

**REPORT OF THE WSCUC VISITING TEAM SEEKING ACCREDITATION
VISIT 2**

For Institutions Seeking Candidacy or Initial Accreditation

To the California Institute of Advanced
Management September 24-27, 2018

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

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SECTION I. OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

Description of Institution and Visit

The California Institute of Advanced Management (CIAM) is a private, nonprofit institution of higher education that occupies space in an educational business park in Alhambra, California. Founded in 2011 and supported financially by a sole benefactor, CIAM aims to keep the management legacy of Peter F. Drucker relevant through its single Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree program delivered in both hybrid and online modalities. As of fall 2018, CIAM enrolled 72 students (up from 10 in fall 2016), employed 2 full-time faculty (up from zero in fall 2016), 22 adjunct faculty, and 14 staff (13 paid; 1 volunteer). Since the last Seeking Accreditation Visit (SAV) 1, CIAM revised its mission to better reflect CIAM's commitment to offer a quality MBA program to a diverse student body:

“Building on the wisdom of Peter F. Drucker, we produce leaders who have a deep understanding of their management responsibilities to achieve personal and societal success. We do this by delivering experiential learning in both traditional classroom and virtual environments.”

In 2012, CIAM received the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE) licensure to offer the MBA in Executive Management and Entrepreneurship. The Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) accreditation was initially received in April 2015 with a renewal visit in 2018. Also in 2018, CIAM received approval from the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC). CIAM is also approved by the Student Exchange and Visitor Program (SEVP) for enrolling international students (all but two CIAM students are international).

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 for a period of five years through February 29, 2021. In November/December 2016, CIAM hosted its Seeking Accreditation Visit 1, and in March 2017 the Commission granted Candidacy for five years until February 17, 2022 along with five recommendations to be addressed. A SAV 2 was scheduled for fall 2018 to which this report addresses CIAM's responses to the Commission's five recommendations.

The Commission's five recommendations were spread across the four Standards and 12 Criteria for Review (CFR). The team found that the report was organized around the Standards/CFRs. The team reviewed the report and the supporting documents prior to the visit, followed by a team conference call to develop a number of questions and lines of inquiry to extend the review further. While the report provided the foundation for the visit, the onsite interviews, discussions, and the review of additional materials provided the information needed to answer outstanding questions and inform the team's findings.

Multiple stakeholders participated in the discussions and inquiries as part of the review process. Areas that received in-depth inquiries were centered on the five recommendation areas: reevaluation of its mission and vision; alignment of course and program learning outcomes with significant faculty involvement in the assessment of teaching and learning; evaluation of and professional development opportunities for its full-time faculty; moving away from a single source of donor revenue via its enrollment management strategy; and continued operationalization of its Governing Board Policy.

The Institution's Seeking Accreditation Visit and Report

Quality and Rigor of the Review and the Report

The report was organized by the five Commission recommendations across four Standards found to be at a Candidacy level by the Commission upon the recommendation of the

SAV1 team and 12 CFRs not found to be at a sufficient level for Initial Accreditation. While CIAM provided supporting documents as attachments to its report, the team found that the supporting attachments were lacking some information and requested additional materials that included board membership data; curriculum vitae for the chief financial officer (CFO) and adjunct faculty; agenda from the first CIAM retreat; disaggregated enrollment data; assessment tools, program review, curriculum map, and course syllabi; and financial information from the foundation.

As with the SAV1 Report, the SAV 2 Report was drafted by the oversight team: the president, the vice president/chief academic officer (who also serves as the accreditation liaison officer), and the academic dean. The team was able to verify onsite that CIAM staff and faculty were able to review and provide feedback on the institution's SAV 2 Report.

Response to Issues Raised in Past Commission Letters

The Commission offered the following recommendations as CIAM prepared for SAV2:

1. *That as CIAM moves past the recent presidential transition, it reevaluate its mission and purpose in order to better clarify and sustain the demographic and target student population it intends to serve. (CFR 1.1)*

CIAM has responded to this previous concern and has made progress by adopting a board-approved revised mission, vision statement, and values through a collaborative process that involved faculty, staff, and alumni.

2. *That CIAM align and make consistent across the institution its course and program student learning outcomes; that these outcomes clearly state the standards of performance expected at the graduate level; and that significant faculty involvement be integrated and supported in the process of the ongoing inquiry into assessment of teaching and learning. (CFRs 2.2b, 2.3, 4.4)*

CIAM has responded to this previous concern and has made progress by making consistent and better aligning its course and program learning outcomes. Each course has learning outcomes linked to a class lesson and corresponding student performance is assessed through direct and indirect methods. Criteria for admissions, curriculum, student standards of performance, and learning outcomes are more advanced than that of an undergraduate business program. All faculty are involved in the assessment processes, and adjunct faculty are especially supported by the institution to be fully engaged.

- 3. As student enrollment increases, that CIAM thoughtfully plan and prepare to support its full-time faculty by establishing appropriate evaluation processes and faculty development opportunities, by championing them to take collective responsibility for establishing student learning outcomes and standards of performance, and by creating a culture where all faculty are able to freely exercise academic leadership when ensuring academic quality. (CFRs 2.4, 3.1-3.3, 3.10)*

CIAM has responded to this previous concern and has made progress by the adding two full-time faculty who with the adjunct faculty establish student learning outcomes and standards or performance. CIAM's staffing plan includes sufficient numbers of full-time and adjunct faculty who are hired based on distinct criteria, receive performance evaluations, and are provided ongoing faculty development opportunities.

- 4. That CIAM finalize its enrollment management strategy in order to move away from a single source of revenue (donor) towards a more diversified revenue model that includes tuition and other sources; that it align those revenue sources with its educational*

objectives and purpose and be able to operate as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy. (CFRs 1.5, 3.4)

CIAM has responded to this previous concern and has made progress by making a significant transition from a sole-source donor to student tuition revenue. At SAV1, all students were being sponsored by the institution; whereas, at SAV2 only two students were receiving such assistance. The institution has developed a multi-year enrollment management plan that projects a balanced operating budget from tuition by summer of 2020. CIAM has seen more than a 600 percent increase in enrollment over the last two years aligned with growth that defies national trends in MBA programs and international enrollment.

5. *That CIAM continue its implementation of the Independent Governing Board Policy by operationalizing committee roles and responsibilities, by evaluating the president, and by mirroring best practices among boards of trustees—to include appropriate oversight of institutional integrity, policies, and operations and making independent decisions. (CFR 3.9)*

CIAM has responded to this previous concern and has made progress by operationalizing a board committee structure with committees meeting at least annually. The board executes its policies and procedures for the annual review of the CEO and makes decisions independent of the financial commitment of the founder.

SECTION II. EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE WITH WSCUC'S STANDARDS AND IDENTIFIED CFRs FROM PRIOR SEEKING ACCREDITATION VISITS

Standard 1. Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

The institution defines its purposes and establishes educational objectives aligned with those purposes. The institution has a clear and explicit sense of its essential values and character, its distinctive elements, its place in both the higher education community and society, and its contribution to the public good. It functions with integrity, transparency, and autonomy.

The team found CIAM demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 1 at a level sufficient for initial accreditation. Only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards. The team found that the core principle of Standard 1 was understood and clearly articulated as it applies to relevant operations. Additionally, CIAM evidenced thorough and widespread implementation of structures, processes, and forms that operationalize the CFRs with evidence of sustainable commitment.

CIAM offers a Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Executive Management and Entrepreneurship. Since the SAV 1, the institution has adopted a board-approved revised mission, vision statement, and values through a collaborative process that involved faculty, staff, and alumni. The MBA curriculum was also revised and now better aligns with the revised mission, vision and values. A multi-year enrollment management plan was also developed and implemented. At this time, CIAM does not intend to offer a second degree, but there is some discussion about the value of additional programs of concentrations within the MBA based on student interest and alignment with institutional mission. (CFR 1.1)

Per its bylaws, CIAM is a nonprofit public benefit educational corporation exclusively formed to have an educational purpose. CIAM is committed to honest and open communication

with all stakeholders, including students, alumni, staff, faculty, board, state, federal, and accrediting agencies. The board is active and autonomous. CIAM has made a significant transition from a sole-source donor to tuition revenue that will be at a break-even point with 217 students projected to occur in 2020. There is more than sufficient financial support from the donor and foundation to allow CIAM to reach that goal. (CFR 1.5)

Standard 2. Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions

The institution achieves its purposes and attains its educational objectives at the institutional and program level through the core functions of teaching and learning, scholarship and creative activity, and support for student learning and success. The institution demonstrates that these core functions are performed effectively by evaluating valid and reliable evidence of learning and by supporting the success of every student.

The team found CIAM demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 2 at a level sufficient for initial accreditation. Only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards. The team found that the core principle of Standard 2 was understood and clearly articulated as it applies to relevant operations. Additionally, CIAM evidenced thorough and widespread implementation of structures, processes, and forms that operationalize the CFRs with evidence of sustainable commitment.

The institution's MBA program has clearly stated learning objectives and its criteria for admissions, curriculum, student standards of performance and learning outcomes are more advanced than that of an undergraduate business program. Each course has a consulting component and from review of a sampling of the student work, the projects are meaningful to the clients and include research methodologies, structure, and components expected from graduate-level student work. Additionally, the problems addressed and solutions presented reflect currency

and relevance in both the business and higher education sectors. While the students are actively engaged in putting theory to practice, the students' engagement with business literature and theory could be better elevated and promoted by CIAM as are its program's consulting components. As CIAM revises and changes its curriculum to meet the needs of its students and industry, the program's rigor and integrity should be considered and ensured. (CFR 2.2b)

Since the SAV 1, the institution's Assurance of Learning Manual underwent revisions and updating. For each of the degree program's courses, there is a corresponding student learning outcome for each course lesson that aligns with the material presented and the student work assessed. As the CIAM grows, this level of detail and quantity in its assessment process will become unsustainable. A review of the course syllabi indicated a second set of student learning outcomes, separate from the learning outcomes that are aligned with the 10 course lessons (and in addition to the program learning outcomes). The additional course learning outcomes' purpose was unclear to the team but rationale was provided by the chief academic officer and dean onsite. (CFR 2.3)

As part of the materials provided, the curriculum map indicated that all six program learning outcomes are introduced, developed, and/or mastered in every course and subsequently assessed in every course—also unsustainable over time with growth. The team found that in its attempt to address the Commission's recommendation to align and link its course and program level outcomes, CIAM may have created multiple levels of an assessment structure that while robust, also include extraordinary layers and data points collected through direct and indirect assessment methods. The chief academic officer, president, and two-full time faculty had meaningful discussions with the team that resulted in CIAM recognizing that by untangling its assessment structures, the assessment of student learning may become more meaningful and sustainable to its faculty and students. (CFR 2.3)

With the addition of two full-time faculty, the role of faculty in establishing student learning outcomes and standards or performance has become more pronounced. Both full-time and adjunct faculty reported to the team that they are included in determining the alignment between each of their class lesson's student learning outcome with the student work to be assessed—all supporting the program learning outcomes derived from the mission statement. There is a clear understanding among all faculty that the six program learning outcomes are directly linked to the mission statement and are intended to articulate what CIAM expects its graduates to be able to do upon completion of the MBA program. Less clear was the language and definition and practice of using rubrics. (CFR 2.4)

Upon examining 12 course syllabi, while the majority (9) included specific alignment between the student learning outcomes and course lessons, the majority (10) also included rubrics that were more akin to grading scales than a rubric a student could use to determine the level of work required to earn a specific letter grade. Additionally, after examining 40 “rubrics” applied to student work as a direct assessment method, the sampling included many of the same grading scales found in syllabi, a few 4- and 5-point value scales, and a few actual rubrics that layered the multiple levels of expectations upon the student work assessed. During the visit, CIAM faculty and administration acknowledged the rubric definition and application inconsistencies across its program, and the team was encouraged with the update that CIAM will be implementing a new learning management system (Canvas) in January 2019 that allows for consistent rubric development and application for both its hybrid and fully online courses. (CFR 2.4)

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

The institution sustains its operations and supports the achievement of its educational objectives through investments in human, physical, fiscal, technological, and information resources and through an appropriate and effective set of organizational and decision-making structures. These key resources and organizational structures promote the achievement of institutional purposes and educational objectives and create a high-quality environment for learning.

The team found CIAM demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 3 at a level sufficient for initial accreditation. Only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards. The team found that the core principle of Standard 3 was understood and clearly articulated as it applies to relevant operations. Additionally, CIAM evidenced thorough and widespread implementation of structures, processes, and forms that operationalize the CFRs with evidence of sustainable commitment.

CIAM's staffing plan includes sufficient number of full-time and adjunct faculty to provide the depth required across the multiple courses offered. CIAM has hired two full-time faculty members with doctorate degrees and employs 22 adjunct faculty members, also all with doctorate degrees and substantial experience, albeit not necessarily in Peter Drucker's management philosophy. CIAM has made significant steps in adding gender as well as ethnic diversity to its adjunct faculty ranks since the SAV 1. Faculty commitment is evident by the number of adjunct faculty attending professional development opportunities and their ongoing involvement in CIAM meetings and workshops. Full-time faculty chair committee meetings, mentor adjunct faculty, conduct evaluations, guide academic curriculum, and share

administrative responsibilities. As CIAM continues to grow, full-time faculty workload should be a priority in order to avoid sustained overload. (CFR 3.1)

CIAM has developed distinct criteria for hiring both full-time as well as adjunct faculty. Full-time faculty hiring is based on “faculty with significant experience and a strong record of achievement in teaching, scholarship, and service to the university” (p.7, *Faculty Handbook*). Scholarship is mentioned in the Guiding Principles (p.6), and peer-reviewed scholarly activity in the form of conference papers, conference presentations, or published articles are expected at the minimum of once every three years (p.11). Faculty duties and responsibilities are clearly outlined in the *Faculty Handbook*. All relevant policies and procedures are covered in detail. As this is a new document, implementation of the policies and procedures described will require more time in order to be evaluated. (CFR 3.2)

New faculty orientations are held multiple times a year as new faculty are hired. Adjunct faculty are required to attend at least two quarterly meetings per year (i.e., in-service seminars). Based on the minutes reviewed, the meeting themes are diverse and attendance robust. Additionally, each full-time faculty member, as well as the administrators who teach, are responsible for mentoring adjunct faculty respective area of the business discipline. Adjunct faculty repeatedly used the term “culture of respect” and are included in academic decisions about courses to include modifications to content, course and program learning outcomes, and textbook changes. Adjunct faculty relayed to the team that they are very satisfied with and connected to the two full-time faculty and administration in decisions related to ensuring academic quality and evaluation of teaching. (CFR 3.3)

Both adjunct and full-time faculty are encouraged to attend conferences, make presentations at academic conferences, and publish in peer-reviewed journals (p.11, *Faculty Handbook*). Each full-time faculty member is allocated \$1,000.00 per year for profession

development; adjunct faculty each receive an allocation of \$500.00. In order to receive elevated faculty status (and corresponding compensation), faculty are expected to produce scholarly activity (e.g., one full-time faculty article was published in the *Journal of Higher Education* in 2018). Handbooks are available for all faculty and staff, and all members of the CIAM community, including board members, recently convened for CIAM's first-ever retreat focused on future planning for the institution. (CFR 3.3)

Since the SAV 1, CIAM moved to its new facilities and recently executed a lease to expand its footprint. CIAM has sufficient physical and information resources for its operations, and those resources (e.g., classroom, scheduling, instructional technology, data) are appropriately scaling with enrollment increases. (CFR 3.4)

CIAM is financially stable and has clean audits. The institution has a multi-year fiscal plan. The institution has maintained positive balances due to support from a founding benefactor. The benefactor continues to support CIAM by underwriting an irrevocable letter of credit that covers more than the annual operating budget. In addition, a separate foundation has been established to support the institution in perpetuity and has initial funding from the benefactor to support the institution. (CFR 3.4)

The institution has developed a multi-year enrollment management plan that projects a balanced operating budget from tuition by summer of 2020. CIAM has seen more than a 600 percent increase in enrollment over the last two years aligned with growth that defies national trends in MBA programs and international enrollment. (CFR 3.4)

The CIAM Board of Trustees comprises members with the diverse qualifications required to govern an institution of higher learning. The board has operationalized a committee structure with committees meeting at least annually. The team encourages committees to meet more

frequently. The board has executed its policies and procedures for the annual review of the CEO and makes decisions independent of the financial commitment of the founder. (CFR 3.9)

Since the SAV 1, a more formal faculty participation and governance process has been developed that reinforces faculty ownership of assessment and improving the curriculum. The two full-time faculty members chair and shepherd the following committees: program review, consulting institute, and academic promotion. These shared-governance committees meet regularly with active adjunct faculty participation and widely disseminated information. Additionally, both full-time faculty also serve as facilitators for subcommittees (i.e., ad hoc and as needed) specific to all 501-designated courses within the program. Finally, full-time and adjunct faculty also serve as members on the Academic Advisory Board and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. (CFR 3.10)

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

The institution engages in sustained, evidence-based, and participatory self-reflection about how effectively it is accomplishing its purposes and achieving its educational objectives. The institution considers the changing environment of higher education in envisioning its future. These activities inform both institutional planning and systematic evaluations of educational effectiveness. The results of institutional inquiry, research, and data collection are used to establish priorities, to plan, and to improve quality and effectiveness.

The team found CIAM demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 4 at a level sufficient for initial accreditation. Only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards. The team found that the core principle of Standard 4 was understood and clearly articulated as it applies to relevant operations. Additionally, CIAM evidenced thorough and widespread implementation of

structures, processes, and forms that operationalize the CFRs with evidence of sustainable commitment.

The team found that CIAM encourages all faculty involvement in the ongoing improvement in the teaching learning process. The institution invites adjunct faculty to attend and participate in all meetings and workshops, however a review of minutes from a curriculum committee meetings indicate that adjuncts do not always attend the meetings. A meeting specific to the importance of providing paths for student feedback was not attended by any adjunct faculty; a meeting specific to students' concerns about needing more training for consulting was immediately addressed and responded to by adjunct faculty. Because of the currency of full-time and adjunct faculty's experiences in the business industry, the design and improvement of curricula, pedagogy, and assessment at CIAM is strengthened and changes made are more nimble because of the institution's size. (CFR 4.4)

SECTION III. FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CIAM addressed the Core Commitments and the Standards in its report and as part of the site visit. The team found that for all four Standards, CIAM demonstrated evidence of compliance at a level sufficient for initial accreditation. Only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards. The institution understands and clearly articulates the core principle or intention of each Standard as it applies to relevant operations, and there is thorough and widespread implementation of structures, processes, and forms that operationalize the CFRs with evidence of sustainable commitment. Below are the salient commendations and recommendations with areas for continued improvement noted by CFR in the recommendations.

Commendations

- The team commends CIAM on its significant enrollment growth, countering the national trends of declining MBA and international student enrollment.
- The team commends CIAM on the quality of its new location, establishing a collegiate learning environment, and its acquisition of additional space for enrollment growth.
- The team commends CIAM on creating two full-time faculty positions, financially supporting adjunct faculty professional development and academic governance participation, and engaging all faculty into its culture of commitment.
- The team commends the ongoing financial support and assurance from Board Chair Minglo Shao and the Bright China Social Fund—evidencing CIAM’s diversification of revenue for its operations.

Recommendations

- The team recommends that CIAM continue to align its course and program student learning outcomes so that the assessment of student learning can be measured and provide the data needed to support the ongoing continuous improvement process. (CFR 2.3)
- The team recommends that 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 the assessment instruments. (CFR 2.4)
- The team recommends that CIAM continue implementing its enrollment management plan, paying special attention to its targets and goals of domestic student enrollment. (CFR 3.4)

