

REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM  
For Reaffirmation of Accreditation

**To Whittier College**

April 5-8, 2022

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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

### Description of the Institution and its Accreditation History

#### About Whittier College

Whittier College, a highly diverse, private not-for-profit institution, was founded in 1887 by the Religious Society of Friends. It has been a secular institution since the 1940's, and its Quaker heritage continues to be reflected in its values and practices. Today, Whittier serves its diverse community of Southern California and is designated an Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and Minority Serving Institution (MSI), with great pride that it is one of the most diverse small liberal arts colleges in the country.

Whittier serves approximately 1,300 undergraduate students in 30 majors across 23 disciplines. It also serves approximately 60 students in its graduate program in Education. In the fall of 2021, Whittier's students of color (which includes all students who are not White, international, or unknown) made up 67.7% of the student population. As of fall 2021, Latinx students made up 49.5% of the student body, Asians, 6.8%, and Black/African Americans, 4.6%. The percentage of first-year students from California in fall 2021 was 62%, and its most recent 6-year graduation rate was 63.9%.

In July 2018, Whittier welcomed its new president. Since her appointment, the college has been focused on three strategic imperatives: 1) diversity, equity, and inclusion; 2) the need to generate a sustainable business model through new revenue generating initiatives; and 3) the need to align the college's mission with its resources. The themes of the institution's Thematic Pathway Review (TPR) report reflect these imperatives, and to this end, several notable developments have taken place since the president's appointment, as documented in the institution's report and this team report.

#### Accreditation History

Whittier College was first accredited by WSCUC in 1949, and since then has been in good standing with the Commission. Whittier had its last WSCUC reaffirmation in 2013 and submitted an

Interim Report in fall 2016 focused on its strategic “Positioning Plan,” undergraduate research, and student success. In 2017, Whittier was approved to participate in the Thematic Pathway Review. Whittier’s Mid-Cycle Review took place in spring 2018, and the college completed a successful teach-out of the Whittier College School of Law in June 2019. It is also significant that over the years, some of Whittier’s leaders have been directly involved with WSCUC as commissioners, workshop presenters, and accreditation team members.

### **Description of Team’s Review Process**

Whittier College submitted its TPR report on time and the team began its reading and review of the report, the Key Indicators Dashboard, and its exhibits. On March 24, 2022, the team held its first meeting to organize the review process, discuss initial findings and areas of inquiry from the team members’ individual reviews of the institution’s report and exhibits, finalize team assignments, discuss the visit schedule requirements, and determine any other documents needed. The assistant chair of the team and Whittier College’s Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) then worked closely to confirm a final visit schedule. Shortly after the team meeting, the chair and the assistant chair of the team held a call with the president of the college, during which an introduction to the institution was shared, updates since the submission of the TPR report were communicated, and the objectives of the visit were discussed. The visit schedule with all requested constituent meetings was finalized by the ALO and team’s assistant chair prior to commencing the visit.

The team engaged in the Thematic Pathway Review (TPR) visit on campus April 6 - 8, 2022. During the visit, the team met with the president, representatives of the board of trustees, the college cabinet, individual cabinet members, the WSCUC Steering Committee, Strategic Planning Task Force, Committee on the Future of the Liberal Arts, Assessment Committee, a variety of TPR theme committees and constituents, Faculty Executive Committee, Inclusion and Diversity Committee, Enrollment and Student Affairs Committee, representatives of co-curricular offices, and in open

meetings with students, faculty, and staff. The team also enjoyed a student-led tour of the beautiful campus and several of its facilities.

In advance of and during the visit, the institution provided everything requested and adjusted the visit schedule when needed to allow the team to meet with all requested participants. The exit meeting – attended by several constituents from across the college and in which the team shared its final commendations and recommendations with the Whittier College community – took place on April 8, 2022 after a debriefing meeting between the team chair and the president. The team was impressed by the engagement of the campus community in the entirety of the visit and grateful for everyone's preparation and participation.

The visit went smoothly, and with the exception of a few adjustments requested by the team to ensure the relevant voices were included sufficiently, as scheduled. The team met with and interviewed all requested participants and was able to access additional documents and reports as requested, review the confidential email account daily, and complete the visit without any challenges. The ALO of the institution and his co-worker were extremely helpful, responsive, and well-organized in supporting the needs of the team.

The team would like to express its sincere gratitude to the president, the ALO, and their Whittier colleagues for their communication and attention to the team's process and needs throughout the entire visit.

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

The institution chose to focus its TPR on two primary themes: *Equity and Inclusion*, and *Excellence*. Regarding the theme of *Equity and Inclusion*, three sub-themes were addressed: 1) admissions, retention, and student success; 2) employee recruiting and hiring; and 3) curriculum and co-

curriculum. Regarding the theme of *Excellence*, the college addressed two sub-themes: 1) program review and 2) strategic planning.

The institution's report and supporting evidence were organized, accessible, and clearly presented. The report portrayed the institution well with sufficient evidence and documentation. Additional documentation requested by the team before and during the visit was provided in a timely manner by the ALO or the president.

The team noted inconsistencies in the institution's depth of reflection and planning for next steps in the *Component 2: Compliance with Standards* section of the institution's report. For example, the section on Standard 3 did not specifically elaborate on how the institution was going to address its financial challenges; however, the section on Standard 4 did note the need for improvements in assessment, institutional research, and business intelligence. After meeting with the president on the first day, the team requested additional documents and additional meetings with key leaders to be able to better understand and evaluate the status of the institution at the time of the visit. Again, the college accommodated all of these requested documents and meetings.

Whittier's WSCUC Steering Committee, which met with the team on the first day of the visit, guided the self-study process, with notable attention particularly given the COVID-19 disruptions beginning in spring 2020. The institution was broadly represented in the report and in the visit itself; furthermore, constituents that the team met with were familiar with the themes of the report and about the WSCUC visit goals and processes, and the participation of representative constituents in the exit meeting revealed interest in the outcomes of the review.

The team found that the institution's self-study, its reflection on its themes, its work toward its strategic imperatives, and its identification of future work priorities will support its further development as well as support the important efforts of continuous improvement, employee engagement, and student success as informed by its mission.

## SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS

### **Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions**

In Whittier College’s previous Commission Action Letter from July 2013, three recommendations were specified as needing further attention and development: 1) Whittier College’s Positioning Plan; 2) undergraduate research, scholarly and creative activity (URSCA); and 3) student success. The college’s 2016 Interim Report detailed its work between 2013 and 2016 in these areas, and cited a great amount of progress and improvement, accordingly, which was acknowledged by WSCUC at that time.

Component 1 of the institution’s TPR report provided background information, cited examples of progress and changes since 2016 in these three areas and related areas, and briefly discussed several new areas of focus for each of these topics. The team was satisfied that the institution had reflected upon, provided resources for, and demonstrated sufficient improvement for each of these recommendations over the years and had attended to the previous Commission actions with attention to continuous improvement and student success.

### **Component 2: Compliance: Review under WSCUC Standards and compliance with federal requirements; Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators**

#### **Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives**

##### *Institutional Purposes*

Whittier College’s mission statement is clearly and consistently communicated with the campus constituents and broader community. The values and commitment of the college to serve and prepare “students from diverse backgrounds to excel in a complex global society” are not only stated in the mission statement but are also represented in its ongoing strategic planning process, curriculum development and assessment processes, employee handbooks, student policies, and efforts to create an inclusive environment for all Whittier voices (CFRs 1.1, 1.2).

The most recent Fact Book (2021) highlights the ongoing effort of the institution to keep the Whittier community informed of student enrollment, retention, engagement, and graduation rates (CFRs 1.2, 1.7, 2.10). The evidence of student learning, growth, and development are spoken of with pride by faculty, staff, and campus leaders. It was clear to the team that the faculty and staff find much joy and fulfillment in providing opportunities for development and witnessing student success. In addition, the college's National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) results show the progression of student engagement: there is a clear increase in engagement and preparedness amongst the student population (CFRs 1.2, 2.6). These indicators are also reflective in the collaborative efforts of student service offices that support forward movement.

The team commends the institution for collaboration between and among departments and committees to advance student success and learning related to its purposes, as evidenced by: a) partnership among the Career Center, Alumni Relations, and the Center for Engagement with Communities to promote career development opportunities and connect the college with external communities so that students can thrive authentically; and b) the Committee on the Future of the Liberal Arts (CFLA) work on revamping the liberal arts program inclusive of members of the faculty and student affairs staff in order to holistically consider students' needs and experiences (CFRs 1.1, 1.2).

#### *Integrity and Transparency*

Whittier College's students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to engage in respectful communication and supportive learning development opportunities. The parameters around academic freedom are defined in depth for faculty, as articulated in the faculty handbook and visible on the website, with a connection to the college's academic requirements, policies, and procedures (CFR 1.3).

The Whittier faculty, staff, students, administrative leaders, and representative members of the board of trustees that the team met with all operate with a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and work to align educational objectives and efforts with the goals of the institution. The team

commends Whittier College for articulating its strong commitment to DEI as evidenced by the ongoing work to establish the Strategic Plan for Equity and Inclusion, the use of the MacKenzie Scott Award to support DEI and student success initiatives, restorative justice conversations, the diversification of faculty through the Rustin Fellows program, the diversity of the board of trustees, and the efforts to create cultural change at the department level. (CFR 1.3). In addition, the curricular and co-curricular opportunities have continued to evolve with consideration to DEI goals, leadership investment in faculty development, intentional feedback from faculty and students, exploration of Project Based Learning (PBL), revamping first year seminar, and alternate degree pathways with interdisciplinary studies (CFRs 1.3, 1.4, 1.5). Although there are many efforts in progress that align DEI within student life, programming, and development, implementation of the Whittier Recruiting and Hiring protocol, and policies such as the nondiscrimination and grievance protocols, the institution acknowledges its current challenges to continue hiring and retaining diverse faculty and staff due to budget constraints (CFRs 1.3, 1.4).

Whittier College has balanced its community affiliation and partnerships, along with its awarding of grant funding and financial donor contributions, to support the institutional mission and vision and focus on DEI. The institution's uniqueness as a small, private, liberal arts college remains its core identity and the foundation of its operations and quest to serve its students. In addition to its ongoing DEI work, the team recommends that the college continue efforts to operationalize and resource the Strategic Plan for Equity and Inclusion by establishing timetables and a set of measurable outcomes that are visible, accessible, and actionable; and create programming that will recognize and support the multiple identities and intersectionalities of the entire Whittier community (CFR 1.4).

Whittier has also initiated opportunities for open dialogue through town hall meetings and is seeking additional opportunities to improve communication lines amongst faculty, staff, students, and administrative leaders (CFRs 1.6, 1.7), which the team noted could be improved. Whittier College has

policies and structures in place that support student development in respect to grievances and complaints, whereas the community has access to processes, protocol, and persons to contact with concerns. Policies regarding student conduct, Institutional Review Board, and protection of human subjects within research, degree requirements, cost of attendance, as well as health and safety are clearly outlined in the catalog and accessible to the public. These directives along with other information to support academic progress are accessible within the student handbook and catalog, as well as website portals. Whittier students have expressed their appreciation for the tuition discounts and financial support opportunities presented, while also reaffirming the institution's commitment to creating community, providing academic programs that reflect student interest, and holding firm to the institutional values (CFRs 1.6, 1.7).

Before and during the visit, Whittier College maintained open communication with WSCUC and the team, responded to additional requests for materials and meetings so that the team could sufficiently explore and understand the college, and the college community was fully engaged in the TPR visit process (CFR 1.8).

*Standard 1 Summary: The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that Whittier College has demonstrated sufficient evidence of compliance with this WSCUC Standard. Final determination of compliance with the Standard rests with the Commission.*

## **Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions**

### Teaching and Learning

Whittier College has established academic requirements in 30 academic majors and 40 minors offered at the undergraduate level, as well as a masters and credentialing program in Education at the graduate level. Three programs participate in specialized accreditation, which provides clarity on these

programs' requirements and resources. Through the Whittier Scholars Program, undergraduate students may customize a major and coursework around a field or career they are interested in pursuing. The content, length, and standard of the institution's academic programs conform to recognized disciplinary standards (CFRs 2.1, 2.2).

Whittier's degree programs have been designed around and meet student learning outcomes consistent with required competencies for entry level within the respective disciplines. The only graduate program and two other programs are professionally accredited, which provided external validation of the program's rigor and quality. The most recently reported demographics of faculty show that its programs are taught by 111 full-time and 46 part-time faculty. However, the team observed a three-year successive decline in the total number of faculty without a corresponding decline in number of program offerings, suggesting possible insufficient qualified faculty to teach in some programs or increased faculty workload. It appeared that program learning outcomes are not fully well-defined across all programs; however, faculty exercise collective responsibility for setting and assessing student learning outcomes (CFRs 2.3, 2.4) and attention to student learning outcomes is monitored by the Assessment Committee.

Student achievement data for retention and graduation rates appeared to show a downward trend, but above the national average. The college's Liberal Education program learning goals and associated first year Writing Seminars provide an academic framework that is integrated at all levels of the curriculum with attention to program knowledge areas. The team commends the work of the Committee on the Future of the Liberal Arts (CFLA) on revamping the liberal arts program inclusive of members of the faculty and student affairs staff in order to holistically consider students' needs and experiences (CFRs 2.2, 2.6). Students interviewed by the team affirmed that the college shows common

understanding and respect for their learning and provides appropriate and ongoing feedback to improve their learning and performance (CFR 2.5).

Whittier College has an established program review approach that is intertwined with the annual programmatic assessment reporting, which is discussed more fully in Component 8 of this team report. The Assessment Committee and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) support this work through promoting a culture of assessment and continuous improvement, as evidenced in its 2021 *Assessment Handbook*. At the time of the visit, OIRA's two staff positions were vacant and had been for some months; while an insufficient interim staffing model was in place, OIRA is inadequately equipped with an infrastructure and resources to systematically analyze student learning and success data at program and institutional levels. The team was informed that the staffing needs of OIRA are being rearticulated and that new staff positions are planned for summer 2022 (CFRs 2.6, 2.7).

Program learning outcomes have been aligned to program and course learning outcomes tailored to the discipline of practice and have been assessed through established frameworks defined by the Assessment Committee. All academic programs are required to submit on an annual basis assessment plans and reports on the assessment of at least one learning outcome. The team commends the Assessment Committee for its continued focus on and improvement of the assessment and program review processes (CFRs 2.6, 2.7). The team recommends that the college continue to develop and strengthen assessment and program review processes across the institution, with consideration of the goals of the strategic plan, so that the results can be used to inform decisions regarding program improvement, viability, sustainability, and potential growth (CFRs 2.7, 2.11, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4).

#### Scholarship and Creative Activity

Policies and expectations for faculty promotion and tenure, academic freedom, and recognition of scholarship are clearly defined in the faculty handbook. Whittier College supports the culture of research, scholarship, and creative activity as evidenced in its commitment to service-learning initiatives

between the college and community-based organizations, Whittier Scholars Program, Mellon-Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program, start-up funds for new faculty, sponsorship of research programs, establishment of a grant office, and implementation of small course development grants (CFRs 2.8-2.9).

### Student Learning and Success

Whittier College offered multiple indicators for evaluating the needs and progress of its students as evidenced by the disaggregated data utilized for timely monitoring of student success. The institution collects and analyzes student data through multiple lenses, and the college benchmarks its retention and graduation rates against comparable peers. Undergraduate degree completions have been relatively stable, while the six-year graduation rates are above the national and comparative institutions' averages. In interviews conducted by the team, staff and faculty indicated a strong commitment and support to student learning and success (CFR 2.10).

The college offers co-curricular opportunities that are consistent with its tradition of community engagement. Through the Center for Engagement and Communities, co-curricular programs that are aligned to academic goals are reinforced by course-based service learning, student internships and fellowships, community partnerships, and compelling community enhanced academic experiences. While the team observed that the assessment of the co-curricular programs is in the early stages of development, and the use of its results for improvement is in its infancy, there is a commitment to engagement of students in co-curricular programming (CFRs 2.10-2.14).

*Standard 2 Summary: The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that Whittier College has demonstrated sufficient evidence of compliance with this WSCUC Standard. Final determination of compliance with the Standard rests with the Commission.*

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

#### **Faculty and Staff**

Whittier College's faculty and staff are incredibly passionate about the institution's mission and its work in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The team commends the dedication, commitment, and hard work of staff and faculty to continue to support students while facing the difficult circumstances of an ongoing pandemic and the challenges of the institution's financial situation. This commitment was evident through staff and faculty interviews and the professional development opportunities offered to faculty to support student and academic success (CFRs 3.1 – 3.3).

As reported in the faculty and staff handbooks, the college conducts performance evaluations for faculty and staff consistent with best practices. The college also appears to employ sufficient full-time faculty members to achieve the educational objectives, as evidenced by the student-faculty ratio of 11 to 1 reported in the Whittier's College Fact Book. The Fact Book also reported that the number of full-time staff and faculty that support the institutional purpose and educational objectives continues to trend downwards, which the institution will want to address. Many of Whittier College's faculty and staff interviewed by the team reported that the institution does not have adequate resources to maintain student service level expectations. Therefore, the team recommends that Whittier College develop a staff and faculty strategy that assures adequate capacity to meet the educational mission of the college and the goals of the institutional strategic plan (CFRs 3.1, 3.2).

#### **Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources**

Whittier College's Fiscal Year 2021 unqualified independent auditors' report shows that the college has adequate resources to meet its current operating needs and commitments. This is evident in the reporting of the college's liquidity and availability of financial assets readily accessible to meet general expenses over a period of 12 months. In addition to the reporting of \$71 million of financial

assets available to the college, the college's total endowment shows \$148 million, of which \$36.8 million is without donor restrictions and may be spent at the board's discretion. Whittier also has access to \$8.6 million of unrestricted MacKenzie Scott Funds, which are not part of the endowment. Additionally, the campus real estate asset book value is \$101 million, and Whittier has hired a consulting firm to help determine the market value of its real estate assets as part of its strategy to operate with a full understanding of its resources and assets. Whittier College's financial state is evident in the Fact Book, which reports a total composite financial index of 4.82 compared to the benchmark score of 3.0, which is considered the threshold of an institution's financial health.

The team observed that, similar to other institutions, Whittier College has struggled with meeting its enrollment targets due to the ongoing pandemic. This enrollment decline is of high concern given the institution's high reliance on tuition for funding its operations. The Fact Book shows that tuition and fees comprise 75% of the operating revenue. The team noted that the changes in enrollment and enrollment-related revenue have significant impact on the college's long-term financial sustainability. This is evident in the Fact Book, which shows that as net tuition and fees revenues declined starting as early as 2017, the college reported net operating deficits in academic years 2018 of \$7.2 million, 2019 of \$3.7 million, and 2020 of \$2.5 million. In 2021, the college showed a net operating profit of \$8 million. The net operating profit is driven by an unrestricted gift of \$12 million. As reported in the independent auditor's report, the college expensed \$1.4 million of the gift in 2021 with the intent to spend the remainder over the following six years. At the same time, consistent with prior years, the report shows net tuition and fees continued to trend downwards in 2021 to \$33.3 million compared to \$41.6 million in 2020.

The leadership reported to the team that to "right-size" the budget, the college has implemented a hiring freeze, and currently the president approves the recruitment of any new positions. Due to the hiring freeze, staff reported to the team a lack of institutional resources to meet

students' needs and faculty and staff service-level expectations. For example, during the on-site interviews, staff reported concerns with providing ongoing training and support for students and faculty who use technology in instruction. The team was pleased to learn that the board agreed to invest \$1 million in information technology and noted that an increase in resources for staff and student support for using this technology will likely be necessary given the college's strategic goals and emerging future plans (CFR 3.5)

The college's facilities and related services appeared to the team to be well-supported and sufficiently maintained; the team enjoyed the beautiful grounds and well-designed and maintained facilities on a student-led campus tour during the visit.

The team commends Whittier College for the institution's commitment to finding a comprehensive approach to enhancing the institution's financial sustainability (CFR 3.4). Developing resource and budget models is a priority of the college, and at the time of the visit, the team learned that plans are being developed for a budget model that specifies how the college will address the impact of declining enrollment on institutional resources. The team has two recommendations regarding the college's fiscal resources:

- Develop a comprehensive resource and budgeting model that integrates with the strategic plan, focuses on long-term operational and financial viability, ensures expenditure reductions are appropriate and sustainable, and emphasizes revenue generation. (CFR 3.4)
- Accelerate the development of a strategic enrollment plan with adequate resources, clear measurable targets, and metrics to ensure success. (CFRs 3.4, 4.6)

#### *Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes*

The president of Whittier College's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion has generated excitement and passion among the faculty, staff, and board of trustees; this theme was a clear and consistent through-line of the entire visit. The president has identified administrators at the

cabinet-level to deliver on the institution's strategic initiatives. Whittier College currently has 23 board members who provide governance and oversight of the institution. The board conducts an annual review of the president's performance, meeting of goals, and overall management and leadership of the college. The annual review includes conducting an independent 360-degree performance evaluation every four years. During the interview with board members, the team observed the board's dedication and loyalty to the institution and its support of the president. The team commends the board's engagement in the governance and oversight of the institution and its commitment to creating policies and practices that promote the strategic vision of Whittier College (CFRs 3.6 - 3.9).

The Faculty Executive Committee, Educational Policies Committee, and various standing committees provide effective academic leadership; however, faculty and staff also reported the shared governance structures and processes across the college as deficient and untransparent (CFR 3.10). Many staff and faculty constituents reported a lack of trust, support, and engagement from senior leadership. Although leadership indicated that they have communicated regularly and openly with the Whittier community, multiple groups and individuals with whom the team spoke noted the lack of communication and transparency concerning the budget and planning processes. The team consistently observed low employee morale as a notable concern as staff and faculty increase their workloads to take on additional responsibilities to continue meeting institutional goals, educational objectives, and students' needs without additional compensation, resources, or opportunities to develop professionally. A final concern shared by faculty and staff was the increased expectation of cost sharing shifted to faculty and staff to support their retirement benefits.

In addition to the recommendations cited above related to Standard 3, the team has two additional recommendations regarding several combined areas of Standard 3:

- The team recommends that to enhance faculty and staff levels of satisfaction, retention, and engagement, the college work to address morale by reviewing current workloads and job

scopes and planning for appropriate compensation structures. Continue to monitor morale through the use of engagement surveys or other methods. (CFRs 3.1, 3.2, 3.7, 3.10)

- To foster greater trust and collaboration, formalize practices to support communication and transparency among leadership and across the broader campus community and provide meaningful opportunities for faculty, staff, and student input into decisions in which they have a direct and reasonable interest. (CFRs 3.6, 3.7, 3.10)

*Standard 3 Summary: The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that Whittier College has demonstrated sufficient evidence of compliance with this WSCUC Standard. Final determination of compliance with the Standard rests with the Commission.*

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

##### Quality Assurance Processes

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) and the Assessment Committee provide oversight on all quality assurance processes at the college. There are well-defined processes for assessment and the periodic review of programs for meaning, quality, and integrity. Through periodic reviews of academic programs and self-studies carried out by academic and administrative units, there is a campus-wide understanding of various programs' strengths and areas for improvement. Academic programs are required to report annually the measure to which students are exceeding, meeting, or failing to meet established benchmarks in the discipline, after which the Assessment Committee reviews and provides recommendations (CFRs 4.1, 4.2).

About 95% of the academic programs have completed or are at various phases of completing the program review process, which includes the development of a self-study report that is reviewed

internally by the Assessment Committee, the Associate Dean of Academic Planning, and external reviewers during the program review cycle. More recently, a newly revised three, five, and seven-year periodic program review process for analyzing the effectiveness of academic programs has been established as discussed extensively in the institution's report. Both the report and information provided by faculty during the visit revealed weak evidence that the actions coming out of assessment and program review activities result in programmatic changes and improvements in student learning and success (CFRs 4.1, 4.2).

In both the institution's report and subsequent conversations, there appeared to be an absence of a clearly established structure for continuous improvement and oversight for non-academic and co-curricular areas and plan for sustaining the processes. Limited departmental units have participated in the recently developed pilot quality assurance process for the assessment of non-academic and co-curricular areas; this pilot was interrupted by the pandemic and has not yet been reinstated. In addition, there was little or no evidence for how data from the quality assurance processes have informed changes or documented improvements in these departments. It appeared to the team that the capacity for continuous quality improvement is threatened by the current lack of permanent staffing and needed resources in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. Based on the report and subsequent feedback, the in-house assessment management system for managing assessment, program review, and accreditation evidence is quite helpful, but appears to be inadequate for a highly effective quality assurance process.

### *Institutional Learning and Improvement*

Whittier College demonstrates its commitment to institutional learning and improvement in its culture; however, in general, there are limited resources devoted to these important activities to ensure a systematic commitment to ongoing analysis and utilization of results for continuous improvement purposes. The college's annual assessment and program review processes were developed by faculty

and had faculty involvement with several program review processes yet to be completed at the time of the visit. The co-curricular assessment is still in the pilot state with full implementation planned for the 2022-23 academic year. Student course evaluations are regularly administered and analyzed, and student learning and engagement outcomes are benchmarked against comparative institutions (CFRs 4.3 – 4.5).

Given the team's serious concerns about institutional research capacity, resources, and systems, as well as the imperative for the college to use findings and information for planning and continuous improvement purposes, the team has two recommendations in regard to Standard 4's focus on quality assurance processes and institutional learning and improvement:

- Ensure the capacity of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment to provide high quality, accurate data and analysis for use in assessment, program review, planning, student success initiatives, resource allocation, and overall institutional effectiveness. (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4)
- Continue to develop and strengthen assessment and program review processes across the institution, with consideration of the goals of the strategic plan, so that the results can be used to inform decisions regarding program improvement, viability, sustainability, and potential growth. (CFRs 2.7, 2.11, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4)

Regarding strategic planning, details about and progress toward the institution's strategic plan are discussed more fully in Component 8 of this team report. The environmental scan conducted by the Strategic Planning Task Force in December 2020 and the recommendations to the board's Future Committee were positive steps toward having a collective understanding of trends and issues as the college develops and begins to enact its vision for its future. The task force work engaged multiple constituencies including students, staff, faculty, administrators, and community stakeholders. The team commends the Inclusion and Diversity Committee (IDC) for creating the yet to be approved draft of the

Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, which creates a potential roadmap for facilitating discussions with key constituents across campus about equity and inclusion. The hiring of a new vice president for innovation and new ventures demonstrates the college's commitment to providing oversight on current and anticipated changes that are part of its planning and new engagements. There appears to be a strong commitment to foster collaborations campus-wide; however, the team encourages improvement in integrative systems and processes that facilitate collaboration across academic, co-curricular, administrative, and organizational lines (CFRs 4.6 - 4.7).

*Summary of Standard 4: The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that Whittier College has demonstrated sufficient evidence of compliance with this WSCUC Standard. Final determination of compliance with the Standard rests with the Commission.*

#### **Component 8: Institution-specific themes**

The institution chose to focus its TPR on two primary themes: *Equity and Inclusion*, and *Excellence*. Regarding the theme of *Equity and Inclusion*, three sub-themes were addressed in the institution's report and explored in-depth with the college constituents during the visit: 1) admissions, retention, and student success; 2) employee recruiting and hiring; and 3) curriculum and co-curriculum. Regarding the theme of *Excellence*, the college addressed two sub-themes: 1) program review and 2) strategic planning. Many of the commendations and recommendations cited in Component 2 earlier in this team report also apply directly to the thematic elements of the institution's report and therefore are not included again in the sections below.

*Equity and Inclusion: Admissions, Retention, Student Success*

The team noted the institution's remarkable focus on equity and inclusion as means of addressing its organizational challenges and adaptation to a rapidly changing environment both in and outside of higher education. Specifically, the exploration of the intersection between diversity and inclusion and the college's student admissions, retention, and success data align with the mission and priorities of the college. It seemed fitting to the theme that this specific sub-theme was highlighted and is significant to the college personnel.

Through the review of institutional data, Whittier College was able to identify and take positive steps that ensure that equity and inclusion play a role in the student admission decisions. For example, the adoption of a minimum high school GPA of 2.5 for entering first year students; the establishment of a minimum college GPA of 2.2 for transfer students; and the establishment of the California Community Advantage Program that offers guaranteed admission to California community college applicants who meet certain requirements are having impacts on the college's enrollment composition. While these initiatives are impactful, the team observed that meeting enrollment numbers continues to be a challenge.

Whittier lacks a comprehensive strategic enrollment management plan with clearly defined metrics for measuring success. The vice president of enrollment management recently took a position at another institution, and the enrollment management function at Whittier was being reorganized at the time of the visit. The college has experienced declining undergraduate enrollments from a high of 1776 in fall 2019 to a low of 1320 in fall 2021. Similarly, new undergraduate enrollments declined from a high of 493 in fall 2019 to a low of 279 in fall 2021. It is noteworthy that retention has increased in the same time period from 72.8% to 82.8%; the team also notes that enrollment growth will need to continue to be a central focus of the college. Due to limited communication between the leadership and the campus community, it appeared to the team that very few members of the community are aware of the

severity of the college's enrollment challenges. As an institution that is primarily tuition driven, a strong enrollment management strategy will be essential to its existence.

The college's recent decision to allocate over a million dollars of the MacKenzie Scott Award to fund the Success Scholarship annually for third- and fourth-year students from families with an annual Family Adjusted Income of \$100,000, which translated into the most recent high first year retention rate of 82.8%, is commendable. With qualifying students receiving up to \$4,000 in aid, the compounding effect on the college is significant, but may not be long-lasting without successful fundraising efforts. Students spoke positively about the impact of this aid to their support for academic success. As part of its development efforts, Whittier will be seeking specific donor contributions to support the Success Scholarship beyond the lifetime of the MacKenzie Scott Award.

The college's focus on the Black Male Initiative to strengthen academic and personal support for black students, and the appropriation of some of MacKenzie Scott Award to funding positions within the Office of Equity and Inclusion that promotes programming activities for the Black Male Initiatives, signaled renewed investment of the institution in Black student success. Furthermore, the college created unique pre and post orientation experiences for Black students, connected Black faculty and staff with Black students, and nurtured new partnerships between Black students and the College Black Alumni Association. All of these activities notably translated in the recent increase in retention of Black male students to 87%. The team applauds Whittier's faculty and staff for their continuing focus on and support for student success through an equity and inclusion lens, and for creating an outstanding experience for all of Whittier's current and prospective students. Student success is at the heart of this work for Whittier College.

#### *Equity and Inclusion: Employee Recruiting and Hiring*

In a draft of its Strategic Plan for Equity and Inclusion, Whittier College articulates its core commitment to diversifying employees through recruitment and hiring. The plan consists of several

domains: education and scholarly mission, institutional responsibility, access and success, campus climate, and intergroup relations. The institutional responsibility strategic objective is to characterize the institution's capacity to plan, implement, and evaluate DEI efforts. Strategic goal #2 reported in the draft details the commitment of the college to establish transparent and equitable recruitment, hiring, and retention policies and practices and expand recruitment activities and criteria to value diverse backgrounds and develop diverse pipelines of candidates. The college has some excellent efforts beginning or underway to meet this strategic goal, including updating the Hiring and Recruitment Guide with the aim of increasing applicant pools and maximizing anti-bias practices in advertising, interviewing, and recruiting faculty. The Bayard Rustin program provides a unique opportunity to increase diversity of faculty through direct recruitment, mentorship, and exposure to the college teaching environment; monitoring the efficacy of this program over time will prove useful in furthering its goals. Furthermore, the college has invested in incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion by including ongoing DEI professional development from notable leaders in the field, and the college also hired its first administrator focused on DEI, the Associate Dean of DEI.

Whittier College's staff is more diverse than the faculty. The 2020 staff climate survey reported that 28% of the staff is White. The chief administrative officer works closely with the associate dean of DEI to implement strategies that focus on recruiting and hiring candidates from different backgrounds and ethnicities. The chief administrative officer follows similar guidelines presented in the hiring and recruitment guidelines for academic departments and chairs.

Data from the WSCUC Key Indicator Dashboard show that Whittier has made progress in diversifying its faculty. In 2015, the faculty was 70% White compared to 57% in 2020. Whittier's College Fact Book reports that Whittier's faculty is 67% white/other. Faculty diversity is an issue that the college is working to address by investing in programs and initiatives to increase diversity in the faculty body. This commitment is evident in the creation of the Bayard Rustin Program by academic affairs to reform

faculty recruitment and take a holistic approach to create greater racial equity in the faculty body. The program has resulted in two African American fellows joining the faculty. The college also established hiring and recruitment guidelines for academic departments and department chairs that support the college's commitment to diversity. The guidelines detail a process and resources for preparing for the search process, advertising, and recruiting for the position, reviewing applications, and selecting and orienting the new faculty member. Overall, the key principles of recruitment and selection outlined in the hiring process provide evidence of the institution's commitment to recruiting and hiring diverse faculty.

#### *Equity and Inclusion: Curriculum and Co-Curriculum*

Whittier College commendably focused on enhancing curricular and co-curricular institutional outcomes as a part of its overarching theme of *Equity and Inclusion*. The institution set out to intentionally engage in discussions and efforts that support holistic student development within these contexts. The Committee on the Future of the Liberal Arts facilitated discussions to determine ways to enhance the learning experience and Liberal Education curriculum, specifically with consideration of a large component of Whittier's student population: students of color and first-generation college students. The committee collected data via surveys from faculty, students, and alumni and engaged working groups for an extended time to support recommendations in alignment with institutional goals, equity, and access. The newly envisioned Liberal Education curriculum intends to incorporate Project Based Learning (PBL), as well as to reimagine first year experience/seminar, pathways and interdisciplinary minors and the extended orientation course, while continuing to consider redesign for first generational learners, curricular models, and high impact practice models. The committee as well as faculty within departments have been provided opportunities to attend trainings and workshops that provide guidance in the work to integrate PBL.

In addition, co-curricular discussions have also engaged the Division of Student Life, which led to determining three themes of Student Life Curriculum: Student Engagement, Student Wellness, and Equity, Justice, and Inclusion. The Student Life Curriculum launched its pilot in fall 2021, which also included the new First Six Weeks Initiative, an initiative that highlights student engagement metrics that consider opportunities for student well-being and success. Although these curricular and co-curricular opportunities were in a pilot phase at the time of the visit, this direction seems to the team to encompass the needs of the diverse student population while encouraging a sense of belonging among students and helping students flourish. The committee continues to operate and present opportunities for feedback from faculty and assessing the engagement of and from students.

Although the committee has accomplished much in enhancing the curricular and co-curricular opportunities, the team noted that there exists a need to expand the collaborative work to include other campus constituents. For example, the committee's partnership with the Assessment Committee could be strengthened to better define and assess student learning outcomes and help inform opportunities for continuous improvement, alongside the need for personnel and support from OIRA. Additionally, this important work would benefit from increased institutional financial support, to not only show institutional commitment and accountability, but to also expand faculty and staff development.

#### *Excellence: Program Review*

As described in relation to Standard 4 earlier in this report, Whittier College has embraced program review for many years and has focused its most recent work, through the Assessment Committee, on redesigning the assessment and program review process to reduce redundant data requests and to help evaluate annual assessment activities leading into program review. These improvements are commendable: in addition to clarifying expectations for effective assessment and program review practices, the Assessment Committee moved from a blanket five-year program review cycle to a needs-based three, five, or seven-year cycle depending on the relative strength of the

department. Additional communications processes and accountability measures for attending to annual assessment and program review processes have been put into place as well to meet the needs for a high-quality reflective set of processes geared, ultimately, for continuous improvement. These program review requirements and processes are detailed in the *2021 Assessment Handbook*, which comprehensively includes specific directions and resources for self-studies, templates for reports, example schedules and processes for external peer review, and other effective practices for program review.

The Assessment Committee noted that the previous practice of developing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) coming out of program review was never fully understood and therefore rarely acted upon by departments or college administration. Accordingly, examples of significant or substantive programmatic improvements as a result of program review were lacking. The MOU format has, however, since been replaced with an “Action Plan,” and at the time of the visit, the Assessment Committee and Vice President for Academic Affairs were formalizing communications and workflows to re-launch the external peer reviews interrupted by the pandemic, and to implement these process improvement measures for closing the loop to lead to continuous improvements in programs and services.

Of important note is a pilot program review process for non-degree departments. Student Disability Services and the Center for Advisement and Academic Success were the first two non-degree granting departments to undertake an appropriately modified program review process starting in 2019 – 2020. This pilot process was interrupted by the pandemic in spring 2020, but the college intends to re-implement this process and build a community of practice in regard to assessment, program review, and continuous improvements using the findings in all non-degree departments.

Although the institution is experiencing personnel changes in a few key areas, including the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA), its commitment to maintain the program review

and assessment cycle in efforts to continuously improve is still underway. The team believes that sufficiently resourcing and organizing the work of the OIRA to be able to provide high quality, accurate data and analysis for use in assessment, program review, planning, student success initiatives, resource allocation, and overall institutional effectiveness will be essential toward this end. Appropriately staffing and strengthening this office, along with ensuring adequate resourcing and processes for implementing improvements coming out of program review findings, will be essential for degree and non-degree program improvement, viability, sustainability, and potential growth.

### *Excellence: Strategic Plan*

As discussed in the institution's TPR report, strategic planning took on a new form and importance with the inauguration of its current president in 2018. Whittier College's strategic plan reflects a clear articulation of its values and principles that are well-aligned with the mission of the campus, including its core values of diversity, equity and inclusion.

The first strategic imperative in the Whittier College Strategic plan was to focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion to support student success. This strategic initiative was aligned with the first specific subtheme, focusing on measurable metrics linked to student admissions, retention, and success data and national survey data such as the NSSE/BCSSE. Through initial data gathering and data analysis, the plan indicated that DEI would guide the future action plan for the institution.

The second subtheme was to analyze specific employee data to promote equity and inclusion in hiring, with a particular emphasis in hiring more diverse faculty. There were some deliverables linked to the institution's review of current policies and practices in this subtheme. However, this subtheme did not have specific data or comparative benchmark data identified, resulting in a lack of clarity on measurement instruments to assess specific activities/interventions to outcomes. Nonetheless, there have been promising pilot programs aimed at diversifying the faculty pool such as the Bayard Rustin Program. In addition, the institution significantly realigned resources to meet the strategic imperative to

make faculty DEI central to student success. With regard to staff DEI programs, there were no clear evidence-based approaches presented to address equity and inclusion strategies for staff.

The third subtheme focused on meaningfully injecting equity and inclusion as guideposts in curricular and co-curricular discussions to promote more holistic student development. This subtheme was clearly present in the discussions with faculty and staff, most notably in the Committee on the Future of the Liberal Arts, which included members of co-curricular programs and student affairs staff. (The work of this committee was discussed previously in the section about *Equity and Inclusion: Curriculum and Co-Curriculum*).

The second strategic imperative for the institution was to launch new revenue generating initiatives to allow for a sustainable business model for the college. During the pandemic, Whittier College suffered significant financial losses in their operating budget due to declining enrollments. During this same period, the institution received the largest gift in Whittier College's history, a \$12 million dollar gift from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott. In order to maintain affordability and access to their diverse students, the institution allocated a portion of the Scott gift to success scholarships for third- and fourth-year students from families with an annual Family Adjusted Gross Income of \$100,000 or less. The net effect of this action was to improve their first-year retention rate to 82.8% for fall 2021. This realignment of funds clearly articulated a new philanthropic opportunity for the institution that reinforced their DEI strategic initiative. It also enhanced enrollment persistence and student success.

At the same time, tackling declining enrollment with discounting tuition alone has not been a viable financial strategy for maintaining a sustainable operating budget over time. With the trends in declining enrollment, the financial risk to the institution is significant. The campus community is generally aware of the precarious financial situation facing the institution if enrollment numbers are not increased and continue to decline over time. However, based on the team's meetings with faculty and staff, the institution's messaging about the complexity and risks to the institution are not fully

understood across the institution. There was a clear willingness of the faculty and staff during the site visit to support the institution during the difficult time. However, the team also had grave concerns about the lack of clear strategies for enrollment management or growth. While Whittier appears to be shifting its enrollment focus from recruiting nationally to tapping the local market and transfers from community colleges, the college lacks a detailed plan with specified resources, clear measurable targets, and metrics to monitor its progress.

Whittier's efforts to diversify its revenue have included assessing real estate assets, considering new modalities of instruction delivery to adapt to a broader variety of student learner preferences, and targeting new markets such as adult learners through new programs (Whittier LUX). Members of the board have been working closely with the leadership team of the college to be able to present a more comprehensive financial strategy to the Whittier campus community later this year.

The final strategic imperative of the strategic plan focused on working to align the institution's resources to its mission. The institution's DEI strategic vision has been clearly articulated through all areas of the campus and was prioritized with institutional resources. Specific examples include DEI and student programs supported through the distribution of the Scott gift funds, the Bayard Rustin faculty fellows program, and new staff positions in the Office of Equity and Inclusion. There were also benchmark metrics to support impact of fund use on overall senior leadership diversity.

Overall, the team felt that greater clarity in the alignment of vision and resources for the institution would be beneficial. This could be enhanced with greater specificity of short run and long run goals with clear metrics, revenue sources (recurring and non-recurring), and timelines and indicators of success for completion. A final observation was that this particular strategic imperative was critically linked to the success of the second strategic imperative, and that these two strategic imperatives must be closely aligned.

Moving forward, the team believes that Whittier’s strategic plan must develop clear action steps and implementation plans, with specific timelines and metrics of success for completion. The integration of the DEI components of the plan are well-developed in most areas of the campus and will be further enhanced with greater planning and coordination of future activities with the broader campus community.

### **Component 9: Reflection and plans for improvement**

Whittier College’s TPR report and the institution’s commentary during the visit appropriately reflected general awareness of its areas for ongoing development significant improvement. The college’s broad engagement in various analyses of the standards, and across the colleges’ TPR themes, was notable.

In Component 9 of the report, the institution noted that its TPR themes “express important and ambitious goals,” and that “challenges remain, no doubt” (page 55). The institution also appropriately reflected that “the President, leadership, and the Board of Trustees are highly invested in the success of our programs both existing and emerging” and that Whittier will need to continue to work and actively pursue progress to “implement forward-looking and sustainable change at the institution” (page 58) inclusively. This focus will be essential to maintain its current momentum and to meet its current and future challenges as a small tuition-driven, diverse liberal arts college.

### **SECTION III – OTHER TOPICS, AS APPROPRIATE (such as Substantive Change) – N/A**

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

The team applauds the committed members of the Whittier College community for their engagement during the accreditation visit and their commitment to the WSCUC accreditation process. As demonstrated in its TPR report, its documentation and evidence, and the numerous interviews and

meetings during the team's visit, Whittier College fulfilled the intended outcomes of the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation review.

## **COMMENDATIONS**

The team commends Whittier College for:

1. The dedication, commitment, and hard work of staff and faculty to continue to support students while facing the difficult circumstances of an ongoing pandemic and the challenges of the institution's financial situation.
2. The college's commitment to finding a comprehensive approach for enhancing the institution's financial sustainability.
3. The strong commitment of the college community to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as evidenced by:
  - a) The Strategic Plan for Equity and Inclusion
  - b) The MacKenzie Scott Award used to support DEI and student success initiatives
  - c) Restorative justice conversations
  - d) The Rustin Fellows used to diversify the faculty
  - e) The diversity of the board of trustees, and
  - f) Efforts to create cultural change at the department level.
4. The Assessment Committee for its continued focus on and improvement of the assessment and program review processes.
5. Collaboration between and among departments and committees to advance student success and learning as evidenced by:
  - a) Partnership among the Career Center, Alumni Relations, and the Center for Engagement with Communities to promote career development opportunities and connect the college with external communities so that students can thrive authentically.

- b) The Committee on the Future of the Liberal Arts' (CFLA) work on revamping the liberal arts program inclusive of members of the faculty and student affairs staff in order to holistically consider students' needs and experiences.
- 6. The active engagement of the board in the governance and oversight of the institution and its commitment to creating policies and practices that promote the strategic vision of Whittier College.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The team has identified the following recommendations to focus Whittier's ongoing efforts:

1. Develop a comprehensive resource and budgeting model that integrates with the strategic plan, focuses on long-term operational and financial viability, ensures expenditure reductions are appropriate and sustainable, and emphasizes revenue generation. (CFR 3.4)
2. Accelerate the development of a strategic enrollment plan with adequate resources, clear measurable targets, and metrics to ensure success. (CFRs 3.4, 4.6)
3. Implement the strategic plan by identifying key activities, metrics of success, and timelines, and by aligning the plan to budget, resource allocation, new initiatives, and organizational structures. (CFR 4.6)
4. To foster greater trust and collaboration, formalize practices to support communication and transparency among leadership and across the broader campus community and provide meaningful opportunities for faculty, staff, and student input into decisions in which they have a direct and reasonable interest. (CFRs 3.6, 3.7, 3.10)
5. Develop a staff and faculty strategy that assures adequate capacity to meet the educational mission of the college and goals of the institutional strategic plan. (CFRs 3.1, 3.2)
6. To enhance faculty and staff levels of satisfaction, retention, and engagement, work to address morale by reviewing current workloads and job scopes and planning for appropriate

compensation structures. Continue to monitor morale through the use of engagement surveys or other methods. (CFRs 3.1, 3.2, 3.7, 3.10)

7. Ensure the capacity of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment to provide high quality, accurate data and analysis for use in assessment, program review, planning, student success initiatives, resource allocation, and overall institutional effectiveness. (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4)
8. Continue to develop and strengthen assessment and program review processes across the institution, with consideration of the goals of the strategic plan, so that the results can be used to inform decisions regarding program improvement, viability, sustainability, and potential growth. (CFRs 2.7, 2.11, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4)
9. Continue efforts to operationalize and resource the Strategic Plan for Equity and Inclusion by establishing timetables and a set of measurable outcomes that are visible, accessible, and actionable. Create programming that will recognize and support the multiple identities and intersectionalities of the entire Whittier community. (CFR 1.4)

## APPENDICES

The report includes the following four Federal Compliance Forms:

- a. Credit Hour and Program Length Review
- b. Marketing and Recruitment Review
- c. Student Complaints Review
- d. Transfer Credit Review

### Credit Hour and Program Length Review Form

Under federal regulations, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's credit hour policy and processes as well as the lengths of its programs.

#### Credit Hour - §602.24(f)

The accrediting agency, as part of its review of an institution for renewal of accreditation, must conduct an effective review and evaluation of the reliability and accuracy of the institution's assignment of credit hours.

1. The accrediting agency meets this requirement if-
  - i. It reviews the institution's-
    - A. Policies and procedures for determining the credit hours, as defined in 34 CFR 600.2, that the institution awards for courses and programs; and
    - B. The application of the institution's policies and procedures to its programs and coursework; and
  - ii. Makes a reasonable determination of whether the institution's assignment of credit hours conforms to commonly accepted practice in higher education.
2. In reviewing and evaluating an institution's policies and procedures for determining credit hour assignments, an accrediting agency may use sampling or other methods in the evaluation.

**Credit hour** is defined by the Department of Education as follows:

A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than—

1. One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
2. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

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

**Program Length - §602.16(a)(1)(viii)**

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

**1. Credit Hour and Program Length Review Form**

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Policy on credit hour	Is this policy easily accessible? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, where is the policy located? <a href="https://www.whittier.edu/registrar/academicpolicies#CreditHour">https://www.whittier.edu/registrar/academicpolicies#CreditHour</a>
	Comments: No concerns
Process(es)/ periodic review of credit hour	Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO  Departmental Self Studies Include Review of Syllabi (see p. 10): <a href="https://www.whittier.edu/sites/default/files/media/ir/TheSelfStudy(Chapter3).pdf">https://www.whittier.edu/sites/default/files/media/ir/TheSelfStudy(Chapter3).pdf</a>  <a href="#">Educational Policy Committee Discussion/Review of Credit Hour</a>  <a href="#">New Course Proposal Form</a>
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: No concerns
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	<a href="https://cf2.whittier.edu/registrar/students/schedule/">https://cf2.whittier.edu/registrar/students/schedule/</a>  Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: No concerns

<p>Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i></p>	<p><b>Excluding COVID, Whittier only offered very few online courses over the summer under the old federal guidelines. Moving forward, Whittier intends to complete the WASC application to institutional approval to conform with Department of Education Guidelines in the near future.</b></p> <p><a href="#">Syllabi</a></p> <p>How many syllabi were reviewed?</p>
	<p>What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)?</p> <p>What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral</p> <p>What discipline(s)?</p> <p>Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments: No concerns</p>
<p>Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated) <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i></p>	<p><a href="#">Social Work 412</a>, <a href="#">INTD 299</a>, <a href="#">EDUC 521</a></p> <p>How many syllabi were reviewed? 3</p> <p>What kinds of courses? Social Work, Education, and Interdisciplinary courses</p> <p>What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral</p> <p>What discipline(s)? Social Work, Education, and Internship</p> <p>Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments: No concerns</p>
<p>Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)</p>	<p><a href="https://www.whittier.edu/academics/programs">https://www.whittier.edu/academics/programs</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.whittier.edu/registrar/catalog">https://www.whittier.edu/registrar/catalog</a></p> <p>How many programs were reviewed? 15</p> <p>What kinds of programs were reviewed? UG and GR - random sampling</p> <p>What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral</p> <p>What discipline(s)? Multiple</p> <p>Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments: No concerns</p>

Review Completed By: Melanie Booth  
Date: 4/8/22

## Marketing and Recruitment Review Form

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

Material Reviewed	Questions and Comments: Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this table as appropriate.
**Federal regulations	<p>Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students?  <a href="https://www.whittier.edu/policies">https://www.whittier.edu/policies</a></p> <p>X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <hr/> <p>Comments:            No concerns</p>
Degree completion and cost	<p><a href="https://www.whittier.edu/admission/value">https://www.whittier.edu/admission/value</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.whittier.edu/businessoffice/charges">https://www.whittier.edu/businessoffice/charges</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.whittier.edu/academics/ira/rates">https://www.whittier.edu/academics/ira/rates</a></p> <p>Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree?            X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <hr/> <p>Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree?            X <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <hr/> <p>Comments:            No concerns</p>
Careers and employment	<p>—Each <a href="#">degree program</a> features alums and their careers.            —<a href="#">Pre-professional programs</a>            —<a href="https://www.whittier.edu/careers">https://www.whittier.edu/careers</a></p> <p>Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <hr/> <p>Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable?            X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>
	<p>Comments:            No concerns</p>

\*§602.16(a)(1)(vii)

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

Review Completed By: Melanie Booth  
Date: 4/8/22

### 3. Student Complaints Review Form

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

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Policy on student complaints	<p>Bias Incident: <a href="https://www.whittier.edu/policies/biasincident">https://www.whittier.edu/policies/biasincident</a> ADA Related: <a href="https://www.whittier.edu/disability/grievance">https://www.whittier.edu/disability/grievance</a> General Grievances: <a href="https://www.whittier.edu/campussafety/policies">https://www.whittier.edu/campussafety/policies</a> Academic Appeals: <a href="http://catalog.whittier.edu/content.php?catoid=3&amp;navoid=122#Grade_Appeal_Policy_and_Process">http://catalog.whittier.edu/content.php?catoid=3&amp;navoid=122#Grade_Appeal_Policy_and_Process</a></p> <p>Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If so, is the policy or procedure easily accessible? Is so, where? Yes via the website. All are easily searchable.</p> <p>Comments: No concerns</p>
Process(es)/ procedure	<p>General Grievances: <a href="https://www.whittier.edu/campussafety/policies">https://www.whittier.edu/campussafety/policies</a> Also see above.</p> <p>Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If so, please describe briefly: Yes, Grievances will go the Associate Dean/Title IX Coordinator.</p> <p>If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO Yes, it does. All grievances are responded to within 48 hours and cataloged in the Maxient web-based platform.</p>

Comments:

No concerns

Records

Does the institution maintain records of student complaints?  YES  NO

If so, where?

Yes, all student complaints are housed through the Maxient software. Each grievance is assigned a case number. SDS maintains its own files for ADA compliance complaints.

Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time?  YES  NO

Comments:

No Concerns

\*§602-16(1)(1)(ix)

See also WASC Senior College and University Commission's Complaints and Third Party Comment Policy.

Review Completed By: Melanie Booth

Date: 4/8/22

## 4. Transfer Credit Policy Review Form

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

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Transfer Credit Policy(s)	<a href="#">Transfer Student Information Page</a> Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, is the policy publicly available? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where? Transfer Student Website (admissions)
	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? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:  No Concerns

\*§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: Melanie Booth  
 Date: 4/8/22