decentralized budgeting process designed to incentivize individual departments to increase performance. While Pacific faces many of the challenges common today to many higher education institutions, the Institutional Report and subsequent meetings with faculty, staff, administration, and board of trustees show a much-improved

process of shared governance and consultation that is crucial to ensuring successful decision making and outcomes.

B. Communication with all university constituents (CFRs 1.7, 3.6)

During the previous reaffirmation visit communication appeared to be a significant problem on multiple levels of the organization. In particular, several faculty complained openly about a lack of access to key administrators, and being left out of communication loops on key issues with what they considered to be an academic locus of control. The Institutional Report documented numerous changes that have been put into place since the last visit, and the team encountered confirmation from both staff and faculty that these changes were having a positive impact.

According to the report, from the first days President Callahan's appeared on campus he placed a high priority on "clear, transparent, open, and frequent communication" (Institutional Report, page 11). The president developed an extensive communication plan for himself that included memorandums, newsletters, social media, committee integration, and personal group and one-on-one meetings. A mutually agreed upon meeting structure between the faculty, deans, provost, president, and board of regents, ensures that each party has the opportunity to hear and be heard on emerging issues and initiatives. Academic Council's Executive Board, for example, has a standing meeting with the president and another with the provost; as do the Academic Council Chair and Chair-Elect, and the provost regularly reports out at full Academic Council meetings. The Academic Council Chair also has regular opportunities to meet with the deans, and with the board of regents. As explained by one faculty member during the visit, the new meeting structure significantly reduces the chance that faculty would not be aware of upcoming changes.

The president has also encouraged new administrators to engage with the community as well, for example, the new Vice President for Strategic Enrollment now holds regular open meetings for faculty and staff to congregate informally. These types of opportunities appear to be making tangible improvements in building relationships and trust with new administrators. Based on these successful efforts to enhance communication and build interpersonal working relationships between faculty and administrative leadership, it will be important for the university to sustain these efforts going forward, and to duplicate what is most effective as new academic leadership is onboarded (CFRs 1.7, 3.6). The new leadership stands to learn a great deal about institutional history and values from long-standing

faculty, and of course, faculty will greatly benefit from collegial and productive relationships with academic leadership. The team was thoroughly convinced that this is a new era for the university, and an opportunity for faculty and administrative leadership to develop a new vision for the future of the university together.

C. Implementation of the new chart of accounts (CRFs 1.7, 3.4)

The UOP finance team successfully implemented a hierarchal chart of accounts with clear account definitions that support timelier, and more relevant reporting to support decision-making. Pacific leaders expressed confidence that the changes achieved enhanced budgetary control, greater transparency, and the ability to make information-based decisions using current information. Leaders understand that the financial reporting changes remain in the early stages and are prepared to assist in developing systems further as business needs mature.

The university recruited a Chief Financial Officer whose primary focus will be oversight of the financial controls, systems and reporting to join the leadership team. This role will add support to the gain-share strategy planned to support future years. Impact of the gain-share strategy for right sizing academic programs and equitably distributing workload will depend on continuing dialogue between academic leaders and the finance team. Increased understanding and acceptance of financial management principles applied to the management of academic departments will help to ensure efficient operations while maintaining University of Pacific program quality.

The implementation of the new chart of accounts promises to provide deans with tools to realize financial gains and the opportunity to reinvest them in their schools.

D. Implementation of the Diversity Plan (CFRs 1.4, 3.1)

Recognizing that losing talented individuals across the population undermines the mission of higher education, Pacific established a Diversity Plan in 2016. This plan established a firm foundation for advancing the mission of the institution, and this has been enhanced by subsequent work. Discussion with the board of regents revealed a depth of knowledge and commitment that is admirable, and the matrix of responsibilities, which shows adoption of oversight for advances in DEI across the work of the entire board, is exemplary. The chair indicated that the board of regents seeks a national leadership position in DEI, and this ambition will require identification of resources. The connection of diversity,

equity, and inclusive excellence to the mission of prioritizing student success is strong and compelling. In addition, the University has rightly connected DEI to issues of justice in healthcare, the law, and the professions, as well as to the necessity of fostering innovation in every field.

Headway has been made in the recent landmark donation of \$21mm for scholarships in the law school, as well as the provost's commitment of \$500k per year of bridge funding for 2 years for faculty positions, and the establishment dedicated budget for the VP for DEI. The VP for DEI is a highly capable and talented storyteller who is capable of eloquently explaining why DEI work is essential for Pacific and the communities it serves. She will require support in terms of staff and budget, especially for assessment work.

The academic leadership of the schools candidly shared progress, as well as barriers and opportunities, with the team. Salary and recruitment remain challenges, but there is significant opportunity for the university at the same time. Revision of curricula, development of inclusive pedagogy resources, and critical examination of library resources revealed gaps and opportunities for further engagement. Focus on courses with low success rates showed places where faculty could, in elevating student success, improve climate and persistence for all students.

Progress in faculty hiring has been slow, and will need to accelerate in order to meet stated goals. There is very little evidence reflecting student perceptions, and we did not see data regarding staff perception of climate. Overall, the establishment of a chief diversity officer and consolidation of authority and budget may help the university to advance, but it will not be possible to do so unless the entire institution takes responsibility for work to ensure every student, faculty, and staff member at Pacific has the tools to succeed; that qualified students, faculty, and staff are recruited and retained in numbers reflective of the U.S. and California populations; and that the environment supports success for all.

The team's review of the plan and materials submitted suggests that the current administration should ensure that the rationale for diversity, equity, and inclusivity remains firmly centered as part of the mission of the university, and continue to build buy-in across constituencies (CFRs 1.4, 3.1).

Consideration with the goals and timeline of the DEI plan need to account for new developments nationally, the evolution of best practices within the field, and, as always, changing conditions on campus. Student input is also critical to better understand how their educational and social needs might

be met at this point in time. In addition, goals for diversifying the faculty will require clear identification of the pace and scope of hiring needed to make measurable progress. The team recommends the identification, collection, analysis, and dissemination of updated key performance indicator for DEI in alignment with WSCUC's Equity and Inclusion policy (CFRs 1.4, 3.1).

SECTION IV – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Special Visit team concluded that the information cited in the Institutional Report, along with qualitative data gathered from numerous interviews during the visit, demonstrate that significant progress on the Commission’s recommendations has been made at Pacific since the 2019 reaffirmation review. In order to support Pacific’s efforts to fully achieve their anticipated outcomes on these recommendations by the next full reaffirmation review, the team offers further commendations and recommendations below.

Commendations

The team commends Pacific for the following:

- striving for and achieving a collaborative resolution to the shared governance matrix;
- prioritizing regular, reliable, and transparent communication with faculty and staff that considers their interests and concerns;
- the new chart of accounts that provides deans with tools to realize financial gains and reinvest them in their schools; and
- the steps that Pacific has made on increasing diversity and equity, and promoting inclusivity. In particular:
 - the new vice president for DEI and the Diversity Leadership Team;
 - the board decision to make DEI issues a central part of their oversight;
 - regular, disaggregated reports to the cabinet on new hires, promotions, and staff and faculty attrition;
 - revision of employee evaluations to include DEI factors;
 - the office of Strategy & Educational Effectiveness, Center for Teaching and Learning, and the university committee on DEI for collaborating to enhance opportunities for faculty development;
 - University Libraries conducting a diversity audit of its collections; and
 - collaboration between general education committee and DEI experts on diversification of requirements and curriculum.

Recommendations

The team recommends that Pacific respond to the following issues:

- continue efforts to clarify shared governance roles and responsibilities reflecting a collaborative process involving faculty, administration, and board of regents building on the new tone of

governance currently enjoyed in the institution. Ongoing assessment of shared governance effectiveness will be important to ensure responsiveness to and alignment with the on-going changing higher education landscape (CFRs 3.7, 3.10, 4.6);

- reaffirm the Diversity Plan with revised goals, implementation timeline, and dedicated resources in order match the university's significant ambitions as articulated by the president and the board of regents (CFRs 1.4, 2.10, 2.11, 3.1); and
- use campus climate surveys of staff, students, and faculty to assess the effectiveness of university diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives (CFRs 1.4, 2.10).