

**REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM
For Reaffirmation of Accreditation**

To
Westminster Seminary California

March 13-15, 2018

Team Roster

Diana Demetrulias, Team Chair
Provost (retired)
Notre Dame de Namur University

Susan M. Clapper, Team Assistant Chair
Executive Associate to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Accreditation Manager
Dominican University of California

Jonathan Reed, Team Member
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
University of La Verne

Robert Hite, Team Member
Vice President of Business Affairs and Chief Financial Officer (retired)
Golden Gate University

Maureen Maloney, WSCUC Staff Liaison
Vice President
WASC Senior College and University Commission

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 and Accreditation History.....	3
B. Description of Team’s Review Process	4
C. Institution’s Reaccreditation Report and Update: Quality and Rigor of the Report and Supporting Evidence.....	5
SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS.....	6
A. Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions	6
B. Component 2: Compliance: Review under WSCUC Standards and compliance with federal requirements; Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators	11
C. Component 3: Degree Programs: Meaning, quality, and integrity of the degree.....	19
D. Component 4: Educational Quality: Student learning, core competencies, and standards of performance at graduation	24
E. Component 5: Student Success: Student learning, retention, and graduation.....	26
F. Component 6: Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program review, assessment, use of data and evidence	28
G. Component 7: Sustainability: Financial viability, preparing for the changing higher education environment	30
H. Component 8: Optional essay on institution-specific themes.....	34
I. Component 9: Conclusion: Reflections and plans for improvement	34
SECTION III – OTHER TOPICS	36
SECTION IV – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	36
A. Findings.....	36
B. Commendations	37
C. Recommendations	38
APPENDICES.....	40
A. Federal Compliance Forms	40
1. Credit Hour and Program Length Review	41
2. Marketing and Recruitment Review.....	42
3. Student Complaints Review	43
4. Transfer Credit Review	44

SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution and Accreditation History

Founded in 1979, Westminster Seminary California (WSC) began as a branch campus of the Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, PA. Transitioning to an autonomous graduate institution and moving to its current location in Escondido, CA, WSC was later accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (ACSCU) in 1982, and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) in 1984. WSC obtained Association of Theological Schools (ATS) accreditation in 1997.

WSC offers a three-year 110-unit Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree that prepares candidates for ordained ministry in confessional Reformed and Presbyterian denominations to include the Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC), the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA), and the United Reformed Churches of North America (URC). Graduates also serve in the Association of Reformed Baptist Churches in America (ARBCA), the Christian Reformed Church (CRC), and the Reformed Church in America (RCA). In addition to the MDiv degree, WSC offers a 72-unit Master of Arts (MA) degree with three concentrations: Biblical Studies, Theological Studies, and Historical Theology. The WSC board and its faculty understand the criteria for gospel ministry to limit candidacy to qualified males; therefore, the MDiv program is restricted to men; both men and women are encouraged to enroll in the MA program as part of the seminary's mission:

Westminster Seminary California exists to prepare experts in the Bible who glorify Christ, promote His Gospel and serve His Church. Through graduate theological study in the Reformed tradition, we provide students with the tools for a lifetime of studying and

sharing God's Word. Our rich educational heritage shapes the instruction and community which happens face-to-face on our campus in Southern California.

WSC has a graduate student enrollment of 150 (FTE 122) and 14 full-time faculty. There are no distance education programs. The campus site consists of three buildings on 19 acres, including a newly renovated library, classrooms, a chapel, a student lounge, and faculty and administrative offices. A recently built 64-unit student housing development is scheduled for completion in May 2018.

Under the former reaffirmation of accreditation cycle, WSC had its Capacity and Preparatory Review in 2009 followed by its Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) in 2011. In June 2011, the Commission reaffirmed WSC's accreditation and scheduled its next comprehensive review for spring 2018. The Commission also requested an Interim Report to be submitted in spring 2014 to address four areas of concern resulting from the EER: program review and assessment of student learning and achievement, inclusive diversity, organizational development, and institutional planning. In June 2014, the Commission received WSC's Interim Report and requested progress on the same four areas to be included in the institutional report for the Offsite Review (OSR) in fall 2017 and Accreditation Visit in spring 2018.

In August 2017, WSC selected its fourth president having succeeded the previous president who provided leadership for the past 24 years. The transition between presidents reportedly went well, resulting from a consultative, participatory, and open process.

B. Description of Team's Review Process

The team followed the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) 2013 reaffirmation of accreditation review process and began by reviewing the institutional report and supporting documents as part of the OSR on September 20-21, 2017. The team

identified seven lines of inquiry: diversity, public good, institutional research, academic freedom, program review and assessment of student learning, strategic and financial planning, and organizational structure. The team requested additional documents to be made available prior to the visit and materials to be available for review during the visit. The team also reviewed the previous Commission action letters and team reports. A confidential email account was made available for WSC students, faculty, and staff to provide comments on their experiences at WSC, and one response was submitted during the site visit.

The team arrived for the Accreditation Visit on the afternoon of March 12, 2018, and spent the following three days meeting with leadership, students, full-time faculty, staff, alumni, and board members. While the report provided the foundation for the Accreditation visit, the onsite interviews and discussions provided the necessary information to answer questions and shape the team's findings. On March 15, 2018, the team chair presented six commendations and seven recommendations to the president prior to presenting those statements to the assembled Executive Council.

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

WSC's institutional report was organized around eight components with five focusing on degree programs, educational quality, student success, quality assurance and improvement, and sustainability. WSC did not include the optional institution-specific theme component. While required forms were completed and included as part of the component that discusses compliance with Standards, the report originally lacked an analysis and discussion narrative that evidenced the seminary's self-assessment and reflection of its Review under WSCUC Standards. The team requested that WSC complete this component, and the seminary submitted its response as an

eight-page addendum to the report. The report did not indicate the process for writing and vetting the report; however, onsite the team confirmed that senior leadership authored the report with contributions, review, and affirmation from campus stakeholders. For all steps during the OSR and AV review process, WSC representatives were responsive and candid in responding to the team's requests for additional documents and information as part of its lines of inquiry.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS

A. Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions

The June 2011 Commission action letter and the June 2014 Interim Report letter included four areas for continued progress: program review and assessment of student learning and achievement, inclusive diversity, organizational development, and institutional planning. While WSC's institutional report indicated that it had addressed each of the four issues to the Commission's satisfaction following the Interim Report, the Interim Report Committee (IRC) review letter noted that WSC was to include progress on the four topics as part of the fall 2017 OSR and spring 2018 AV. Between the OSR and the AV, the majority of the team's time focused on these four areas through its lines of inquiry and onsite meetings. It was evident from WSC's institutional report, its response to the Summary Lines of Inquiry, and the visit that WSC has thoughtfully engaged in responding to the four areas for continued progress.

Program Review and Assessment of Student Learning and Achievement

The 2011 Commission letter recommended the consistent use of learning outcomes in all syllabi, the engagement of faculty in evaluating student work, the use of direct evidence beyond indirect student self-assessment and surveys, and the collection and analysis of graduation and retention data. The 2014 IRC review letter noted that WSC had moved from initial to emerging in its program review, student assessment, and student achievement processes. As part of the

OSR and AV, the team reviewed completed rubrics, a sampling of theses, jury-reviewed MA papers, and the alignment of course and program learning outcomes to evidence student achievement at expected levels of performance. Overall, the team found substantial and continued progress for establishing a graduate culture of assessment, refined program review processes, and increased use of direct evidence for assessing student learning. (CFRs 2.1, 2.2b, 2.3-2.7)

While the program review process is systematic (next scheduled for 2018-19), the annual assessment process appeared less so. Admirably, WSC faculty come together annually during the summer to assess samples of students' portfolio and capstone course assignments; however, the team was unclear how the findings are then circulated to the full faculty body and how this analysis of direct evidence occurs in systematic way at the course and program levels. WSC is encouraged to adapt the thoughtfulness and systems in place for the program review process to this annual assessment process. (CFRs 2.4, 2.5)

An examination of fall 2017 syllabi indicated an inconsistent display of course, program, and institutional learning outcomes. There also appeared to be an inconsistent use of definitions related to course outcomes, objectives, and descriptions on syllabi. The team encourages the faculty to achieve an institutional definition for all three terms and in which context to use each, thus moving WSC closer toward consistent syllabi components for students' educational benefit. (CFR 2.4)

With regard to the examination of the educational achievement of subpopulations of the student body, WSC has disaggregated some of its data sets, and faculty were able to articulate their attention to ensuring all students progress toward their achievement of their degrees. Interviews with students and alumni corroborated the progress WSC has made with regard to

diversifying the student body—especially through full-scholarships for African American students. It is important to note also the students’ highly appreciative testimony of the institution’s acceptance and accommodation of students with disabilities, especially those related to mental illness. (CFRs 2.10, 4.2)

Inclusive Diversity

The 2011 Commission letter reiterated the 2009 action letter that urged WSC to “provide students with substantial scholarly exposure to the experiences and perspectives of women as part of their academic preparation.” The 2014 IRC review letter concluded that WSC had made progress in attending to the issue of increasing diversity in society consistent with the seminary’s mission. At the same time, WSC was asked to sustain its momentum and make significant progress by the time of the OSR, specifically to articulate long-term goals and related strategies for responding to society’s increasing diversity, to develop criteria and standards to evaluate alignment between CFRs and WSC’s efforts, and to ensure strategies are pervasive across the curriculum. (CFR 1.4)

Student demographics illustrate the following: the MDiv program is 100% male given its religious restriction to the ministry open only to males. Females represent 25% of the MA program. White males are the largest percentage of students followed by students identifying as Asian or Hispanic, and non-resident alien students. Diversity of the students and adjunct faculty has increased, diversity of perspectives has been incorporated into curricular readings and assignments, diversity of gender perspectives via lecture series has increased, diversity in recruiting materials is evidenced, and a dean of women students provides guidance and support to female students. (CFR 1.4) These achievements illustrate WSC’s seriousness and good faith for addressing issues related to diversity, and the team acknowledges this progress within the

context of the seminary's faith-based mission and the religious and biblical tenants. To advance institutional discussions and actions, WSC is encouraged to refer to WSCUC's *Equity and Inclusive Policy* (November 2017), which contains good practices for valuing and fostering inclusion. (CFR 1.4)

Organizational Development

The 2011 Commission letter included the expectation that WSC conclude its planning for separating the roles of the chief executive officer (CEO) and the chief financial officer (CFO). The 2014 IRC review letter commended WSC for its efforts in separating the CEO and CFO roles, acknowledged the succession plan in place for presidential leadership, and recommended succession planning for all key leadership positions. Fall 2017 brought about the retirement of WSC's president of 24 years, and the board-appointment of WSC's newest president, effective August 1, 2017. In conversations with the new president and the board of trustees, it was clear to the team that the succession planning for other key leadership positions remains at the forefront of WSC's priorities, along with strategic and enrollment planning. (CFRs 3.6, 3.7)

The board viewed the presidential succession experience as an opportunity to enhance the existing direction of the seminary by creating a strong financial base from which to operate and serve churches by effectively training their future pastors. The board chair relayed that the board is impressed with the president's vision and is encouraging the president to advance and lead the seminary forward in its next stage of development. One example is expanding the seminary's reach to Asian nations of the Pacific Rim and Latin America. The team encourages the board to employ a deliberate process to evaluate the president beyond the goals setting that has occurred to date. (CFR 3.9) Finally, while the CEO and CFO roles remain independent of each other, the day-to-day roles and responsibilities of the CFO do not appear to mirror WSCUC-expected

functions of a high-level leadership position in advising the president, e.g., providing sophisticated financial management and planning, applying knowledge of financial law and risk management practices, driving a culture of fiscal accountability, and reporting to the board finance and/or audit committees. (CFR 3.8)

Institutional Planning

The 2011 Commission letter included the expectation that WSC have a more specific expression of institutional planning and a coherent and consistent planning process that assures attention to long-term financial stability. The 2014 IRC review letter commended WSC for securing a two million dollar gift to purchase several acres adjacent to the seminary for new graduate housing, increasing enrollment and tuition revenue, and successful fundraising efforts. The team found that student enrollments for fall 2017 and spring 2018 have reversed the decline experienced for the past three successive years (2014, 2015, and 2016) and brought the enrollments to the levels achieved prior to the three-year decline. The president indicated that the moderate decline in enrollments resulted from both a smaller incoming class and graduation of students in May 2016, the largest in the seminary's history. Throughout this time period, WSC maintained a positive net balance. The team was convinced that WSC continues to benefit from sound enrollment and strategic planning. (CFRs 3.4, 4.6)

Recognizing the flexibility and nimbleness needed for smaller faith-based and tuition-dependent institutions, WSC moved to a three-year budget projection model with annual strategic planning to adjust its decision-making and recalibrate its future direction. WSC has recognized its donor base is changing and is planning accordingly to protect and build its endowment. The graduate housing initiative has been thoughtfully developed and implemented and is in direct response to diversifying its revenue sources for long-term sustainability, as is the

one-course pilot program in Orange County to increase visibility of the seminary for students and friends of WSC. (CFRs 4.6, 4.7)

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

WSC conducted its Review under WSCUC Standards over two separate sessions, one with the faculty during the annual summer Educational Effectiveness Review day in August 2016 and one with administrative staff in September 2016. The faculty indicated a greater interest and concern with academics and curriculum; the administrative staff with areas that affected the institution as a whole based on their areas of responsibility. The team was provided the completed Review under WSCUC Standards table as part of the institutional report and upon request, was provided with a narrative synthesizing the findings. The federal requirements for credit hour, marketing and recruitment, student complaints, and transfer policy were completed thoroughly, as was the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI).

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to determine compliance with the Standard 1. Final determination of compliance with the Standard rests with the Commission.

Institutional Purposes

WSC has a clearly defined mission statement and demonstrates how it contributes to the public good, e.g., 700 hours of external fieldwork by each student. (CFR 1.1) Educational objectives are known and clearly understood across the seminary from the board to the executive leadership to faculty, student, and alumni. (CFR 1.2)

Integrity and Transparency

WSC is committed to academic freedom without compromising its confessional belief and tenants. Statements to support this are included in the Faculty Handbook and the catalog and were verified across several meetings with leadership, faculty, students, and alumni. (CFR 1.3) Education is WSC's primary purpose for both future pastors and for students to serve in other capacities and/or prepare for doctoral study. Students complete their programs in appropriate lengths of time and without excessive financial debt. (CFRs 1.5, 1.6) WSC has sound business practices and audits, has policies and processes in place to address student complaints and grievances, and represents itself honestly to WSCUC. (CFRs 1.6, 1.7)

Standard 1: Areas to be addressed or improved

The team found that while gains have been made in WSC's commitment to diversity, it remains an area to be advanced further through the curriculum (appears to be segmented and parceled versus embedded seamlessly), faculty (when vacancies or growth in number of faculty positions allow, faculty qualifications for teaching in the MA could provide opportunity for more female faculty and teaching in both programs for more non-white males), leadership positions (senior administrative roles within the organization could be expanded for females beyond the vice president for advancement positions), and board of trustees (additional at-large female members and non-white male voting members). The team encourages continuing vigilance for inclusive diversity as a means of increasing institutional effectiveness and educational excellence, serving the public good, fostering an equitable and inclusive learning environment, and preparing students for their roles in a diverse society. (CFR 1.4)

Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to determine compliance with the Standard 2. Final determination of compliance with the Standard rests with the Commission.

Teaching and Learning

WSC's two graduate degree programs are academically rigorous and are supported by qualified and highly trained faculty who all hold a terminal degree in their fields. (CFR 2.1) Oral and written communication competencies are aligned with what pastors, graduates of the MDiv program, will need. (CFR 2.2b) Student learning outcomes exist at the course, program, and institutional levels, although not consistently evidenced on course syllabi. (CFR 2.3)

The graduate programs' competencies are aligned with WSC's institutional learning outcomes. Student learning outcomes for the MDiv and MA degrees are appropriate for a mission to prepare ministers and leaders in the church. Student capstone portfolios serve as direct evidence to demonstrate student achievement of learning outcomes and high standards of performance. The program review process at WSC has been skillfully revised since its last WSCUC review. The seminary has increased its sources of direct evidence and external benchmarks from peer institutions, and completed program reviews are thoughtful and culminate in action items. Surveys are administered to external constituents (e.g., church leaders and field education supervisors on student preparedness). Examples were provided to the team of faculty-identified weaknesses in program review findings and improvements made to the curriculum as a result. Additionally, course evaluations have led to immediate improvements (e.g., senior capstone in theology). (CFRs 2.5, 2.6, 2.7)

Scholarship and Creative Activity

Faculty scholarship is supported through sabbaticals, internal and external seminars, and faculty professional development funds. (CFR 2.8) Faculty evaluation and promotion processes appropriately evaluate scholarship, teaching, student learning, and service. (CFR 2.9)

Student Learning and Success

Data indicate high student success rates (e.g., retention rates are 81% MDiv and 91% MA; graduation rates are 89% MDiv and 76% MA within 3 years; placement rates for either employment or post-graduate study are 78% MDiv and 67% MA). Student satisfaction is high with means from 4.1 to 4.6 on a scale of 5.0. All entering students are given a pre-test of content knowledge specific their programs which assesses their preparation and a post-test prior to graduation which assesses both growth and achievement levels. While previously analyzed in aggregate as a cohort, WSC is beginning to analyze pre-test and post-test findings at the individual student level. Additionally, students entering into the MDiv degree program with minimal ancient Greek and Hebrew language preparation are able to develop their language competencies with additional coursework as part of the MDiv program. (CFR 2.10)

As a graduate-only institution, traditional co-curricular activities that are often seen at undergraduate institutions are not as adaptable at WSC. With the completion of the graduate housing adjacent to the seminary, plans for building community among students and their families are a priority for the next academic year. (CFR 2.11)

With dedicated faculty and staff, WSC meets the needs of its students advising, tutoring, and counseling needs many times through the personal relationships that students develop with faculty and the deans of students. Students receive financial aid advising, often in support of

reducing the amount of loans taken to complete their education and graduate with the least amount of debt. (CFRs 2.12, 2.13)

Standard 2: Areas to be addressed or improved

The team found that successful improvements have been made in each stage of assessment (e.g., standards of performance are set, communicated and validated, rubrics are employed, and evaluations and reviews are conducted). These improvements occur in the multi-year program review process, and there remains a need for refining an annual assessment cycle that builds towards the multi-year program review process. (CFR 2.4)

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

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to determine compliance with the Standard 3. Final determination of compliance with the Standard rests with the Commission.

Faculty and Staff

WSC has operationalized its faculty and staffing levels with its educational objectives. Faculty have a minimum teaching load of 14 units per year, allowing for quality time for research and writing and also for dedicated time with students that is an attribute of the seminary's culture. WSC employs faculty and staff who are committed to the seminary's success and more importantly, the success of its students. Faculty and staff are encouraged to participate in professional development activities, some more formalized than others. In meeting with the faculty and staff during the open forums, there were no concerns expressed related to WSC policies and procedures. (CFRs 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)

Fiscal, Physical and Information Resources

WSC's educational facilities and services are sufficient and aligned with objectives. The additional graduate student housing will most likely strengthen the cohesiveness and community throughout the seminary, as well as strengthen its financial standing. During the visit, some of WSC's constituents expressed a need to improve the information and technology infrastructure and to allow for greater access to technology resources in and outside of the classroom. The president indicated that an allocation has been made to upgrade technological support.

(CFR 3.5)

Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes

WSC's leadership is characterized by integrity and vision from the board to the president to the executive leadership team and staff. The board's bylaws require all voting members to have served as ministers or elders in the Presbyterian and Reformed churches. Of the 18-member board, at least six but no more than nine must be current ministers. The at-large committee (non-church elders) includes two non-voting female members. As evidenced in board minutes, the board chair confirmed with the team that in addition to its legal and fiduciary authority, it evaluates the president (albeit systemic evaluations need to be planned for going forward) and exercises appropriate oversight of institutional integrity, policies, and ongoing operations. (CFR

3.9)

Faculty exercise effective academic leadership and are supported by the president and the board in their roles. Faculty are able to assemble as a governing group with direct lines of communication to the administration and to the board through the president. The team found that the seminary's processes enabled faculty to ensure academic quality and the effectiveness of educational purposes. (CFR 3.10)

Standard 3: Areas to be addressed or improved

The team found that WSC has impressive financial statements for Fiscal Year (FY)15 and FY16, and has unqualified audits. At the time of the AV, it was too early to be determined if the diversification of revenue sources through the graduate housing project and the subsequent donor commitments will be successful. (CFR 3.4)

The team found that WSC's leadership operates with integrity, high performance, responsibility, and accountability. There are clear and consistent decision-making processes, and there is a full-time CEO and CFO in place; however, the team was concerned with the limited scope of responsibilities and authority for financial oversight of the existing CFO position and how WSC's expectations for the position align with WSCUC expectations for sustaining institutional capacity and educational effectiveness. (CFRs 3.6, 3.7, 3.8)

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

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to determine compliance with the Standard 4. Final determination of compliance with the Standard rests with the Commission.

Quality Assurance Processes

Several layers of the use of indirect and direct evidence ensure academic quality through the program review process. Curriculum improvement and process review combined for better quality assurance. Greater amounts of direct and indirect evidence are now being used in assessment than during previous WSCUC reviews. (CFR 4.1)

Institutional Learning and Improvement

The team found that administration, staff, faculty, and board demonstrated a commitment to improving and furthering the seminary's mission based on data and evidence collected through quality assurance processes. Additionally, WSC routinely includes its alumni and external constituents (church leadership and fieldwork supervisors) as part of assessing and aligning its educational programs to its mission. (CFRs 4.3, 4.5)

Standard 4: Areas to be addressed or improved

While data are disseminated and incorporated in planning and decision-making, the team found WSC's distributed approach to institutional research will benefit from greater clarity of roles and responsibilities. Several individuals are responsible for various elements of institutional research (e.g., data collection, analyses and interpretation, dissemination of findings, employment of assessment findings in decision making). Formalizing the institutional research infrastructure will allow for more understandable, sustainable, and reliable assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness. (CFR 4.2)

The team confirmed faculty's significant involvement with the ongoing inquiry into the processes of teaching and learning. Faculty and academic leadership use program review the findings to improve student learning and the curriculum, and they engage in other direct and indirect assessment methods to enhance pedagogy as well. (CFR 4.4)

The team recognized that WSC employs strategic planning to guide its financial decisions, and regular meetings are held to ensure adherence to its goals and financial accountability. Plans for the new graduate housing offer growth not only in revenue but also possible new students from outside the regional area and internationally. With the rapidly changing higher education environment, the team encourages WSC and its constituents to

continue pursuing its multi-year strategic planning process, including budgeting and resource allocations, as described in its report and evidenced during the site visit. (CFRs 4.6, 4.7)

C. Component 3: Degree Programs: Meaning, quality, and integrity of the degree

Meaning

The meaning of WSC's degrees (MDiv and MA with three concentrations in Biblical Studies, Theological Studies, and Historical Theology) derives from WSC's clearly articulated mission and public statement of the ways in which its programs are distinctive from other seminaries. These curricular elements reflect a classical model of education, including a firm commitment to biblical languages as required for the award of the degree and onsite face-to-face instruction. WSC also articulates its theological distinction (confessional and catechisms) in contrast to other seminaries. WSC does not ordain students or place them directly into ministry positions. Its mission is to educate ministers and leaders in Presbyterian and Reformed Christian denominations and specialists in the Bible. By doctrine, only men may become pastors. WSC's mission statement commits to providing theological education for those who serve the Christian community and larger society. For example, women are educated in scripture and theology to serve roles in the church. This mission commitment leads to the centrality of biblical languages in its curriculum and a curricular emphasis on preaching. Further, the meaning of the degree finds its expression in a mission value in which the centrality of research and scholarship (knowledge) is linked directly to religious beliefs. In addition, the administration and faculty stated their awareness of a changing higher education environment, most notably with distance education technologies, with an intentional decision to adhere to WSC's distinctive mission and unique curricular components via face-to-face instruction only. (CFRs 1.1, 2.2b, 4.7)

WSC's meaning of its degrees finds expression most visibly in its clearly articulated student learning outcomes (SLOs). For the MA, three core SLOs are common to all three concentrations: understanding of Reformed theology and interconnections of biblical doctrines; rationale for convictions rather than mere assertions; and growing integrity, humility, perseverance, and self-discipline. Each concentration has one additional SLO specific to the program. (CFR 2.2b) For the MDiv program, five SLOs focus on academic outcomes appropriate to WSC's religious mission: emphasis on biblical text interpretation and the centrality of Hebrew and Greek as biblical languages; preaching sermons that use literary, historical and covenantal settings appropriate to church's present cultural contexts and perspectives and needs of diverse groups; interconnections of biblical doctrines; and dogmatic historical development of the church. The fifth SLO expects students to exhibit growing values (e.g., integrity, humility, self-discipline). For MA programs, core SLOs encompass both academic and personal value/moral conduct, along with those unique to each disciplinary concentration. (CFR 2.3)

Quality

The team examined the alignment of courses, curricular, co-curriculum—how structured, sequenced, and delivered so that students achieve SLOs at expected levels of performance. Overall, the team found substantial and continuing progress for establishing a graduate culture of assessment, refining program review processes, use of direct evidence for assessing student learning, and use of student portfolios to evaluate student work.

The last WSCUC Interim Report Committee review letter recommended that WSC demonstrate substantial progress in its alignment of institutional learning outcomes with program learning outcomes. The institution has demonstrated progress in doing so. A summary of assessment findings and actions taken to address these findings illustrate appropriate use of data

for programmatic improvement and increases in student learning resulting from academic program reviews. (CFR 2.3) In addition, the institution provided a thorough explanation and evidence for establishing performance levels for student achievement for each assessment method, communication of these levels, and validation to ensure continued very high academic rigor. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.6) Noteworthy is the extent to which both current students and alumni affirmed the faculty's creation of a culture of academic excellence and insistence for high intellectual achievement and critical thinking. (CFRs 2.5, 2.6)

WSC has carefully monitored the quality of its degree programs through its program review process that occurs on a four-year cycle. The review results in a ratification of the written report by both the board and administration. (CFRs 2.7, 4.1) The board indicated that while it receives reports on program reviews, faculty scholarship, and student achievement of learning outcomes, it does not interfere with faculty's curricular decision-making or faculty scholarship. (CFR 1.5)

Program review is comprised of several "layers" of direct and indirect evidence. Ten methods of findings from direct assessment were provided, such as cross-departmental faculty juries of students' written works and sermons, evaluations by field supervisors and church leaders present at licensure and ordination examinations, student portfolios maintained throughout the program, and a senior capstone examination. Plans are underway to conduct a pre-post analysis of student performance on capstone examinations on the same cohort of entering and graduating students (begun 2017-18). Indirect evidence includes student course evaluations, senior capstone self-assessment of students' having met SLOs, alumni surveys, and surveys associated with the ATS that accredits the programs. (CFR 2.7)

Faculty affirmed their leadership in the creation of the SLOs. (CFR 4.4) The derivation of these SLOs from WSC's historic commitment and confessional conviction are consistent with standards reflected with ATS. At the same time, course syllabi illustrate inconsistent identification of course objectives and student learning outcomes. The faculty and administration are strongly urged to ensure that all syllabi of all full-time and part-time faculty include SLO's aligned with faculty's course assignments and evaluation methods. (CFRs 1.2, 2.4)

Most importantly, in discussions with students, the team heard several examples of ways in which students self-assess and articulate their own academic and personal/spiritual development, including testing at time of program entry to program completion. This assessment method allows both faculty and students to evaluate student growth over time, using such data for improvement/changes in curriculum and teaching, thus leading to enhanced student learning. (CFR 2.5)

Faculty

The quality of academic programs is inextricably linked to the quality of the faculty. Currently, there are 13 full-time faculty, several emeriti professors, and a few adjunct faculty. (CFR 3.1) The student/faculty ratio of 11:1 is favorable for graduate education. WSC faculty demonstrated impressive academic credentials, and the team commends the faculty for their active and rigorous scholarly work. During interviews with faculty, students, alumni, and board and evidenced by various academic documents, the team concurred that faculty illustrate daily their extraordinary dedication to the faith, mission, exemplary teaching, and scholarly vitality. Given the small campus size, graduate programs only, and limited staffing for co-curricular support, faculty illustrated unwavering commitment to students' academic success and spiritual

growth, both in and out of the classroom. Faculty, dean of students, and part-time dean of women students provide support for counseling, advising, tutoring, and other support roles.

(CFRs 2.8, 2.11, 2.13)

Integrity

As a result of program review findings, faculty provided a summary of the changes programs implemented to ensure both quality and integrity. Examples of changes resulting from the program review include the following for the MA program: revised courses; revising the comprehensive examination; adding a thesis seminar, rubric for theses and theses defense and grading scale; and refining the capstone pre/post tracking of student performance, among others. Changes for the Master of Divinity program included changes in church leaders' survey, compliance for diversity SLOs in all syllabi, field education supervision, discontinued offering of on-line courses through Christian Counseling Educational Foundation due to non-compliance with WSCUC distance education standards, criteria for field supervisors (training, selecting, evaluating), and aligning baseline/capstone exam by individual students. (CFR 4.2) WSC indicated the faculty will examine the effectiveness of their curricular changes in the next scheduled program review. Faculty and the academic dean indicated plans to evaluate the degree to which these changes have resulted in increased student learning over time. (CFR 2.10, 4.1)

To ensure integrity, the institution examined the adequacy of its program review and assessment processes, and changes were made to strengthen the program review process (e.g., modifying the schedule; including information about student retention, graduation, and placement rates; benchmarking program performance against other peer institutions).

In summary, WSC has presented strong evidence of its ability to (a) define the meaning of its degrees which is closely aligned with its distinctive mission, (b) articulate comprehensive

processes including cyclical program reviews, (c) define and assess standards/levels of proficiency expected of graduates in their achievement of SLOs, (d) provide a supportive institutional infrastructure and adequate resources to support academic programs and students' achievement of their degrees, and (e) engage students in self-reflection regarding their academic degrees and spiritual development.

D. Component 4: Educational Quality: Student learning, core competencies, and standards of performance at graduation

Five core competencies are evaluated for all graduate students: written communication, oral communication, critical thinking, information literacy, and spiritual formation/piety (the fifth being lieu of quantitative reasoning). WSC describes several dimensions in critical thinking and information literacy. Four of these core competencies correspond closely with expected standards for graduate education (advanced study and promotion of importance of scholarship) as identified by WSCUC and ATS Standards. The fifth core competency, spiritual formation, is reflective of institutional mission as a faith-based institution. (CFR 2.2b)

With only two degrees, WSC has a clear focus and offers a coherent graduate curriculum in line with a well-articulated mission. WSC maps its graduate-level learning outcomes onto four of the five WSCUC-required undergraduate core competencies: written and oral communication, critical thinking, and information literacy to which WSC also adds spiritual formation. It is clear that the design for both programs is not merely an accumulation of courses but rather is based on thoughtfully integrated and scaffolded curricular maps. Capstone courses and culminating experiences ensure student achievement in the above-defined learning outcomes. (CFRs 2.2, 4.1)

In particular, the MDiv program's focus on career preparation for oral communication (preaching) demonstrates WSC's commitment to student learning and achievement. There are

well-written learning outcomes for oral communication, an initial speech test (which serves as a benchmark and may result in remediation), preaching courses each semester, coupled with the field education supervisor's evaluation of six sermons. The oral communication sequence tightly integrates with courses in Biblical Languages and Historical Theology (respectively considered part of learning outcomes for critical thinking and information literacy). The programs culminate in student portfolios for MDiv students and final theses for MA students that ensure the quality and integrity of WSC's degrees. (CFR 2.2b) The MDiv student portfolios capture both pre-and post-performance by students in select learning outcomes. (CFR 4.1)

The degree programs are taught by a faculty of sufficient quantity and quality, including relevant terminal degree and requisite scholarly and professional experience. (CFR 2.2.b) Ample evidence was submitted by WSC to demonstrate students' active engagement with the wide range of scholarly literature in the fields of Biblical Studies, Historical Theology, and Practical Ministry, albeit from a clearly defined and controlled theological perspective which is at the core of WSC's mission and guiding philosophy.

A review of syllabi revealed that WSC's student learning outcomes are widely shared and distributed, and students were familiar with these expectations, alongside doctrinal positions held by WSC and the founding denomination. Learning outcomes are developed by the faculty, syllabi are reviewed and discussed annually at the departmental level, often revised, and learning outcomes are communicated to the board. (CFR 2.4)

The sample of graded assignments and the jury-reviewed MA theses raised two concerns. First, unlike the student portfolio's self-reflections that clearly focus on WSC's learning outcomes, the rubrics developed for the jury-reviewed master's theses did not clearly map onto the institutional learning outcomes. Second, and more significantly, the team was not able to

discern an institutionalized mechanism serving as a repository for data about the assessment of individual and aggregate performances in the student learning outcomes. It was unclear how these are collected or disseminated annually for discussion among faculty in an effort for self-improvement on teaching and learning. (CFR 4.3) Further, the team noted a lack of evaluative comments to enhance student learning on three of the four rubrics reviewed during the visit. Whether or not gaps in student achievement reflect certain patterns with regard to individual learning outcomes, which might be the result of an individual course design, the curricular map, or faculty performance, should be a key component of WSC's program review process and annual review. The team encourages the facilitation of such questions tied to program review. The ability to create an environment that has a planning process focused on student learning, with a corresponding link to faculty development funds, curricular transformation efforts, and resource allocation to address learning is likely hampered until institutional research capacity is more fully developed and roles and responsibilities more clearly defined. (CFR 4.3)

E. Component 5: Student Success: Student learning, retention, and graduation

WSC annually collects, publishes, and evaluates key data about student achievement. Retention and graduations rates, placement data, and alumni feedback for each program are posted on the website and tracked by the dean who annually reviews them with faculty just prior to the academic year and submits them to the president's Executive Council as part of a summer strategic planning day. (CFR 1.2) These data are an integral part of the program review process. (CFR 2.7)

Students and alumni consistently reported and praised the academic rigor and high standards in all classes across the curriculum; clearly, WSC faculty created a culture of high expectations accompanied by ongoing student support. (CFR 2.4) Outside the classroom, faculty

shepherd students through their studies with tutoring, career counseling, placement, and mentoring, along with thorough advising on program requirements for timely graduation.

(CFR 2.12) With prolific scholarly productivity, the faculty models a commitment to intellectual inquiry and thorough research. (CFRs 2.8, 2.9)

The MA and MDiv program reviews contain pertinent data including evidence and the analysis of direct and indirect assessments of student learning outcomes, which are jointly created by the faculty at the seminary and department level. (CFR 2.4) Also included in the MDiv program review is feedback from external constituencies such as church leaders and field education supervisors. In some ways, WSC considers its MDiv placement data in the same way that licensure is treated by other professional programs, adding another level of feedback on student achievement with regard to learning outcomes. While the MA program review contains only general recommendations on student learning, the MDiv program review has a more sophisticated and actionable set of recommendations, including the alignment “of student portfolios, MDiv entrance and exit exams, sermon evaluation rubrics, and field education evaluations.” The team encourages the refinement of program reviews by disaggregating data by demographic categories for student achievement and placement. (CFR 2.10)

During the visit, it was not clear how the faculty and academic dean are managing the annual review of student learning outcomes, specifically with regard to assessing faculty classroom activities, course syllabi, and the curriculum. Although there are examples of individual faculty making changes to their courses, often in dialogue with other departmental faculty, WSC is encouraged to ensure a widespread understanding among faculty about the annual assessment process. Promoting the pervasive use of direct evidence of student learning outcomes in a systematic manner would contribute to WSC’s educational effectiveness. In

addition, faculty are urged to disaggregate these data by gender and ethnicity as part of their discussions of student achievement among the faculty. (CFRs 2.4, 4.4) The capacity for institutional research as it relates to the collection, dissemination, and analysis of this evidence merits further reflection by the institution. (CFR 4.2)

To continue this progress and gain sophistication in using data for decision-making, the team recommends a formal consideration of institutional research infrastructure that will allow for more understandable, sustainable, and reliable assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness. This entails greater clarity of roles and responsibilities for various individuals regarding who collects which data, who analyzes and interprets data, who disseminates findings and analyses, who oversees the timetable for administration of various assessment functions, and who ensures assessment findings are employed in decision making. (CFR 4.2)

F. Component 6: Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program review, assessment, use of data and evidence

Since its last comprehensive review, WSC has conducted two MA program reviews (2010-11 and 2014-15) and one MDiv program review (2015-16). WSC faculty focused their analyses in two areas: to make improvements to the curriculum and to improve the program review process. The institution's report noted that between the two MA reviews, WSC faculty had doubled the number of direct evidence artifacts used to assess student learning. Most recently, comprehensive entrance and exit examination results, jury-reviewed MA student papers, graduation and retention rates, and placement rates comprise the direct assessment suite. WSC has also been successful to include external benchmarks from a validated peer institution group against which to compare WSC performance. (CFRs 2.7, 4.1) In its report, WSC presented

multiple examples of how program review findings have been identified and subsequent changes made in the curriculum and/or pedagogy. For example, in the 2010-11 MA program review, faculty noted that while students were successfully defending and passing their written theses, there was no rubric used by faculty to evaluate student work. By the time of the 2014-15 program review, faculty had created and implemented a thesis evaluation rubric which made uniform the faculty assessment of student theses. While WSC has made great progress in formalizing its program review process, because it is relatively new to the process, it remains in the emerging phase with two cycles completed for the MA and one cycle completed for the MDiv degree programs. Both programs will benefit from longitudinal data after completing the next cycle in 2018-19. (CFRs 4.1, 4.5, 4.6)

During the onsite meeting with faculty specific to program review and assessment, faculty relayed to the team the annual process of reading and assessing a sample of 4-5 student portfolios. Selected by the academic dean, one portfolio from each degree concentration is reviewed by a small group of faculty applying the same standardized rubric and completing an evaluation form. The evaluation forms are then returned to the academic dean who, if noticing a trend from within a specific concentration of a degree program, will communicate and work with the identified program faculty to suggest changes or adjustments to the curriculum and/or pedagogy. The same process was stated to be in place for reviewing and providing feedback related to student course evaluations. Once completed, the academic dean analyzes the student comments and notes any trend changes or issues that may need to be addressed with faculty. The team struggled with understanding this process used in the annual assessment of the direct assessment of student work and how this process was linked to SLOs and led to actions for program improvement and student learning. During two separate interviews with faculty, there

appeared to be either a lack of understanding of the annual process or inconsistent explanations of this important and commendable direct assessment of student work. It is recommended that the faculty and academic dean come together to ensure widespread understanding of this important and annual direct assessment process and promote the pervasive use of the findings from this process. (CFRs 2.4, 4.1, 4.4) Additionally, faculty are encouraged to develop their own set of criteria for and selection of student portfolios, to establish course, program, and institutional standards of student performance, and to document and track the use of their annual findings in order to improve the teaching and learning process. (CFRs 2.4, 2.6)

G. Component 7: Sustainability: Financial viability, preparing for the changing higher education environment

As part of the institutional report and the Accreditation Visit, WSC evidenced institutional strategic planning and financial stability. The team confirmed through discussions with the president, the vice president for administration, and the Executive Council that WSC moved from a five-year strategic planning horizon to an annual planning process in order “to remain adaptive to a rapidly changing seminary marketplace.” (CFR 4.7) Annually, during the summer, staff and faculty meet together to develop and achieve consensus on an annual plan. (CFRs 4.5, 4.6)

The team reviewed WSC’s *Strategic Plan 2017-2018* consisting of goals and objectives for each of five areas: academics, advancement, administration, finance, and enrollment management. Although this planning process and annual artifact differ from a traditional university strategic plan, the team found that it nonetheless provides a clear roadmap of key strategies, goals and objectives to guide each program of WSC during the 2017-2018. (CFR 4.7)

Also as part of its strategic planning, WSC commissioned a marketing study to develop brand clarity and to guide the seminary through the changing higher education environment. (CFR 4.7) The study was designed to assist WSC in meeting three key business objectives: curb the decline in enrollment and begin to grow student population, develop messaging to appeal to potential donors and students, and support continued growth of the development strategy and acquisition of major donors. The marketing research findings point to “Four Pillars” for WSC: biblical theology, excellent “churchmen” graduates, serving the church, and nurturing community. Going forward, WSC may use these pillars to build a sound multi-year business plan for sustainability and financial viability.

While the team did not find evidence of longer term strategic planning at the present time, the president, the board of trustees, and the Executive Council each relayed that WSC is planning to begin 3-year strategic planning and budgeting processes beginning summer 2018. Thus far, WSC has benefited from solid financial planning and skilled management who have:

- Achieved strong financial results over the past three fiscal years;
- Acquired land on which to build graduate student housing;
- Executed a \$7.5 million construction loan;
- Commenced construction of graduate student housing which is planned to be completed and ready for occupancy by summer 2018;
- Established plans to raise funds to construct a 10,000 square foot education building; and
- Achieved unqualified (clean) audits with zero audit findings.

In addition to the unqualified audit opinions, there were no audit findings regarding deficient internal controls and/or operational processes. The above accomplishments would be remarkable for any institution and are especially so for a small, young seminary such as WSC. (CFR 3.4)

The team observed that WSC combines operating and non-operating activities in its Statement of Activities that obscures the seminary's operating results. For example, restricted donations for capital projects and other purposes are reported together with operating revenues. The team suggests that capital activities (e.g., gifts for construction and endowment along with gains and losses on endowment) be reported discretely in the Statement of Activities as non-operating activities so that the readers of WSC's financial statements can clearly and readily distinguish both operating and non-operating results. (CFR 3.4)

Additionally, while WSC has a well thought-out Investment Policy Statement, it does not have an annual endowment spending policy—a policy employed by most institutions in managing their endowments. The team suggests that WSC consider putting in place a spending policy that specifies a fixed annual percentage of a moving average of the market values of its endowed funds through a specific date to provide predictability of the annual endowment spending for budget planning purposes. (CFR 3.4)

The 9.5 acres of land adjacent to the seminary was purchased by donors and gifted to WSC in order to build graduate student housing. All graduate housing project construction costs have been paid from cash on hand, and WSC has not yet had to draw against the \$7.5 million construction loan in place. At the time of the visit WSC had received \$13.5 million in payments toward the \$16 million in pledges for the approximately \$21 million housing project. Although WSC stated in its institutional report that the goal of the board and the administration was to “have no debt on this project by the time students begin to occupy the residences in the summer of 2018,” the team learned during the Accreditation Visit that WSC's revised plan projects the seminary to be debt free within a year. (CFR 3.4)

The graduate student housing project consists of 64 residential units: 16 one-bedroom, 24 two-bedroom, and 24 three-bedroom units with monthly rental rates of \$750, \$950, and \$1,150, respectively. Upon completion, the student housing project is expected to generate approximately \$450,000 annually in net revenue. This project exemplifies a concrete, strategic idea that was envisioned many years ago with the goals of supporting its students by filling a need for below market housing, generating a new revenue stream that will assist WSC in its sustainability efforts, and enhancing the seminary's learning community. At the time of the visit, the graduate housing units were 75% subscribed and WSC expects 90% occupancy by the next fiscal year.

In addition to student housing, WSC plans to raise funds to build a 10,000 square foot education building that has already been approved by the City of Escondido. The building will have two smart classrooms along with multiple offices. In addition, the City of Escondido has approved the construction of eight additional graduate housing units. With a claimed donor retention rate of 74 percent and the receipt of large temporarily restricted gifts over the past two years as reported in its audited financial statements, WSC is in position to achieve its building plans and execute on additional strategies laid out in its *Strategic Plan 2017-2018*. (CFR 4.7)

The net revenue generated from the student housing project may assist WSC to reduce its annual fund goal to a more sustainable level and provide contributions to grow the seminary's endowment. Although WSC has raised \$2.2 to \$2.5 million annually for the past 10 years, WSC has recognized this level of fundraising is not likely sustainable. For planning purposes, the president plans to set an annual fund goal to \$1.8 to \$1.9 million.

In its 2014 Interim Report, WSC reported that in response to the 2011 Commission letter, it had created a CFO role as part of its vice president for finance position. Following the

departure of the vice president for finance who functioned as a part of the Executive Council, another individual assumed the title of CFO without the title of vice president for finance. While the institutional report indicated that the CFO is “responsible for all financial matters,” the team was unable to find evidence to support this statement and instead found that the CFO reports to the vice president for administration, with the latter position appearing to have assumed some of the duties of the former vice president for finance’s position. The team believes, based on the position description and responsibilities expressed by the CFO, that the CFO position is responsible for routine accounting functions, recording and processing payroll, and other budget-related information (i.e., controller functions). Additionally, the team was unclear how the vice president for administration’s role has been and is able to perform WSCUC-expected CFO responsibilities based on minimal financial expertise. The team strongly recommends that the president review the current structure for financial leadership to ensure senior level financial expertise and update position descriptions for leadership positions to be more comprehensive and reflective of responsibilities commensurate with expectations for senior management. (CFR 3.8)

H. Component 8: Optional essay on institution-specific themes

Not applicable.

I. Component 9: Conclusion: Reflections and plans for improvement

WSC’s institutional report provided a listing of four action items for continued attention as a result of WSC’s inclusive participation in the process for seeking reaffirmation:

- Direct evidence: improve data gathering from external evaluators (church leaders survey), comprehensive examination for tracking baseline and capstone performance of individual students in each cohort, other/better direct evidence to improve program review process

- Diversified learning experiences: provide students with diversified learning, e.g., women in theology lecture series, syllabi for readings of women/persons of color, teaching opportunities for women professors
- Recruiting: improve efforts targeted for women, Hispanic, and African American students
- Fiscal: diversify donor base and constituency

The team concurs with these areas for continued attention. WSC identifies important issues throughout its institutional report which were well-articulated by the president during the visit and are contained in its strategic plan which identifies goals, objectives, and tactics for academics, advancement, administration, finances, and enrollment management. While comprehensive in identification of actions to achieve its strategic plan, the plan outlines actions for one year only; however WSC's leadership stated its intent is to complement the yearly plan with a multi-year plan strategic plan that incorporates specificity with regard to enrollment management and budgeting and resource allocations. In addition, interviews with the president and his Executive Council illustrated that they have given serious consideration to the future, especially with regard to those external factors that provide opportunities for building enrollments, e.g., recruiting in the region (Orange County) and internationally (more global involvement with focus on Asia, Africa, and Latin America). A professional marketing study also provides the seminary with concrete areas for consideration as it looks to its next decade under the new president. (CFR 4.5, 4.7)

The institution provided evidence that it has engaged in conversations about sustainability with regard to the evolving higher education landscape and anticipate ways in which WSC may need to change or accommodate emerging issues, while remaining consonant

with its mission. This is particularly so with regard to demographics, student preparation for graduate study, technology, and economic pressures. The institution expressed its awareness of the increasing demographic diversity, especially with regard to women and people of color, and the need for WSC to continue promoting diversity in accordance with its theological commitments. (CFR 4.7) Looking to the future, WSC is encouraged to engage more deeply in conversations about its long-term future and the ways in which higher education in general, and WSC in particular, are impacted by the changing external social, economic, and political environment. (CFR 4.7)

Overall, the team was impressed with WSC—foremost with the high quality of its educational programs and the rigorous, high expectations faculty established and students achieved in receiving their degrees. The team has confidence that the institution will continue to make substantial progress in advancing the seminary.

SECTION III – OTHER TOPICS

No other findings.

SECTION IV – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Findings

The WSCUC visiting team concluded that WSC was vigilant and addressed those issues previously identified by the WSCUC Commission and the Interim Report Committee. The latter identified four key topics for WSC to describe its progress for the Accreditation Visit in 2018: program review and assessment of student learning and achievement, inclusive diversity, organizational development, and institutional planning. The institution addressed these issues thoroughly and has made good progress in each area, although continued attention to these issues is required as is cited in the team's concluding recommendations. (CFR 1.8)

Moreover, the institution comprehensively addressed WSCUC's Core Commitments and Standards of Accreditation. WSC demonstrated fulfillment of its intended outcomes for its comprehensive review. Most importantly, the institution's diligent efforts have resulted in continued demonstrable improvement and advancement of WSC's educational mission.

Resulting from the Offsite Review, the institution and WSCUC team focused on seven lines of inquiry: diversity, public good, institutional research, academic freedom, program review and assessment of student learning, strategic and financial planning, and organizational structure. The team concluded that WSC had addressed sufficiently these lines of inquiry by providing additional documentation as requested and with thoughtful responses in interviews with faculty, students, alumni, administrators, staff, and board members.

Based on a thorough review of the institutional report, exhibits, interviews with various WSC constituents and external stakeholders, and prior WSCUC institutional documents, the visiting team achieved agreement in its professional judgment as indicated below with regard to commendations and recommendations.

B. Commendations

Mission. Effective articulation of mission and programs that distinguish WSC from other seminaries and a passionate commitment that links mission to the meaning, quality, and integrity of its degrees.

Student success. High retention, graduation, and placement rates, as well as positive student satisfaction survey results.

Faculty scholarship. Quality of faculty scholarship, academic rigor of the curriculum, and high standards for student performance.

Faculty commitment to students. Faculty's unwavering commitment to students' academic success and spiritual growth, both in and out of the classroom, that includes counseling, advising, tutoring, and other support roles.

Financial strength. Impressive financial results, doubling net assets, increasing fundraising, and achieving unqualified financial audits.

Leadership's vision. Leadership's vision for a residential campus by building graduate student housing designed to foster community, increase revenue, and grow enrollment.

C. Recommendations

Strategic planning. Pursue multi-year strategic planning, including budgeting and resource allocations, that allow for more in-depth conversations and ways in which higher education in general, and WSC in particular, are impacted by the changing external social, economic, and political environment, while retaining its unwavering commitment to its mission. (CFRs 4.6, 4.7)

Financial management expertise. Cultivate financial management expertise, independent of the president, and clarify roles, responsibilities, and authority to provide effective leadership and support for fiscal sustainability and strategic planning. (CFRs 3.6, 3.7, 3.8)

Diversification of revenue sources. Diversify revenue sources to ensure sustainable financial viability. (CFR 3.4)

Institutional research. Formalize institutional research processes that clarify roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and interpretation, dissemination of findings and analyses, including a timetable to inform institutional review, planning, and decision making. (CFR 4.2)

Succession planning. Create succession plans for key leadership positions to ensure operational continuity. (CFRs 3.6, 3.8)

Use of direct student learning evidence. Ensure widespread understanding of the annual assessment process and promote the pervasive use of analyses of direct evidence of student learning for educational effectiveness. (CFRs 2.4, 4.4)

Diversity. Advance diversity throughout the institution, including the curriculum, learning environment, faculty, leadership positions, board of trustees, and ways consonant with WSC's mission. (CFR 1.4)

The team appreciated the institution's candor about its strengths as well as challenges, and the team applauds the extraordinary dedication of the faculty, administration, and staff to their students' academic and spiritual development. The team extends its expression to the president and the entire WSC community for its hospitality, graciousness, and openness during this important reaffirmation process. (CFR 1.8)

APPENDICES

A. Federal Compliance Forms

1. Credit Hour and Program Length Review
2. Marketing and Recruitment Review
3. Student Complaints Review
4. Transfer Credit Review

Appendix A1: Credit Hour and Program Length Review Checklist

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Policy on credit hour	Is this policy easily accessible? YES Where is the policy located? Academic Catalogue (under Academic Policies and Information), pages 75-76 Faculty Handbook (reference not made to policy but criteria for credit hour appears under Course and Syllabus Review/Criteria), pages 51-55.
Processes for 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)? YES. Does the institution adhere to this procedure? YES Comments: Department Chair and Academic Dean review and approve new course syllabi. Registrar reviews course hours and meeting times as part of regular scheduling process. Credit hour and program length reviewed during program review process by Academic Review Committee.
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? YES Comments: The academic calendar and course schedules are on website prior to registration and in the student information system. Print copies are available in the Registrar's Office.
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	How many syllabi were reviewed? No online or hybrid courses are offered What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? Not applicable What degree level(s)? Not applicable What discipline(s)? Not applicable Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? Not applicable Comments
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>	How many syllabi were reviewed? 20 total, four from each of two degrees and three concentrations What kinds of courses? Introductory, advanced, thesis, capstones, practicum, directed research What degree level(s)? Master of Divinity (MDiv) and Master of Arts (MA) What discipline(s)? Divinity, Biblical Studies, Theological Studies, Historical Theology Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? YES Comments: In accordance with the seminary's directed research or extra-mural course policies for courses taken independently the required petition forms must describe the activities/assignments that the student is required to complete as part of the course and indicate the expected minimum time to be devoted to each activity. Total expected time must be equivalent to a minimum of 3 hours per week (45 hours over the course of the semester) per unit of credit.
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	How many programs were reviewed? Four programs What kinds of programs were reviewed? Master of Divinity (1 program) and Master of Arts (3 programs) What degree level(s)? Master's degree What discipline(s)? Divinity, Biblical Studies, Theological Studies, Historical Theology Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? YES Master of Divinity is 3-4 years, 88 semester units/110 total. Master of Arts is 2- 3 years , 51-55 degree semester units/72 total. Comments: The campus references federal law for compliance with federal definition of credit hours, as well as addresses program length and time to degree.

Appendix A2: 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.	Verified Yes/No
**Federal regulations	Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students?	Yes
	Comments: Federal regulations for recruiting students are followed, with special attention given to ensure compliance for international student recruitment.	
Degree completion and cost	Does the institution provide accurate information about the typical length of time to degree? Academic Policies and Information, page 76.	Yes
	Does the institution provide accurate information about the overall cost of the degree? Financial Information in Academic Catalogue, page 87. Includes tuition, application and student fees, refunds, payment due dates, and financial aid information.	Yes
	Comments: The institution provides clear definitions of degrees, units required for program completion and length of time for degree completion. Tuition information for each program is clear and available on the website and in recruitment print materials.	
Careers and employment	Does the institution provide accurate information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable?	Yes
	Does the institution provide accurate information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable?	Yes
	Comments: Information about vocational opportunities and placement of graduates is provided in recruitment information sessions and website.	

*§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.

Appendix A3: 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.)	Verified Yes/No
Policy on student complaints	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints?	Yes
	Is the policy or procedure easily accessible? Where?	Yes
	Comments: The institution publishes an abbreviated policy (revised May 2017) for student complaints and grievances in the Academic Catalogue, pages 84-85 and its full policy in the Student Handbook, Grievance Policy, pages 22-24.	
Process/ procedure	Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? Please describe briefly:	Yes
	The institution has both an informal (in person) and formal (written) procedures for grievances, complaints, and concerns. Issues include academic and non-academic matters. Students are encouraged to discuss issues with the program coordinators and the associate director and to exhaust all informal procedures prior to moving into the formal grievance procedures. Student grievances are to be identified to the appropriate administrator within 15 days of occurrence.	
	Does the institution adhere to this procedure?	Yes
Records	Does the institution maintain records of student complaints?	Yes
	Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? Please describe briefly:	Yes
	Comments: Complaints are monitored and tracked by the registrar (academic complaints and appeals), by the Dean of Students (non-academic complaints and disciplinary issues), by the Title IX Coordinator (Title IX complaints), and VP for Administration (employment complaints).	

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

Appendix A4: Transfer Credit 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.)	Verified Yes/No
Transfer Credit	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit?	YES
Policy(s)	Is the policy publically available? If so, where? Academic Catalogue on website, Admission and Transfer Credit Procedure, page 49. Academic Policies and Information, pages 76-78.	YES
	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? From accredited graduate-level academic institutions: Grade of C or better; equivalency and currency of course content; course work no older than 10 years prior to transfer. At least 36 credit hours must be completed at WSC. From non-accredited institution: Grade of B or better. Dean reviews course description, syllabus, prerequisites, requisites, and sample of course work used to achieve credit at transfer course. Dean consults with WSC course instructor. No more than 15 transfer credits accepted.	YES
	Comments: WSC reviewed its transfer credit procedure and revised it in May 2017. A new Transfer of Credit Evaluation Form was added to the process for reviewing sufficiency of requested transfer courses.	

*§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