

REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM
SPECIAL VISIT

To the California Institute of Advanced Management (CiAM)

October 16, 2020

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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.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT..... | 3 |
| A. Description of Institution, Accreditation History, as relevant, and Visit | 3 |
| B. Description of Team’s Review Process | 4 |
| C. Institution’s Special Report: Quality and Rigor of the Report and Supporting Evidence | 5 |
| SECTION II – EVALUATION OF ISSUES UNDER THE STANDARDS..... | 6 |
| A. Assessment of Student Learning..... | 6 |
| B. Faculty Support for the Assessment of Student Learning | 8 |
| C. Enrollment Management..... | 9 |
| SECTION III – OTHER TOPICS, AS APPROPRIATE | 11 |
| SECTION IV – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... | 11 |
| APPENDICES (if applicable) | 12 |

SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution, Accreditation History, as relevant, and Visit

The California Institute of Advanced Management (CiAM) is a private, nonprofit institution of higher education located in Alhambra, California. Founded in 2011, CiAM seeks to extend Peter F. Drucker’s business management philosophy and to offer students real-world, hands-on experience as part of an affordable Master of Business Administration (MBA) program. The mission of CiAM is: *Building upon the philosophy of Peter F. Drucker, through classroom and online learning, we produce successful, responsible, globally oriented leaders who are rooted in practice.*

CiAM delivers its MBA via both hybrid and online modalities, and in two lengths: traditional and accelerated, two years and one year to complete, respectively. Since the last WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) visit (September 2018), CiAM has added two new concentrations to its MBA program, Project Management and Business Analytics, also to be offered as certificates. As of September 2020, CiAM enrolled 215 active students (with an additional 2 students on a leave of absence), a substantial growth from 10 students in fall 2016 when the institution first sought WSCUC accreditation. Additionally, there are 3 full-time faculty members, who also serve as content chairs, approximately 35 adjunct professors, 20 staff members, and 1 volunteer.

In November 2015, CiAM submitted its application for Eligibility to the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) and in March 2016, CiAM was granted Eligibility through February 2021. In December 2016, CiAM hosted its Seeking Accreditation Visit (SAV) 1, and in March 2017 the Commission granted Candidacy until February 2022. An SAV2 occurred during September 2018, and in March 2019, CiAM received initial accreditation¹ for a period of six years retroactive to December 1,

¹ Since receiving WSCUC accreditation, CiAM has voluntarily withdrawn from ACICS (2019) and DEAC (2020) in 2019 and 2020, respectively. Other current approvals include the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), the U.S. Department of Education’s Title IV program, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, and the U.S. Department of Defense.

2018. Additionally, the Commission scheduled a Special Visit to occur in fall 2020, to which this report addresses CiAM's responses to the Commission's three recommendations. The Commission's recommendations were captured under Standards 2 and 3 with three Criteria for Review (CFR):

Recommendation 1. CiAM continue to align its course and program student learning outcomes so that the assessment of student learning can be measured and provide data to support the continuous improvement process. (CFR 2.3)

Recommendation 2. The CiAM faculty be supported in their efforts to collectively develop and be responsible for establishing student learning outcomes and standards of performance, including the creation and application of assessment instruments. (CFR 2.4)

Recommendation 3. The institute continue implementing its enrollment management plan, paying special attention to its targets and goals for domestic student enrollment. (CFR 3.4)

B. Description of Team's Review Process

During the initial team conference call, team members divided the responsibilities for the writing and inquiry that would be conducted, enabling the members to explore questions and draft preliminary report narrative to guide the visit. Before the site visit began, the team had the opportunity to review its inquiry plans during a preliminary virtual Zoom meeting held on October 15, 2020.

Beyond the initial findings based on CiAM's report and supporting documents, the Special Visit provided the team the opportunity to further understand the personnel changes and program improvements made at CiAM since the previous SAV2 in 2018. Original materials submitted for review by CiAM included plans, processes, and matrices for program assessment; curriculum maps; and faculty and staff workshop training documents. Additionally, materials specific to marketing, enrollment planning, and curriculum vitae for leadership were provided and reviewed. The team was appreciative to CiAM's president for the visuals provided that allowed the expanded instructional and student spaces to be seen; at the time of the SAV2, these spaces had been in a future planning phase.

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the team visit occurred virtually via Zoom. To explore the three recommendations, separate meetings were held with the president; faculty and staff from academic affairs; full-time and adjunct teaching faculty; staff from marketing, student and campus

success; and students. The CiAM report, together with the materials provided and the virtual meetings, were found by the team to have addressed the issues and concerns raised by the Commission and its request for a Special Visit. The visit concluded with the team chair presenting four (4) commendations and two (2) recommendations to the president prior to presenting those statements to an assembled group of faculty and staff.

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

The team found that CiAM's Special Visit report was well organized around the three recommendations as identified in the Commission's Action Letter dated March 4, 2019. The report included a section dedicated to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic since spring 2019, and a concluding statement that allowed for reflection on CiAM's progress since the SAV2. The report provided a detailed listing of roles and responsibilities from a campus cross-section of faculty and staff who contributed to the report. CiAM's evidence—its use and analysis—was aligned extremely well to the report, as were the conclusions made by the institution at the end of each of the three recommendation sections. While most of the evidence attachments were relevant at the time of the report's submission, in preparation for the visit, the team requested disaggregated enrollment numbers for three years and an update on the student space utilization. The team concluded the visit with a sense that CiAM not only embraced the formal team observations but also the informal peer suggestions during the meetings.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF ISSUES UNDER THE STANDARDS

A. Assessment of Student Learning

Recommendation 1. CiAM continue to align its course and program student learning outcomes so that the assessment of student learning can be measured, and provide data to support the continuous improvement process. (CFR 2.3)

Since the 2018 SAV2, CiAM has expanded and improved the quality of its assessment and program review processes. An area of concern during the last visit was the extent to which course and program learning outcomes were not aligned and therefore difficult to measure. The Special Visit report and supporting assessment of student learning materials detail and evidence a thorough, albeit newer, comprehensive plan for teaching and learning improvements based on data. Discussions with faculty and staff directly involved in the assessment restructure, confirmed the essential role of both full-time and adjunct faculty in the assessment and evaluation processes.

Following the SAV2 visit, the Assurance of Learning Plan was developed with the intention to better align CiAM's learning outcomes. After an external consultant's review, it was determined that the plan needed to provide more clarity to the assessment design. Additionally, in response to growing enrollment, CiAM hired a full-time director of assessment and educational effectiveness. With this hire came the Assurance of Learning Plan's revision to the approved Program Outcome Assessment Plan. In-services and trainings to better support and empower faculty in the assessment process, and a restructuring, renaming, and realigning of the learning outcomes to become institutional learning outcomes (ILOs), program learning outcomes (PLOs), and course learning outcomes (CLOs), also occurred as a result of this leadership addition. The team reviewed agenda, meeting notes, and Power Point presentations not only for faculty and staff specific to the larger assessment processes, but those presented to the Board of Trustees also.

The team was able to verify that faculty are responsible for developing the curriculum in each course that directly supports one or more of the learning outcomes for that course (CLOs). The CLOs have been thoughtfully mapped to the program learning outcomes (PLOs), which in turn are mapped

and congruent with the institutional learning outcomes (ILOs). Each MBA course also includes a faculty-designed signature assignment that is used to assess student learning. Faculty members, with the use of rubrics, provide a grade for these signature assignments and forward the data to the institutional research office. Faculty also confirmed that while there is better clarity around measurable learning outcomes, some CLOs will require revisions and subsequent remapping—both to begin in 2021.

In addition to the direct assessment occurring in the MBA courses, since 2016, CiAM has been using an indirect assessment measure of pre- and post-knowledge surveys in each course. At the end of each term, survey responses are collected by institutional research and are updated and publicly posted on a CiAM webpage twice a year. While these surveys once served as the main assessment measure across all MBA courses, direct assessment measures through signature assignments are now in place. The team was initially concerned that the quantity of the survey responses may become too large to manage and obtain meaningful data. In discussions with faculty and staff as to the value added by the pre- and post-surveys, faculty and the institutional research director believed that as the student population grows, a representative sampling model will be manageable and remain meaningful.

The team also reviewed the streamlined template for the Educational Annual Outcomes Assessment Plan and a new 5-year program review schedule. At the time of the team visit, PLO 3, “Demonstrate written communication skills by producing professional-quality business documents,” was in the process of being assessed. Meetings with the faculty and staff detailed authentic involvement in assessment process and provided rationale as to why PLO 3 was selected as the first to be evaluated under the new program review schedule. Faculty acknowledged that for many of CiAM’s students, English is often their second language. Ways to improve student support in this area, in addition to the tutoring services already in place, is a priority for CiAM. Going forward, PLOs 1 and 2 will be assessed in 2021, PLOs 5 and 6 in 2022, PLOs 7 and 8 in 2023, and PLO 4 in 2024 with the culminating program review.

B. Faculty Support for the Assessment of Student Learning

Recommendation 2. The CiAM faculty be supported in their efforts to collectively develop and be responsible for establishing student learning outcomes and standards of performance, including the creation and application of assessment instruments. (CFR 2.4)

The team reviewed the documents submitted by CiAM and met with the adjunct and full-time faculty, as well as students. The team reviewed the following documents: faculty in-service documents for September 9, 2020 and December 8, 2017; faculty-graded student signature assignments; writing samples with feedback; existing and new rubrics; faculty evaluation process documents; and Academic Governance Committee meeting minutes from October 2019, July 2019, and March 2019. Prior to the visit, the Program Review Committee met in October 2020 to finalize CiAM's program review process—one that included faculty and staff in the planning and recommendations made to the appropriate shared-governance groups and CiAM leadership. The CiAM faculty are supported in their efforts to collectively develop and be responsible for establishing student learning outcomes and standards of performance, including the creation and application of assessment instruments.

Since the 2018 WSCUC Special Visit, CiAM hired another full-time faculty member who is fully engaged in developing systems of learning. During the meeting with faculty, it was evident that both full-time and adjunct faculty are actively involved in the larger assessment process. Evidence included a September 2020 Faculty-in-Service for full-time and adjunct faculty that was entirely based on the theme of faculty's collective responsibility for establishing appropriate standards of performance and demonstrating through assessment the achievement of these standards. Previously in March 2019, faculty met to review, provide feedback, and develop rubrics to apply to student work and possibly reduce grade inflation.

CiAM has aligned its program learning outcomes with its mission and course learning objectives and outcomes. To support faculty in this task, CiAM revised its faculty promotion and reward system to reflect this additional responsibility. During the faculty meeting, one adjunct faculty mentioned a compensation increase due to the role and work in the outcomes alignment—a practice recognized by

the team as CiAM's financial commitment to the assessment process. Release time for curriculum development, institutional service, and research is under consideration. Additionally, CiAM is supporting one of its full-time faculty members with his attendance at the WSCUC Assessment Leadership Academy.

CiAM students were very complimentary and supportive of CiAM's faculty and staff. Examples included adjunct faculty helping students to prepare for job interviews, the availability and responsiveness of the faculty and staff for any issue, and their own performance improvement because of the curriculum design and delivery. When faculty identified the need for student writing support, CiAM hired two tutors in response. Additionally, with reorganization of the physical facilities, CiAM has dedicated spaces for students, including student kitchen, faculty Lounge, and conference room. When students are able to return to campus, this will enhance the interaction between students and faculty, adjunct and full-time faculty, and faculty and administration.

In summary, CiAM has demonstrated that it has given serious consideration to the Recommendation 2. Both full-time and adjunct faculty are heavily involved and the administration is very supportive of the faculty in taking the lead to establish linkages among the mission, program learning outcomes, course learning outcomes and objectives, and developing appropriate rubrics.

C. Enrollment Management

Recommendation 3. The institute continue implementing its enrollment management plan, paying special attention to its targets and goals for domestic student enrollment. (CFR 3.4)

The team reviewed the report prepared by the institution, evaluated supporting documentation, and conducted interviews with institutional leaders, faculty, and students. Supporting documentation included: Marketing Enrollment Sustainability Plan 2020-2021; Board of Trustees marketing presentation notes from a January 29, 2020 meeting; business development manager assignments; web campaign materials including Facebook and Instagram ads and web videos; meeting minutes of the business development managers from March to July 2020; a competitor analysis from an outside firm; a

marketing value proposition analysis from an outside firm; marketing of a speaker series in April, May, and June 2020; marketing materials for the introduction of a weekend MBA; marketing materials for scholarships; and minutes of meetings institutional leadership with the marketing team from April, May, and June 2020. As this was a remote review the team did not visit campus, however all members of the team have visited the campus in the past, and photographic evidence of new facilities were reviewed.

CiAM demonstrated a sincere commitment to address Recommendation 3 with specific plans for overall enrollment growth, as well as for recruiting and diversifying the student population to include more domestic students. In 2018, CiAM enrolled 60 new students; in 2019, there were 130 new students—exceeding the goals of 50 and 105 for the respective years. However, CiAM fell short of the goal of enrolling approximately 14% domestic students, with only 5% new domestic students in fall 2019. A new director of marketing was recruited in February 2020, and a reorganization to a business development manager model was implemented. The business development managers were unsuccessful in recruiting the domestic student enrollment goal of 18 for fall 2020, but have been diligent in looking at a variety of markets. In an effort to attract domestic students who would benefit from CiAM’s MBA curriculum rooted in the liberal arts, and differentiate the program from other programs in the region, the institution is using Peter Drucker’s philosophy of “management as a liberal art” as a recruitment conversation. Total enrollment has grown from 66 in fall 2018, to 155 in fall 2019, to 215 in fall 2020. Additional classrooms, faculty space, and student space have been built to accommodate the growth in enrollment.

MBA concentrations have led to additional enrollment, and the institution is increasing the number of concentrations from two to four in spring 2021. One of the existing concentrations, business analytics, is currently being considered as a second degree for the institution. The development of concentrations makes sense given the size of the student population, and the exploration of a second degree is in alignment with the institutional mission and vision. Continued focus on expanding the

domestic student population is warranted, but success in total enrollment and diversity of the student population is to be commended.

SECTION III – OTHER TOPICS, AS APPROPRIATE

CiAM was significantly impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic, but in different ways than many other institutions. Because the institution had the existing infrastructure for delivering its program online, the blended modality was relatively easy to transition using commercial teleconference software (Zoom) to replicate the “in-class” sessions and pair with the existing online materials. For CiAM, the more significant issue has been the changing guidance from the US Department of State regarding international student visas. The institution has responded in a timely fashion and adjusted successfully, as indicated by its strong enrollment growth in fall 2020 that is predominantly driven by international students. Finally, the institution created a video for its students “C-i-AM HERE FOR YOU” to reinforce the support services available to students, including counseling.

SECTION IV – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Special Visit team commends CiAM for the following:

1. Impressive progress in aligning course, program, and institutional learning outcomes that allow for the authentic assessment of student learning and continuous improvement.
2. Support of its full-time and adjunct faculty in collectively developing and establishing student learning outcomes and developing appropriate tools to measure those outcomes.
3. Commitment of faculty—both full-time and adjunct—in carrying out the institution’s mission and sharing in the academic decision making.
4. Successful enrollment growth during these unprecedented times, especially in a degree area that has seen year-over-year national declines.

The Special Visit team recommends that CiAM:

1. Continue to implement the new multi-year program review process scheduled to culminate in 2024 with review of course learning outcomes as planned. (CFR 2.7)
2. Develop a multi-year strategic plan that includes enrollment and academic programs with goals and benchmarks. (CFR 4.6, 4.7)

APPENDICES (if applicable)

None.