

REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM
For Reaffirmation of Accreditation

To
American Film Institute
AFI Conservatory

November 16-18, 2016

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

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SECTION I - OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution and Reaccreditation Process

The American Film Institute (AFI) Conservatory is part of the American Film Institute, a nonprofit educational arts organization. The AFI was founded in 1967 to fulfill a mandate from the United States President Lyndon B. Johnson, "We will create an American Film Institute, bringing together leading artists of the film industry, outstanding educators and young men and women who wish to pursue the 20th century art form as their life's work." There have been three leaders in AFI's history. George Stevens, Jr. was the Founding Director until 1980 when Jean Picker Firstenberg took over institutional leadership until 2007. Bob Gazzale currently serves as President and CEO of the American Film Institute.

The Conservatory first opened in 1969 as the Center for Advanced Film Studies. The core concept of the Center rested on the practice of professional filmmakers training those who want to become professional filmmakers. In other words, contextualized applied learning has been the heart of the Conservatory's pedagogical approach. The Center for Advanced Film Studies changed its name to the Center for Advanced Film and Television Studies in 1986 and to the AFI Conservatory in 2000.

Located in Los Angeles, California, the AFI Conservatory resides in a hub of visual storytelling expertise and production. As such, the Conservatory leverages the talent and resources available in the community to inform its instructional practices, program development, and student learning outcomes.

The Conservatory's mission statement reads:

The Conservatory at the American Film Institute identifies and serves future leaders in the art of motion pictures. As an institution with the mission of educating storytellers, we seek those who have stories to tell, and whose language of choice is motion pictures.

The Conservatory is committed to the idea that motion pictures are a major influence on both our culture and society. While teaching the craft of filmmaking to aspiring cinematographers, directors, editors, producers, production designers and screenwriters, the Conservatory is dedicated to the art that each disciplines serves – the art of story telling.

The Conservatory realizes this mission guided by core values, objectives and core commitments. Built around a Constructivist approach, two goals guide Conservatory pedagogy. The first goal is to teach story and explore its basic principles, why and how stories are told, what they are and where they are found. The second goal focuses on working together: collaborating with other filmmakers and inculcating the patience, attentiveness, hard work and communication identified in the Conservatory's core values. The Conservatory offers the MFA degree in six disciplines: Cinematography, Directing, Editing, Producing, Production Design and Screenwriting.

The Conservatory was granted candidacy for accreditation in 1999 and initial accreditation in 2002. WSCUC conducted a Capacity and Preparatory Review in 2007 and the Commission acted to continue AFI's accreditation and hold the Educational Effectiveness Review in spring 2009. Following the EER, the Commission decided to defer action on the EER report and scheduled a Special Visit for fall of 2009. The Commission action letter named the following as areas of concern: institutional commitment to the WASC accrediting process, institutional integrity and openness of communication, financial sustainability, strategic planning, academic assessment and

program review, institutional assessment and building a culture of evidence. The Special Team visit in November 2009 found the following issues as satisfactorily addressed: institutional commitment to the WASC accrediting process and integrity and openness of communication. Other issues named continued to need attention. The Commission acted to reaffirm accreditation and requested an Interim Report by November 2010 and a Special Visit in fall 2012.

The Interim Report Committee acted to accept the Interim Report and move ahead with the Special Visit in fall 2012. The Special Visit occurred in September 2012 and the Commission received the Special Visit report and continued accreditation. The Commission requested an Interim Report in November 2014 to address issues noted in the Commission letter related to leadership and governance, finances, strategic planning, curriculum maps, assessment, program review, culture of evidence and academic leadership. The Offsite Review was scheduled for fall 2016 and the Accreditation Visit for fall 2017. Following discussion with the institution, the OSR was rescheduled to spring 2016 and the AV to follow in fall 2016.

The Interim Report was received in February 2015 and the Accreditation cycle dates were confirmed. The institution was encouraged to include further updates on the five issues noted above in the preparation of its Institutional Report.

The institution does not have any off-campus locations or distance education programs that were included in this review. Nor was any special follow-up related to substantive change needed.

B. Description of Team's Review Process

The team conducted the review according to WSCUC expectations and procedures. Each team member reviewed the Institutional Report and accompanying evidentiary materials prior to the initial team conference call. The team chair, in consultation with the assistant chair, assigned evaluation and report writing responsibilities to team members based on their areas of expertise and experience. At the team conference call, the team reviewed the Off-Site Review Worksheet that contained compiled comments from each team member. As a result of the conference call, the team requested additional materials through the assigned WSCUC liaison. The team participated in the Off-Site review, completed the Offsite Review Summary of Lines of Inquiry and the video conference call with institutional representatives.

During the onsite visit, the team prepared by reviewing the Lines of Inquiry, formulating interview questions and carefully examining additional evidence provided by the institution. The team conducted interviews with institutional personnel so that the Lines of Inquiry were fully explored. Team members debriefed each interview to identify themes and refine questions for additional interviews.

The team also examined materials prepared by the Conservatory that were available in the team room. These materials included Program Reviews and samples of student work from the disciplines of Cinematography, Production Design, Screenwriting and final thesis portfolios.

The team utilized evidence gained from all of these sources to inform the report, commendations and recommendations.

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

The Conservatory's Institutional Report was well-organized, clearly written and accurately portrayed the condition of the institution. As a snapshot of a moment in time, the Institutional Report served as valuable evidence for the team. The IR development process included participation of all campus constituencies including faculty, staff, Fellows, administration and AFI's senior management team.

The Conservatory engaged in a yearlong effort driven by a steering group to complete the Institutional Report, the Review under WSCUC Standards and Compliance with Federal Requirements Worksheet and the inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators. Various governance committees were involved and a final review of the IR draft was completed in January 2016. The review was a rigorous inquiry that utilized an appropriate methodology and use of evidence. The data and evidence provided supported the claims of the institution. The self-study resulted in a greater understanding of the institution's effectiveness, its identity and mission and its sense of student learning. Furthermore, the self-study illuminated priorities that will guide the institution toward continued development as a learning organization.

SECTION II - EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS

Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions

In its Action Letter of March 11, 2013, the Commission listed five specific recommendations based on the September 2012 Special Visit. What follows is a brief summary of those recommendations and the team's findings regarding AFI's response:

1. Strategic Planning

The Commission expressed support for the completion of AFI's first strategic plan in 2010 and the update of that plan in 2012. The Commission also urged AFI to refine and expand the plan in two major ways: 1) to create a supplemental strategic plan for the Conservatory "that allows for continued alignment of purposes, core functions, and resources;" and 2) to ensure that planning is informed "by appropriately defined and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data," focused on "evidence of educational effectiveness." On these two fronts, AFI has made limited but important progress. There is a new institutional research function in place, but AFI is still in the earliest phases of work that will make possible the use of data as the Commission recommends. There exists as well a draft for a Conservatory strategic plan that the team reviewed. The team was enthusiastic about its content and its potential to align the Conservatory mission within AFI as a whole. The team learned, however, that the draft had not yet been distributed to the faculty or discipline leadership and that it was simply given to the team as a piece of evidence in the team room. The intention, as we understand it, is to distribute the draft to the community as a starting point for further conversation and planning.

2. Academic Assessment

The Commission asked the AFI Conservatory to demonstrate during the 2016 visit that it had “addressed the new and heightened expectations in the 2013 Standards of Accreditation” regarding academic assessment. The team found clear but incomplete progress in this area as well. The Conservatory faculty have developed well-defined, appropriate, and comprehensive student learning outcomes for all programs, and have articulated their standards for student achievement at the time of graduation. The outcomes are aligned with milestone and capstone projects that the curriculum is structured to support. The faculty have also developed assessment plans for each program, and have begun to discuss the assessment of shared outcomes across the Conservatory.

While much progress has been made, the Conservatory has still not conducted full assessments or analyzed results in a meaningful way. There is a plan – and that is an important sign of progress. They have established a Teaching and Learning Working Group that will develop annual assessments and reporting within each program. But this remains in the initial planning stages. It is still essential that the Conservatory begin a comprehensive practice of collecting, analyzing, interpreting and compiling assessment data to bring AFI to the level the Commission wishes to see.

3. Program Review

The AFI Conservatory has made substantial progress in conducting systematic program review and should be commended for completing reviews in all but one discipline. The team was satisfied that the Conservatory has developed clear policies and practices in this regard. The team was aware, however, that review documents show the process has been weighted more toward facilities and staffing rather than student learning. The team encourages academic leadership to pursue its plans for focusing reviews on student learning by incorporating annual program assessments within self-studies, and by directing external reviewers to focus their evaluations in this way as well. It is also expected that resulting action plans will be documented and considered within planning processes.

4. Culture of Evidence

The Commission urged the AFI Conservatory to build a robust culture of evidence that incorporates the use of data and assessment results “to inform systematic decision-making, planning and budgeting.” There remains much work to do in this area but, once again, there is progress. Institutional Research capacity was enhanced with a new director that is having a substantive impact on the Conservatory, yet basic annual reporting is still lacking and ad hoc reporting is at times inefficient. In addition, as the team’s recommendations on assessment make clear, the Conservatory must continue to develop its collection and analysis of assessment data to close the loop on decision-making and budgeting. There is scarce evidence that AFI has begun to implement these processes at their full potential.

5. Academic Leadership

The AFI Conservatory was responsive to the Commission’s concern for academic leadership knowledgeable about assessment, program review and building a culture of

evidence. The hiring of the Vice Dean of Academic Affairs took the Conservatory a long way toward building its capacity for and understanding of these practices. The team was impressed that AFI had acquired through this hire the very qualities it needed: expertise and understanding of graduate education and thorough awareness of WSCUC expectations necessary to meet accreditation standards.

Component 2: Compliance with the Standards and federal requirements; Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators

The Conservatory completed the Review under WSCUC Standards and the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators in a reflective and analytical way. The Conservatory self-study group guided preparation and discussion of each document including the Compliance with Federal Requirements Worksheet. No gaps in policies and procedures related to the Criteria for Review were identified and areas for improvement were identified. The Conservatory meets federal requirements for credit hour, marketing and recruitment, and students complaints. The Conservatory does not accept transfer students.

Standard One:

The American Film Institute's mission focuses on the preservation of the medium of film, honoring exceptional filmmakers, and educating the public. Within this context, the Conservatory aims to educate the next generation of artists within the areas of screenwriting, directing, cinematography, editing, producing, and production design. Throughout the visit it was emphasized that the educational component of AFI's mission was primary. In addition, the *AFI Strategic Plan, 2016-2018*, reported that a revision of the institute mission was under consideration that would further affirm the centrality of the Conservatory, and the team encourages that this consideration be taken seriously by the AFI community. (CFR 1.1)

The Conservatory's educational objectives are focused on graduating fellows with exceptional leadership and collaboration skills, a deep understanding of the historical context of film, and a solid foundation in the techniques of storytelling that enable them to create and convey stories through an authentic voice. Educational programs are delivered through an individualized and rigorous pedagogy that emphasizes a hands-on approach. Solid understanding of the Conservatory's educational objectives was reiterated at every level of the organization, and the strength of the Conservatory's methods of instruction were made evident to the team in the report through student success data and alumni recognition, as well as during the visit through numerous conversations and demonstrations of student work. The faculty and discipline heads specified their interest in further refining data on student achievement and success and the team reaffirms the importance of this effort. (CFR 1.2)

The Conservatory stressed the necessity for academic and creative freedom in all aspects of the educational process, as well as in the final products of both their students and their faculty. The Board has stated its commitment to academic freedom through policy, but more importantly, the faculty, staff, and students made this commitment clear through their descriptions of the educational process and their reverence for authentic voice. The curriculum demands openness to new and varied perspectives, and embraces productive confrontation through its unique process of critique. This

process is demonstrated most clearly through *Narrative Workshop*, in which a “cycle film” (a first-year, collaborative group film product) is critiqued by an entire class moderated by a faculty member. During a *Narrative Workshop*, the filmmakers under review are not allowed to defend their film, but rather must learn to absorb the information without response. The transformative effect of this process was stated several times over the course of the visit. The Conservatory is also interested in contributing to the diversification of the field by expanding access to underrepresented fellows, and through faculty recruitment. This initiative is supported by a newly established Inclusion and Collaboration Working Group made up of faculty, staff and administrators. The team applauds this initiative, and stresses the importance of expanding the group’s influence within the areas of curriculum and policy. (CFRs 1.3, 1.4)

It is clear that the Conservatory benefits greatly as a component of the American Film Institute, and there is no indication of any substantive interference from the institute within the Conservatory’s educational function or decision-making. The administrative boundaries between AFI and the Conservatory are often blurred, however, and this caused the team to consider whether overlapping areas were appropriate, effective or economical, and in some cases where they possibly led to miscommunication or conflict. Integrity was never in question, neither in representations to prospective students or in internal interactions, and commitment to WSCUC standards is shared by the entire community. Yet, at the same time the team did experience frustrations from the community with respect to transparency within budgeting, planning, and decision-making that require attention. These frustrations were exhibited to the team around multiple issues in discussions with students, staff, faculty, discipline heads, and administrators. Trustees made reference to the fact that they were aware of these frustrations and were eager to address them. In addition, there is considerable work to be done in order to make complaint and Title IX reporting procedures more transparent. All of these issues are known by the Conservatory and work is underway to address them. The team supports this work and strongly encourages that the institute make the most of its value for collaboration in order to progress as quickly as possible. (CFRs 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8)

The team’s finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has demonstrated sufficient evidence of compliance with the Standard.

Standard Two:

The AFI Conservatory has made progress in areas related to Standard 2. The Conservatory core educational process, learning-by-doing characterized by intense collaboration, continues to support the development of emerging film and television artists and their skills. The Conservatory’s core pedagogy is well-known and Fellows report that the process “rocks their soul to the core.” In other words, Fellows find the program challenging, rigorous and “the best program I’ve ever been a part of.”

The Conservatory pedagogy leverages highly-qualified working professionals as part-time faculty which keeps content and program learning outcomes relevant and connected to the filmmaking and TV industries. Faculty are highly invested in the curriculum and in Fellow learning success. Discipline faculty maintain close contact and oversight of Fellows through the learning process and feedback is organized into a process designed to continuously improve Fellow performance and learning. All

discipline programs except for one have completed a program review process and there is a plan in development for annual assessments and critical linkages to the next round of program reviews. (CFR 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.7)

Conservatory Fellows know the Conservatory level performance expectations. They are informed about the mission and values of the institution as well as the first year and second year performance requirements. The Fellows reported on their “cycle film” experiences, thesis movie expectations and discipline level expectations. The first-year “boot camp” serves as a student orientation and goes far in immersing the Fellows in their learning environment, performance expectations and learning outcomes. (CFR 2.2b, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6)

Scholarship in the form of creative activity is highly valued at the Conservatory. All faculty are actively employed or otherwise engaged with the film and/or TV industries. The deep connection to the industries supports a robust curriculum that includes the latest in technology developments and industry trends and impacts on visual storytelling. (CFR 2.8)

While the Conservatory has made progress in core functions to achieve their educational objectives, the team identified areas that need attention. Student support services that are typically found in institutions of higher education are in development. The Fellow Affairs office personnel are working diligently to provide appropriate information, and support services including Federally required (Title IX) policies and due process. Fellows reported challenges in understanding processes of filing a complaint or grievance. The Fellows also evidenced a sense of non-responsiveness from the Conservatory to their concerns and feedback in a number of areas, including course evaluations and programmatic level feedback such as lack of consistency or alignments between discipline area learning outcomes and requirements. Fellows reported a desire to know explicitly about their course level learning outcomes and more direct instruction in expectations for “collaboration.” Indeed, Fellows evidence frustration due to a feeling that their concerns “seem readily addressed and easily fixed,” but appear to go nowhere. (CFR 2.9, 2.10, 2.12, 2.13)

Co-curricular programs aligned with academic goals are somewhat sparse. (CFR 2.11). The team was puzzled by this gap given the Conservatory is part of the American Film Institute which runs programs of such high caliber as the AFI FEST. While the team understands Fellows can attend the film fest, there appears to be little alignment to the curriculum or assessment of the film fest as a teaching and learning tool for Fellows.

It is also important to note that the Institutional Research function at the Conservatory is in an early development stage. Staffed and run by one highly qualified and experienced individual, the Conservatory is urged to address the institutional research needs that will contribute to the development of a strong culture of evidence typical of higher education institutions. (CFR 2.10)

The team’s finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has demonstrated sufficient evidence of compliance with the Standard.

Standard Three:

The AFI Conservatory employs faculty and staff with substantial and continuing commitment to the institution and with impressive experience and credentials in the film and related visual storytelling industries. Over the last few years the Conservatory

has begun to address its limited ethnic and gender diversity. As faculty and staff openings occur, the institution is beginning to have some success finding a diverse range of faculty candidates by tapping resource pools at industry associations rather than, as in the past, relying mainly on internal referrals. (CFR 3.1)

Faculty policies and evaluation procedures are set forth in the recently updated Faculty Handbook. The institution reports that, in the past, faculty evaluations have not been consistent across departments; there has been no consistent multisource feedback, and there is no mechanism for peer-to-peer appraisals of Conservatory support units. The team encourages AFI to fully implement its evaluation procedures with the goal of eventually having an equivalent of the program review process for all staff units. As well, with the exception of a new faculty orientation program, there are currently no structured faculty or staff development activities or processes at the Conservatory. (CFR 3.2, 3.3)

AFI reports that it has had clean financial audits since it first gained WASC accreditation in 2002. The team reviewed AFI's clean audited financial statements and its A-133 audits for the past four fiscal years ending June 30, 2016. AFI, at fiscal year end June 30, 2016, continues to be financially sound with a very strong statement of financial position. For example, its year-end unrestricted cash position was more than enough to offset all its short and long term liabilities. (CFR 3.4)

As a unit within AFI, the Conservatory has a budget but does not have its own audited financial statements. The budgets are balanced on the revenue side by a subsidy from AFI that has ranged from approximately \$2 million to \$2.3 million in each of these years. The team was convinced that AFI is fully committed to supporting the Conservatory as an important part of its mission and that it expects to continue to provide this general support in the future as a routine part of its ongoing operations. (CFR 3.4)

AFI spent \$7 million between 2010 and 2016 to improve its facilities and reduce deferred maintenance. However, as the self-study reported and the team confirmed, there is still a need for further space optimization to reduce overcrowding and a need for improved technological infrastructure. AFI is now in the early stages of a major campus master planning initiative. As well, instructional technology needs constant upgrading to remain apace of the movie and TV industries. The team found that the Conservatory and AFI are doing a commendable job of managing their capital equipment needs. (CFR 3.5)

The team found that the leadership of both AFI and the Conservatory is characterized by integrity at all levels and that leadership was candid and open in its presentation of all materials and conversations requested by the team. AFI has a fulltime chief executive officer (CEO) and a full time chief financial officer (CFO). The CEO has been in office since 2007 and the CFO since 2015. Their responsibilities include the Conservatory as well as other parts of AFI. The Conservatory lead is a Dean who is the chief academic officer. During the past year tensions developed between some faculty members and the Dean over issues of shared governance. As a result, the faculty has unionized and, as of the date of the team visit, was awaiting the start of collective bargaining negotiations. In October 2016, the current Dean resigned effective at the end of the academic year June, 2017. As a result of the accreditation self-study there have been recent reorganizations to improve efficiency in such areas as Academic Affairs, Enrollment Services, Financial Aid, and Registrar/Institutional Research. The team also

noted that the organization charts indicate that, while the Dean of the Conservatory reports to the President of AFI, he is not a member of the AFI senior management group. (CFR 3.6, 3.7, 3.8)

AFI has an independent Board of Trustees of over 50 members all with impressive credentials. Following indications of faculty concern about the Conservatory's direction, the Board commissioned a comprehensive review of the Conservatory in 2015 by an external management consulting group. As a result of this review, a Conservatory Committee, which had been dormant, was reactivated and is now directly responsible for considering matters related to the Conservatory. It is made up of ten trustees and four alumni. The team met with members of the Conservatory Committee and was impressed with their deep commitment to the Conservatory and their enthusiastic support of its mission. In numerous conversations with other community members, however, the team heard widespread concern that there was no formal ongoing channel for faculty, staff and fellows to communicate their concerns and insights directly to either this Committee or the Board as a whole. As well, evidence obtained during the visit indicates faculty at the Conservatory appear to have had a limited role in academic governance. (CFR 3.9, CFR 3.10)

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

Standard Four:

The AFI Conservatory is on a pathway to developing a robust and sustained culture of evidence that informs priorities, planning and improvements of quality and effectiveness. Through its robust pedagogy of "learning by doing" the Conservatory is able to effectively respond to the changing filmmaking industry that directly impacts the higher educational environment sustained at the Conservatory. It is a note of great pride that the Conservatory faculty are connected to and, indeed, immersed in the visual storytelling industry (film or television) and bring to the classroom and the Conservatory Fellows timely and immediate information, trends, techniques and strategies to employ in their educational experience. (CFR 4.7)

It is clear from evidence gained through interviews that the faculty, staff and administrators at the Conservatory are engaged in ongoing inquiry into teaching and learning. They care deeply about the Fellows and their craft. The dialogue of "storytelling," its craft, its artistry and its impact resonated throughout every aspect of the Conservatory structure and culture. Fellows reported good working relationships with faculty and deep engagement with the Conservatory pedagogy. Indeed, Fellows reported that they were continually "rocked to the core of their souls." This is indeed high praise from a group of formidable and skilled artists. (CFR 4.4, 4.5, 4.7)

The first round of Discipline Reviews yielded helpful information according to the Discipline Heads. Each discipline learned more about what worked within their program structure and curriculum and identified areas for growth and attention. Overall, the group identified collaboration and coordination across program disciplines for attention so that Fellows could take more advantage of cross-discipline learning opportunities. Barriers such as class scheduling could be readily addressed in this area. (CFR4.3, 4.4)

The team urges the Conservatory to continue to build the processes and procedures needed to function as a fully engaged institution of higher education. The

foundational structures are in place including a process for systematic assessment of teaching and learning as evidenced by the institutional Teaching and Learning workgroup that is guiding the development of annual assessments that will eventually inform the Discipline Review process. A complete closing of the loop will include a connection to strategic planning including identification of key priorities and future directions. (CFR 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6)

The Conservatory is challenged to collect, analyze and interpret data in ways that track results over time given the current developmental state of the institutional research capacity. The institution has plans to further develop and integrate quality assurance processes. (CFR 4.1, 4.2)

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has demonstrated sufficient evidence of compliance with the Standard

Component 3: Degree Programs: Meaning, quality and integrity of the degrees

The team was especially impressed by the Conservatory's ability to articulate what it means to be an AFI fellow and alum. The challenging and rich educational experience provided by the Conservatory was evident in multiple conversations throughout the visit. The Conservatory employs a constructivist model to provide a hands-on, production-based curriculum, and regardless of their program, each student's first year begins with an immersive boot camp, followed by three major projects. Their second year is devoted to a substantial thesis project that includes an extensive program-specific portfolio alongside their film production. (CFRs 1.2, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2)

Fellows are reviewed at the end of the first year to determine if they will progress to the second year, and again at the end of the program, in which they are assessed on their growth, collaboration, and accomplishments. In addition to faculty reviews, fellows also undergo peer review through a group critique called *Narrative Workshop*. Apart from these assessments, the newly formed Teaching and Learning Working Group has begun systematic assessment of program learning outcomes that will be tied to the discipline review process. Fellows also participate in program-based, mid-residency and exit focus groups that provide rich data for faculty to understand the student experience. Alumni surveys are also conducted, and through the combination of these efforts the Conservatory has been able to verify how current fellows and alums embody the distinct values and educational objectives of AFI through their dispositions and achievements. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.5)

While the team was convinced about the integrity of the MFA offered by the Conservatory, it had some reservations that the institute would be able to sustain this quality indefinitely if it did not immediately enhance its quality assurance mechanisms. Learning outcomes have been established, for example, but the work of the Teaching Learning Working Group remains in the initial planning stages. It will be essential that assessment data begin to be collected annually, analyzed and interpreted, and compiled to support discipline review self-studies. The annual focus groups are an important source of information, but it was reported that they have been occurring with discipline heads present, potentially silencing reticent voices that might otherwise have valuable information to offer. Fellow and alumni surveys, in addition, are locally developed, and therefore lack the advantages of benchmarking results. Fellows participating in the

open student meeting also complained that course evaluations ask irrelevant questions to capture their experience. (CFRs 2.6, 2.7, 4.4)

Both in the areas of direct and indirect assessment the team encourages the Conservatory to explore new ways to verify the quality and integrity of their degrees. Beyond enhancements to assessment and discipline review discussed below, the Conservatory could also consider participating in national or consortia published surveys. The reliability of the current focus group methodology and course evaluation instrument should also be interrogated against best practices at peer institutions. (CFRs 4.2, 4.4, 4.5)

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

The Conservatory maintains that in order for fellows to complete their program they must demonstrate an “advanced ability to synthesize and integrate their craft”. Fellow learning is assessed through four primary methods: discipline-specific course work, Narrative Workshop critique, cycle film project review, and a final thesis project review. Alongside close faculty instruction and mentoring, students have the benefit of peer assessment, and for those who take advantage of it, alumni mentoring as well. The Conservatory faculty have developed clear, appropriate, and comprehensive student learning outcomes for all programs, and have articulated their standards for student achievement at the time of graduation. The outcomes are aligned with milestone and capstone projects that the curriculum is structured to support. Faculty have also developed assessment plans for each program, and have begun to discuss assessment of shared outcomes across the Conservatory. And finally, the students demonstrate that they are able to administer self-assessment as well as peer assessment. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4)

The team was impressed with the Conservatory faculty’s dedication toward developing a systematic approach for outcomes-based assessment. It was noted by the entire team that, in comparison with the status of assessment at the previous accreditation review, the Conservatory’s capacity and infrastructure has improved dramatically. Admittedly, faculty, staff, and administrators were candid about the fact that they are still in the initial stages of development, yet they appeared motivated and eager to take this work on. Building on momentum across the Conservatory, the team strongly encourages enhancing and expanding assessment activities in three core areas. First, the learning outcomes, the curriculum and co-curriculum, and the products used to demonstrate learning, need to be more directly aligned. Mapping should be conducted and documented, with the result disseminated to all faculty. Next, multi-year assessment plans need to be established that describe how outcomes will be assessed (including the tools and procedures used), and how assessment data will be analyzed, interpreted, and put to use. And finally, fellows need to be more clearly communicated with regarding assessment, and when appropriate, trained in the techniques of self-assessment of specific outcomes. During the open student meeting there was general agreement that they did not fully understand what outcomes faculty wanted them to achieve, and citing “collaboration” as an example, fellows did not see the connection between the curriculum and what was expected of them. (CFRs 4.4, 4.5)

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

The successes of the Conservatory include not only an award-winning and influential alumni, but also an average retention rate within the MFA programs of 95% and an average graduation rate of 93%. The team commended the Conservatory on these achievements and was equally impressed with the low student-loan default rate. It is a testament to their attention to student needs that the Conservatory reported recent improvements such as moving to two-year scholarships; expanding services in counseling, crisis intervention, advising, internship and career services; and establishing an alumni mentorship program that matches alums with interested current fellows. (CFR 2.10)

The Conservatory has also recently hired a highly-qualified Director of Fellow Affairs. While student success is not in question, throughout the visit the Conservatory's capacity to fully support student life was found to be lacking with respect to common practice within higher education. In order for the Conservatory to stay apace within the changing ecology of higher education it will be essential that programs, policies, protocols, workflows, and communications be developed in the areas of, for example: grievances and appeals, leadership development, Title IX reporting, equity and inclusion, entrepreneurship and financial literacy, and wellness, just to name a few. With acknowledgement of the limitations of space on campus, healthy eateries and places for commuting fellows to gather and socialize should also be considered. Although these steps may not be required to improve student success, they would significantly impact the student experience and likely lead to improvements in student learning as well. (CFRs 2.11, 2.13)

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

The AFI Conservatory approached the Discipline review process seriously and with the clear intent to build a robust culture of evidence. Production Design was the first to complete a Discipline review in 2013, closely followed by Cinematography. All other programs with the exception of Screenwriting completed a program review process by spring 2015; Screenwriting is scheduled to complete a review in spring 2017. As a new process, each review led to process improvements in the next review. Interviews suggest that program review has become a critical component to the program planning and curriculum development plans at the Conservatory. Indeed, one participant indicated Discipline review had led to a complete reorganization in scope and sequence for Cinematography. The reorganization was needed to support Fellow learning and to maximize the instructional talents of the faculty.

The Conservatory Discipline Review process is structured around an internal Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats analysis along with an external review by an individual with an academic background in the field and an individual from the entertainment profession in the same area. Faculty and Fellows are involved in the process which adds strength. Descriptive institutional data on outreach efforts, applicant characteristics and Fellow characteristics are utilized.

The Conservatory committee for Discipline review indicated the next developmental step is to develop and execute action steps based on findings. Annual assessment data will also add depth and sophistication to the Discipline review process. As well, the committee intends to continually reflect on the Discipline Review process

and identify ways to more closely connect it to direct and indirect evidence of student learning. The committee reported that the utilization of outside reviewers was a worthwhile investment and indeed it seemed the reviewers “didn’t have enough time on campus.” An additional next step in their professional development is to serve as program reviewers for other film schools; one Discipline Chair plans to do so in the near future.

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

The financial viability of the Conservatory depends on its place within the larger structure of AFI. For fiscal year ending June 30, 2016, AFI’s total unrestricted support and revenue was \$33.6-million while the budget for the Conservatory was \$16.6-million. The Conservatory therefore represents about 50 % of AFI’s total financial operations. This ratio has been fairly steady for several years. (CFR 3.4)

AFI has received clean financial audits for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016.

AFI Audited Statements	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total Unrestricted Support & Revenue	33,461,533	32,246,655	31,560,168	33,180,065
Total Expense	32,247,987	31,848,925	32,030,951	33,647,189
Change in Net Assets from Operations	1,213,546	397,730	(470,783)	(467,124)
Total Net Assets	40,661,685	39,694,510	40,132,642	38,502,119

(Parenthesize in table represent negative numbers or declines).

These audited statements show that AFI’s total unrestricted support and revenue declined in 2014 and 2015 but recovered in 2016. These numbers reveal that, while AFI is currently financially sound, it is not growing. The Conservatory, along with the other parts of AFI, will need to develop additional financial resources to assure long-term sustainability.

According to AFI’s self-study, AFI’s Executive Vice Dean is responsible for preparing the annual budgets for the Conservatory. In March and April of each year requests for resources are solicited from faculty, staff and administrators. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and others review inputs and assumptions and develop the final budget. The AFI finance office tracks the budget throughout the year and issues regular budget reports. This budgeting process is new to AFI and the Conservatory and the team found in on-site interviews that it is not yet fully operational nor do strategic planning and budgeting fully align. AFI’s relatively new Chief Financial Officer, who has introduced these new budgeting structures, is still working with the campus community to get the process fully accepted and implemented. This new process is expected to facilitate full alignment between planning and budgeting in the next planning cycle. (CFR 3.5, 3.6)

The budgets presented to the team consist of a series of pie charts that present revenues and expenses in dollars and percentages for the fiscal years 2013 to 2019. For the completed years, 2013 through 2016 these are not so much budgets as an extraction,

on an accrual basis, of the actual funds related to the Conservatory that were included in the AFI audited statements. While these pie charts provide a useful view of the Conservatory's revenues and expenses, they are not the more detailed comparison of budgeted with actual expenses that the governing boards of higher educational institutions usually require. The team recommends that the Conservatory develop a budget format and a set of categories that are more typical of those used in private non-profit institutions of higher education. (CFR 3.4)

Conservatory Actual Expense	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total expense	15,920,681	16,514,671	16,020,115	16,624,289
Salaries and Fringes	43%	44%	46%	42%
Administrative	23%	24%	22%	23%
Production and Equipment	17%	17%	17%	18%
Other including Depreciation	17%	15%	15%	17%

Conservatory Actual Revenue	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total Revenue	15,920,681	16,514,671	16,020,115	16,624,289
Net Tuition, Materials, Fees	73%	66%	66%	67%
AFI General Support	15%	13%	14%	12%
Funded Scholarships	3%	10%	10%	10%
Other	9%	11%	10%	11%

In the preceding tables, it can be seen that revenues and expenses are balanced. The most significant change in these years took place between 2013 and 2014 when, after a major fundraising campaign, funded scholarships increased significantly. Since the Conservatory does not discount its tuition, funded scholarships and federal loans are the only available financial aid.

For some time, the Conservatory has delivered high quality education to a group of Fellows who have become exceptionally successful in the film and related industries. Its challenge now is to sustain the level of excellence for which it is known. To do this the Conservatory needs to keep up with rapid changes in the industries that employ its students as well as with changes in the environment of higher education. The Conservatory's broad focus on storytelling within the moving image arts allows great flexibility in adapting its curriculum to industry changes as the field has expanded from movies to television, to internet streaming, and to other emerging media. However, in a field where technologies are rapidly changing it will be critical that the Conservatory constantly upgrade its production equipment and facilities. The team commends AFI and the Conservatory for beginning a master planning process that, in time, will address a wide range of facilities issues. (CFR 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7)

Finally, it must be recognized that the ultimate sustainability of the Conservatory depends on the quality of the education it provides. For this, the faculty and staff need to keep up to date on changes in means and methods of visual storytelling but they must also stay abreast of best practices in the changing environment of higher education. The team recommends that to this end the Conservatory increase its support for faculty and staff development, encourage membership in higher education professional associations, and consider higher education experience as a qualification when bringing in new people at every level in the organization. (CFR 3.1, 4.3, 4.7)

Component 8: Optional essay on institutional specific themes

The AFI Conservatory did not include an optional essay in its Institutional Report.

Component 9: Reflection and plans for improvement

The AFI Conservatory appears to have made good use of the current institutional review and has certainly demonstrated substantial improvement and momentum regarding WSCUC standards. The interest and commitment are clear: leadership of both the Conservatory and AFI as a whole seek to use best practices of higher education as the scaffolding that will bring their core “learn-by-doing” model to its next level. They rightly point out in the conclusion of the Institutional Report that they must pay close attention to enrollment management, modernizing the curriculum, and supporting the transition of the Fellows to their professional lives as key pieces of their future work. They include, moreover, a list of priorities that dovetail with the team’s recommendations: “plans for the assessment of Fellow learning; continued development of Discipline Review and a culture of evidence; enhanced integration of planning and budgeting; improved governance and communication; and expanding opportunities for understanding and encouraging diversity among people, ideas and educational outcomes.”

The team would add to that list the importance of supporting the centrality of the Conservatory program within the American Film Institute as a whole. Repeatedly, the community referred to the Conservatory as the “jewel in the crown” of the Institute. But that verbal commitment of the Conservatory’s importance was not always evident in terms of organizational structure and planning. As our recommendation makes clear, we advise that AFI pay careful attention to developing structures and practices that support the centrality of education clearly articulated.

Finally, shared governance is a pressing issue and the AFI Conservatory, after a turbulent couple of years, is ready for it. The team is aware that the recent difficulties among the Dean, the Discipline Heads and the faculty make abundantly clear that AFI faces an opportune moment to build a governance model appropriate to its situation and conditions. Indeed, a clearly defined model of shared governance might have avoided a trying period under the current Dean, who had a mandate for change, executed on that mandate in some important ways, yet had no effective process to implement change in a meaningful way – and the enterprise backfired. To be sure, responsibility for the dysfunction extends beyond process to the individuals involved,

but the structure and principals of shared governance could have made an enormous difference.

SECTION III - OTHER TOPICS

Not applicable

SECTION IV - FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TEAM REVIEW

Commendations

The team commends the Conservatory for the following accomplishments and practices.

1. The Conservatory maintains a unifying and focused mission through its celebrated commitment to a production-based curriculum (learn by doing), to the power of visual storytelling, and to the pedagogy of collaborative teams.
2. The Conservatory continues to recruit an impressive group of talented and skilled Fellows and possesses impressive retention and graduation rates in its programs.
3. The strength of the Conservatory's educational offerings is in large measure a product of a dedicated faculty of working professionals.
4. One clear measure of the value of an AFI education is the continued and consistent professional accomplishments of its alumni. The team commends as well the active alumni involvement in mentoring current Fellows.
5. The team recognizes an open and positive attitude at AFI about the accreditation process and the ways in which best practices in higher education can serve as scaffolding for a new level of educational quality and student (Fellow) service.
6. The Conservatory demonstrates significant progress with program review through the completion of reviews for all but one of its programs. The team commends as well the "Teaching/Learning Group" that will develop annual assessment reporting on each program.
7. The team recognizes recently instituted practices of new faculty orientation, new mechanisms for student complaints and Title IX, a new budgeting process with increased transparency, and a working group dedicated to issues of diversity and inclusion.

Recommendations

The team wishes to articulate its recommendations in three major categories: 1) Organizational Planning and Structure; 2) Assessment; and 3) Governance.

I. Organizational Planning and Structure

The team recommends that AFI contemplate an organizational structure that dignifies the centrality of the Conservatory within the Institute as a whole. We suggest that the Institute consider the following.

- Elevating the Dean of the Conservatory to the senior management team to voice the educational priorities of AFI within the context of the Institute's larger strategic initiatives and big picture conversations.
- Building a staff of higher educational professionals within the Conservatory to oversee faculty development, Fellows (student) life, assessment and curricular development, etc. These individuals should have opportunity to engage with AFI as a whole to ensure that educational values are a serious and persistent part of the Institute's planning and strategic focus.
- Including the potential appointments of graduate higher education professionals to the Board and to the Trustee Conservatory Committee.
- Ensuring appropriate participation of Faculty and Discipline Heads not only within the Conservatory but also within the Institute as a whole.
- Crafting a longer-term financial plan for the Conservatory that matches the larger strategic values of AFI and that is consistent with recognized structures of academic financial planning.
- Encouraging the development of a robust culture of higher education through strategic hires, faculty development, and increased Board and Presidential attention to the Conservatory and to its educational role within the Institute as a whole.

II. Assessment

The team recommends that the Conservatory continue to enhance the establishment of a comprehensive outcomes-based program assessment and review system. We suggest, moreover, that AFI expand its institutional research capacity and awareness to inform decision-making and the assurance of educational effectiveness.

- Refine newly established program review process to ensure focus on Fellow learning that leads to improvement through documented action plans clearly connected to budget
- Continue efforts through the Teaching and Learning Working Group to assess faculty-generated learning outcomes and to establish process of annual reporting, analysis and the dissemination of fellow achievement
- Build on institutional research knowledge base and expand Conservatory awareness of IR function through standard reports such as a Conservatory fact book and dashboards.

III. Governance

The team recommends that AFI craft a shared governance model appropriate to its situation and conditions. We suggest that the model take into consideration the following elements.

- The importance of collaborative, comprehensive and open conversation that will inform institutional decisions and those responsible for making those decisions.
- The advantages of appropriate Faculty, Staff, and Fellow representation on the Board of Directors (in a non-voting capacity) and on other appropriate bodies of management
- The need for an independent self-governed faculty group that is able to set its own agenda of issues. The team suggests, moreover, the development of an appropriate arena for those issues to be reviewed in constructive and respectful dialogue
- A process for the dissemination of relevant institutional data and the communication of pertinent developments that will allow for informed shared governance conversation and activity
- The importance of a clear and workable structure designed for timely and active response to Fellow voice and concern
- The benefits of a model that taps into the expertise and wisdom of the community as a whole including trustees, senior management, discipline heads, faculty, staff, fellows, and alumni.

APPENDICES

The report includes the following appendices:

- A. *Federal Compliance Forms*
 1. *Credit Hour Review*
 2. *Marketing and Recruitment Review*
 3. *Student Complaint Review*
 4. *Transfer Policy Review*
- B. *Off-Campus Locations, as appropriate*
- C. *Distance Education, as appropriate*

FEDERAL COMPLIANCE FORMS

OVERVIEW

There are four forms that WSCUC uses to address institutional compliance with some of the federal requirements affecting institutions and accrediting agencies:

- 1 – Credit Hour and Program Length Review Form
- 2 – Marketing and Recruitment Review Form
- 3 – Student Complaints Review Form
- 4 – Transfer Credit Policy Review Form

Teams complete these four forms and add them as appendices to the team report. They are included here in order for the institution to provide the necessary information for the team. Teams are not required to include a narrative about any of these matters in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings, Commendations, and Recommendations section of the team report.

1 - CREDIT HOUR AND PROGRAM LENGTH REVIEW FORM

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

Credit Hour - §602.24(f)

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

(1) The accrediting agency meets this requirement if-

(i) It reviews the institution's-

- (A) Policies and procedures for determining the credit hours, as defined in 34 CFR 600.2, that the institution awards for courses and programs; and
- (B) The application of the institution's policies and procedures to its programs and coursework; and

(ii) Makes a reasonable determination of whether the institution's assignment of credit hours conforms to commonly accepted practice in higher education.

(2) In reviewing and evaluating an institution's policies and procedures for determining credit hour assignments, an accrediting agency may use sampling or other methods in the evaluation.

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

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

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

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

Program Length - §602.16(a)(1)(viii)

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

1 - CREDIT HOUR AND PROGRAM LENGTH REVIEW FORM

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

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Policy on credit hour	Is this policy easily accessible? XX YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, where is the policy located? Fellow Policies and Procedures Handbook 2016-2017, p.110: One credit hour at the AFI Conservatory is defined as fifteen hours of contact/class time with an additional thirty hours or more of work outside class. http://www.afintranet.org/gallery/index.sd?catid=60&headTitle=Fellows%20Handbooks username = afiweb password = !filminfo!
	Comments:
Process(es)/ periodic review of credit hour	Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)? XX YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? XX YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: The Registrar's Office maintains a curriculum chart identifying the credit value of all courses, and monitor credit assignment in the new course approval process.
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? XX YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: The course schedule is maintained by the Registrar's Office; course schedule information and curriculum charts are available. The Conservatory maintains a calendar of courses indicating days and time of class meetings that is used by Fellows, faculty, and staff.
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? Not Applicable
	Type of courses reviewed: <input type="checkbox"/> online <input type="checkbox"/> hybrid
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)?
	Are students doing the amount of work per the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	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? 12
	What kinds of courses? Seminar/Mentorship/Workshop & Screening Class/Advanced Workshop
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Cinematography & Directing
	Are students doing the amount of work per the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? XX YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Comments:	

Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	How many programs were reviewed? Three
	What kinds of programs were reviewed? Graduate
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Cinematography, Directing, Production Design
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of an acceptable length? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

2 - MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulation §602.16(a)(1)(vii), WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's recruiting and admissions practices.

Material Reviewed	Questions and Comments: (Enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections of this table as appropriate.)
**Federal Requirements	Does the institution follow federal requirements on recruiting students? XX YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: No incentive compensation is offered to employees or third party entities.
Degree completion and cost	Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree? XX YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree? XX YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: Typical length of program: http://www.afi.com/conservatory/faqs.aspx Cost of attendance: http://www.afi.com/conservatory/admissions/fa_cost.aspx
Careers and employment	Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? XX YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable? XX YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: Extensive information about alumni outcomes is available here: http://www.afi.com/Conservatory/alumni/

**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 requirements do not apply to the recruitment of international students residing in foreign countries who are not eligible to receive Federal financial aid.

3 - STUDENT COMPLAINTS REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulation*§602-16(1)(1)(ix) WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s student complaints policies, procedures, and records. (See also WSCUC Senior College and University Commission’s Complaints and Third Party Comment Policy.)

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections of this table as appropriate.)	
Policy on student complaints	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints?	XX YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Is the policy or procedure easily accessible? If so, where?	XX YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: The Fellow Affairs Complaint form and information are located here: http://afi.com/conservatory/admissions/fellowaffairs.aspx The Conservatory also contracts with the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education for review of a complaint: Fellow Policies and Procedures Handbook 2016-2017, p.11: An individual may contact the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education for review of a complaint. The bureau may be contacted at 2535 Capitol Oaks Drive, Suite 400, Sacramento, CA 95833, 916.431.6959, www.bppe.ca.gov. This school is authorized under federal law to enroll non-immigrant alien students.	
Process(es)/ procedure	Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints?	XX YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, please describe briefly: The Conservatory Office of Fellow Affairs handles complaints from Fellows, which can be registered online or in person. The Director, Fellow Affairs serves as an Ombudsman for Fellows and is the first point of contact for Fellows. Complaints are considered and routed appropriately for resolution.	
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure?	XX YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Comments: The current procedure is very informal. It is planned to be a more formal and rigorous process in the future.		
Records	Does the institution maintain records of student complaints?	XX YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, where? The Fellow Affairs Office maintains records of Fellow complaints.	
	Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? If so, please describe briefly: The Director, Fellow Affairs and Vice Dean, Academic Affairs review complaints annually and report to the Conservatory Dean.	XX YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Comments: The current process is very informal and needs to be formalized with careful data tracking and analysis.		