

**REPORT OF THE WSCUC VISITING TEAM
ACCREDITATION REVIEW**

To

Irell & Manella Graduate School of Biological Sciences

24 – 25 March, 2015

Team Roster

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The team evaluated the institution under the 2013 WSCUC Senior College and University Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective evaluation for consideration and action by the institution and by the WSCUC Senior College and University Commission.

The formal action concerning the institution's status is taken by the Commission and is described in a letter from the Commission to the institution. This report and the Commission letter are made available to the public by publication on the WSCUC website.

SECTION 1 – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

The Irell & Manella Graduate School of the Biological Sciences (IMGS) is an integral part of the Beckman Research Institute (BRI) within the City of Hope medical center and research institute (COH).

While the IMGS is a very small (in budget terms) part of the COH it is an essential aspect of the COH mission. Indeed, the COH institutional mission statement reads: “City of Hope is transforming the future of health. Every day we turn science into practical benefit. We turn hope into reality. We accomplish this through exquisite care, innovative research, and vital education focused on eliminating cancer and diabetes.” (1.1)

The IMGS also has its own recently revised mission statement: “The mission of the Irell & Manella Graduate School of Biological Sciences at City of Hope is to train students in an academically stimulating, collaborative, and diverse environment to apply their creativity, curiosity and talents to advance understanding of the complexities of the life sciences and to apply research discoveries toward finding cures for disease.” (1.2)

The IMGS awards only a single degree: Doctor of Philosophy in the Biological Sciences degree. (1.2) The COH received State approval to create the IMGS in 1993. Initial accreditation was granted by WASC in 2001 and reaffirmed in 2008. Today the IMGS is both intellectually and physically a part of the BRI. The IMGS is housed in the Beckman Center where it occupies about 5,700 square feet of space. (3.4) A unique aspect of the IMGS is that its faculty is coextensive with research faculty in the BRI, except for a small number of faculty from the Medical Center. Almost all faculty members, today numbering about 80, are researchers in the BRI. Participation in the affairs of the IMGS by BRI members is an additional duty to their primary responsibility as BRI researchers. On the other hand this arrangement provides graduate students in IMGS with access to a very large number of top-quality researchers. The Visiting Team’s (the Team) impression is that the BRI members who choose to teach and act as research advisors to the IMGS students do so enthusiastically and with great commitment to the education of the next generation of biomedical scientists. This report will return to faculty and administrative issues in a later section. (3.1)

Another unique aspect of IMGS is that it charges no tuition; students pay a \$50 fee for each semester of enrollment. The IMGS funding comes from the COH institutional budget, foundation gifts, fellowships, grants, and interest from an endowment that was created by the COH in 2002. The endowment has grown to approximately \$17 million and provides the IMGS with a certain level of autonomy. The Institution has no off-campus locations.

The Team reviewed all of the documentation supplied by the Institution along

with responses received from the Team's request for additional information and clarification in response to its "Lines of Inquiry" request.

SECTION II - EVALUATION OF REACCREDITATION REPORT AND DOCUMENTS

IMGS presented a well-argued report and were responsive to questions from the Team. It appears that academic faculty and students were involved in preparing for the accreditation exercise. The report addressed important issues for accreditation, including responses to previous commission actions; the meaning, quality and integrity of the degree program; assessment and student success, and overall financial viability of the graduate school. IMGS is very clear that its main goal is to "train" students to become research scientists with the ability to be successful in a variety of careers. The report also shows how completing the Compliance Checklist led the graduate school to create new policies on program reviews and grade change appeal process. The Team did note that the grade review policy proposed was too management focused and IMGS has decided to move to a much more faculty intense approach.

The report includes a very informative discussion on the meaning, quality and integrity of their degrees. This discussion demonstrates the graduate school has given serious thought to what their degree means and how the graduate school is actively committed to making sure that their program is aligned with best practices at other institutions, both domestic and foreign.

A previous commission letter (2008) urged the graduate school to improve its institutional research capabilities. The report notes that COH has made major investments in its information capabilities and that this has allowed the graduate school, which receives its IT support from the COH corporate IT department, to purchase and implement the Blackboard learning management system (and to modify it to be compatible with IMGS needs). In FY 2013 the institution also purchased the Oracle Campus Solutions (REGIS) student information system that will allow "the smooth integration of data tracing the progress of students from the application stage, to acceptance, to entry, to graduation, and into careers." IMGS staff is presently undergoing training on the use of this system; how well this improves institutional research capabilities should be the focus of the next accreditation review." The report also indicates how the institution intends to use REGIS to allow it to embed assessment into learning activities. The Team will return to assessments later in this report.

IMGS decided to incorporate a "Special Theme" section into the accreditation report. IMGS is concerned that its students be aware of the various career paths that are available and have taken the responsibility to make students more informed about their post-graduation options. The approach taken is to help

students prepare a “Graduate Student Individual Development Plan.” This is very timely and the results should be examined in the next accreditation review. The accreditation report also included a section on budgeting and finances that became one of the “lines of inquiry” that the team pursued; details will be presented later in this report.

SECTION III - FACULTY AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

The IMGS still uses “volunteer faculty” from the BRI and the Medical Center to provide academic support for their degree program. The Accreditation Report (2008) and Interim Report (2011) both noted the potential problems the issue of “volunteer faculty” introduced. This Team also raised the issue as a Line of Inquiry and received a fairly detailed response from IMGS. (3.1, 3.2, 3.3) IMGS does not recruit academic faculty directly from outside of the COH. The Team has chosen to use the term “academic faculty” for individuals who are considered to be “graduate school” faculty since the BRI uses the term “faculty” for the members of its research staff, even if they do not participate in the affairs of the IMGS. The Medical Center also uses the term “faculty” for its professional staff. IMGS reserves the right to invite appropriate faculty members from both BRI and the Medical Center to become academic faculty. IMGS has carefully defined the requirements needed for faculty to serve on the academic faculty. The Team commends IMGS for creating very clear and appropriate requirements for appointment and also for being clear as to the responsibilities of academic faculty. (3.2) The list of requirements and responsibilities was updated in 2010. Academic faculty are sub-divided into two groups: Professor-Series Graduate School Faculty and Instructor-Series faculty. The main distinction between the two groups is that only the Professor-Series faculty supervise a laboratory and are authorized to be primary advisors for students. Currently there are 74 Professor-Series and 20 Instructor-Series faculty. It is worth mention that 61 students in their second year and beyond are spread among 36 faculty advisors. Here is a statement the Team received on the topic of faculty recruitment:

“Faculty in Beckman Research Institute are recruited by the director of the institute. Faculty in the Medical Center are recruited by the chief medical officer. The foremost recruitment strategy is filling the research needs of the institution. Though one might say that the research needs are not the same as educational needs, when we are talking about educating researchers, the two are almost synonymous. Students want to learn from scientists doing cutting-edge research. Of the twenty faculty members recruited since 2008, thirteen are teaching in the Graduate School classes and two have created entirely new classes. Nineteen students have chosen to work on their doctoral research with these twenty new professors.

“Joining the Graduate School faculty and taking a graduate student in one’s lab is optional for new faculty members, though nearly all new faculty members opt to do so. The offer letter sent to newly recruited faculty members mentions

teaching as one of the forms of expected service: "In addition to your research, you are expected to participate in teaching and institutional committees as reasonably determined in consultation with your Chair to allow your research activities to be the primary focus of your efforts."

The Team is satisfied that IMGS uses an effective, though unusual, approach to the recruitment of appropriate academic faculty. (3.1, 3.2, 3.3)

The academic faculty play pivotal roles in the academic management of the graduate school through service on various committees that include Admissions; Assessment; Curriculum; and Graduate Oversight committees. (3.7) One area of concern to the Team was the IMGS policy that vested authority for changing student grades with the Dean. After the Team raised its concern here the IMGS decided that henceforth such authority would be vested directly with faculty. Academic faculty promotions are processed, not through the IMGS, but along with all BRI promotions. The Team was told that recognition by the scientific community in terms of publications and grants is the dominant theme in faculty promotions. Activities in direct support of the graduate school are considered to be "service activities" and are valued accordingly. The academic faculty promotion packages reviewed by the Team included very modest recognition of teaching contributions. The Team believes that teaching should play a greater role in the promotion of academic faculty than it appears to do at the moment. (3.10)

The organizational structure of the IMGS will be discussed in more detail in a later section but the Team notes that there has been a fundamental organizational change made since the last Accreditation review. COH hired a new Provost in 2014. The Provost is also the COH Chief Scientific Officer and the Director of the Cancer Center. The Team was very pleased to find out that this individual has also been appointed as the Director of the BRI. Given the intimate relationship between the BRI and the IMGS it would appear to be very appropriate that the BRI Director also be the senior executive for the IMGS. The Team will recommend that the results of this appointment be a continuing interest of WASC. (3.7)

SECTION IV - Business and Finance

In its communication of lines of inquiry to the institution, the team requested additional information related to business and financial operations of the Graduate School. In particular, the self-study did not account for fluctuations in the Graduate School budget between 2009 and 2014, and it was not clear that graduate school administrators have more than "a limited access to information and financial decision making associated with the operation of the Graduate School." The team sought an explanation for the institution's inclusion in its financial ratios statement of total Graduate School operating expenses in 2013 of

\$68,255,000. The self-study did not convey a strong case that Graduate School administrators were benefiting from sound business practices appropriate to Graduate School operations, or that appropriate internal accounting practices were in place. (CFR 3.4 and CFR 1.8)

The institution provided a written response to the team's lines of inquiry that recounted efforts by previous WASC evaluation that "pressed the school to determine its true costs." The institution reiterated its general position that little would be gained in doing so since, *inter alia*, the Graduate School is a very small portion of the overall City of Hope budget and more detailed budgeting of costs would entail a "shifting of money from one hand to the other," which "would be a zero-sum game." The institution noted that it had "created an elaborate accounting of the first six months of Graduate School expenses for 2007" as part of the previous accreditation cycle, and that "[t]his satisfied the site visit team and the WASC Commission, but no use was ever made of this and it was not continued." The response to the team's inquiry concluded that "The indifference to such financial data may be in part because of the miniscule cost of the Graduate School, which is less than 0.1 percent of the City of Hope budget. But it is mainly confidence that the Graduate School is a priority that will be supported, that we have a good idea of how much funding the school needs, and that, like other costs, the Graduate School budget will be assumed to rise modestly as salaries and stipends rise." The institution noted that the erroneous \$68 million expense figure was just that – an error, and that the principal cause of variation in year-to-year budget is the number of students admitted.

At the heart of the institution's explanation of its budgeting and internal counting processes is the theme that it is a very tiny part of the City of Hope, and the organizational chart provided to the team showed a line of direct reporting linking the Graduate School directly and ultimately to the City of Hope Board of Directors. However, during meetings with the City of Hope CEO and the institution's finance officer and team, it became clear that for some time the institution and WASC evaluation teams have been talking past each other regarding the essential business and organizational relationships between the Graduate School and the larger institution. The CEO confirmed that the governing board directly responsible for approving the budget of the Graduate School is not the City of Hope board, but the directors of the Beckman Research Institute. The Team notes that the institution implicitly recognizes this reality and is in the process of identifying members of the BRI Board who will serve as an "education committee," and suggests that this will be an important part of assuring that the Board is engaged to a greater extent in oversight of the Graduate School than the current annual presentation by the dean or associate dean.

Budget allocations are made through a series of interactions among the dean, the Provost, and the BRI financial staff, and preliminary budgeting approval is given to the Graduate School based on expected returns from endowments

which are supplemented from the administrative and operations budget of the BRI. The principal funding administered by the Graduate School is funding for student stipends; faculty and research staff are subsumed within the BRI operating budget.

During these meetings, the financial staff acknowledged that one of its members has primary responsibility for Graduate School financial operations and accounting, and that they have previously considered that a staff person should take advantage of special services and information related to graduate education available from professional organizations such as NACUBO. The team suggests that taking advantage of such resources would add value to the finance office's ability to help inform budget planning and accounting for the Graduate School.

The team believes that the institution has demonstrated that the funding base for its student stipends, which are guaranteed to each student throughout his or her program, is stable and meets program needs. This level of support is considered by the team to be commendable (CFR 3.4)

The Team recommends that going forward, financial reports provided to the Commission provide information that reflects the direct relationship of the Graduate School to the Beckman Research Institute, and that the unit of analysis and reporting for overall financial data be the BRI. Budget allocations for the Graduate School should be subsumed within these reports. (CFR 3.4)

Because it appears that the Board of Directors of BRI is the independent governing body that is most directly responsible for the Graduate School, the team recommends that the board assess its structure and processes to assure that it achieves appropriate oversight of the Graduate School. (CFR 3.9)

Section V Commendations and Recommendations:

V 1: Commendations

IMGS provided documentation demonstrating excellent graduation completion records for their doctoral program. Approximately eighty-six percent of entering graduate students complete their degree program with an average time to degree completion of 5.5 years. Data from the Council of Graduate Schools indicates that less than 60% of all life science graduate students complete their degree programs and those completing take on average seven years. IMGS's data demonstrate significantly better than average statistics for both completion rate and time to degree, and therefore the Team offers the following commendation:

- C1. The team commends the institution for its outstanding graduation and retention rates when compared to very aspirational peers, and its success in timely graduation of its doctoral students. These outcomes are

accompanied by exemplary rates of publications per student, which are closely linked with students' progress towards completing their degrees. (CFR 2.10)

The Team found evidence that IMGS provides a rich learning environment for its graduate students. Graduate students are trained by faculty who are highly qualified researchers, effective mentors and leaders in their specialties within the biomedical sciences. Quality research facilities and equipment provide the necessary tools to conduct state-of-the-art biomedical translational research within the of the City of Hope enterprise.

In addition to providing high quality research, IMGS administrators and faculty are dedicated to improving student communication skills. As indicated by federal agencies (NIH and NSF) the United States of America needs students in the sciences to perform at higher levels in oral and written communication.

IMGS has hired specialized staff to assist students in improving communication skills: skills that are so necessary in bringing forward innovation in the biomedical sciences. Increasingly, scientists need to enhance their writing skills to communicate with public and private entities to advance scientific knowledge into the market place as well as to more effectively compete for grants and publications.

IMGS places significant focus on writing skills during the first year of graduate work, particularly during research methods courses and the proposal and dissertation writing phases of the students program, and asserts "that the key indicator of the students' success and their contribution to the public good is the impact of their research. The originality and significance of their research is evident in their record of scientific publications and attendance at national and international scientific meetings." On average, for years 2009-2013, student publications for 1st authorship were collectively 2.8 papers and secondary authors were 3.6 papers. The typical student's dissertation research leads to five to seven scientific papers.

C 2. The team commends the graduate school for its commitment to and evidence of improving writing skills among its graduate students for the dual purposes of increasing grant writing success and its education function in developing critical thinking skills (CFR 2.2b)(CFR 2.5)

The COH and the BRI provide strong financial support to graduate school operations and to graduate students by providing guaranteed funding to students who are working in a lab that may require bridge funding between grants. This funding assurance for graduate students is part of the success of IMGS and student productivity. Such support is especially noteworthy as federal funding continues to be decreasing in comparison to rising costs to conduct research, it is increasingly important to provide bridge funding for researchers between grants and to provide assured funding for graduate students. Such support reduces

worries among students thus allowing them to concentrate on their academic and research program.

C 3. The team Commends the Institution for proving funding for its students for the first two years of the program and for guaranteeing support for those students whose PI suffer a shortage of funding in the later years of student research. (CFR 3.4)

The National Institutes of Health highly recommends that graduate research institutions provide mechanisms to develop individual development plans (IDPs) for each student. The goal is to attract and retain the best and most diverse scientists, engineers and physicians from around the world. Structured IDPs help students to identify and achieve their career goals. IMGS through seminars, guest lectures and other courses assignments supports a student's understanding and awareness of the numerous professional and career opportunities that exist for employment in industry, government and academia. Individual interests and skills are explored and developed by staff and faculty trained to assist each student to meet their career goals.

C 4. The team commends the institution for its commitment via the IDP program to help its students better prepare themselves to pursue the broad range of career opportunities available to doctoral graduates in the biological sciences. The institution's implementation of the IDP program is recognized as a potential exemplar for other programs of similar scope and aims.

V 2 Recommendations:

The Team had some difficulty understanding the interdependent relationship between the BRI and the IMGS. After visiting the campus, the relationship became clear to the team. For the purpose of further clarity to all stakeholders, the team recommends that a formal description of the relationship between BRI and IMGS be published. The direct and essential relationship between BRI and IMGS is a strength.

R 1. The team recommends that future financial reporting to WASC identify the Beckmann Research Institute as the budgetary unit of analysis, with budget allocations for the Graduate School subsumed within such reports. (CFR 3.4)

R 2. The team recommends that the Board of Directors of the Beckman Research Institute assess its structure and processes to assure that it achieves appropriate oversight of the Graduate School in accordance with CFR 3.9.

It became clear that faculty and administrators of IMGS and BRI work closely together and are unified by the nature of their biomedical science and

translational research goals and professional passion. When such dedication is coupled with team problem solving skills the distinction between faculty and administration understandably becomes less clear and possibly less important, however the team observed dynamics that suggested that faculty and administrators regularly make collaborative decisions and in others situations decisions are made top-down. The Team encourages IMGS to establish policies that clearly define what decisions are in the domain of faculty-shared governance and which are to be decided in a hierarchical manner.

R 3. The team recommends that the Institution continue to develop its commitment to the concept of shared governance by providing faculty with the direct authority for all curricula affairs. (CFR 3.10)

The Team thanks the faculty and administration and graduate students of IMGS for their thorough self-study, their hospitality towards the visiting Team, and the transparent responses to lines of inquiry and their commitment to the WSCUC process of assessment and quality improvement.

IMGS Compliance Audit Worksheet

Name of Institution: Irell & Manella Graduate School of Biological Sciences at City of Hope

Date of Visit: Spring 2015

Type of Visit: Reaccreditation

CFR	Documents Required	Reaccreditation
1.1	Mission Statement	The Mission Statement, revised by the faculty in 2012, reads: "The mission of the Irell & Manella Graduate School of Biological Sciences at City of Hope is to train students in an academically stimulating, collaborative, and diverse environment to apply their creativity, curiosity and talents to advance understanding of the complexities of the life sciences and to apply research discoveries to the cures for diseases."
1.2	Public posting of student achievement (retention/graduation)	This is found in the Student Success section of the Catalog.
1.3	Organization Chart	Graduate School Org Chart 2014.ppt
1.4	Academic Freedom Policy	Graduate School Faculty Academic Appointments and ProceduresAP 1-10-09.pdf
1.5	Diversity Statements and Procedures; Title IX, Harassment / Discrimination	City of Hope diversity initiatives are at: http://www.coh.org/diversity-inclusion/Pages/default.aspx . The Graduate School catalog declares that it welcomes applications "regardless of national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, race, age, color, citizenship or disability." Graduate School Policies on Title IX, Discrimination, and Disabilities.doc
1.6	Authority of Sponsoring Entity	N / A
1.7a	Catalog	Graduate School Catalog 2013.pdf
1.7b	Student Complaint and Grievance Policies	Found in Student / Faculty Handbook pp. 24-25
1.7c	Grade Appeals Policies	Graduate School Grade Change Policy.doc
1.7d	Faculty Complaint and Grievance Policies	Graduate School Faculty Academic Appointments and ProceduresAP 1-10-09.pdf
1.7e	Staff Complaint and Grievance Policies	Human Resources has well defined policies and processes for employee grievances.

1.7f	Employee Handbook	http://www.coh.org/hr/Pages/default.aspx
1.7g	Redacted Student Transcript	Graduate School Redacted Transcript.pdf
1.7h	Policies for Changing Grades	Graduate School Grade Change Policy.doc
1.7i	Tuition and Fee Schedule	The Graduate School does not charge tuition. Fees of \$150 / year are charged in October.
1.7j	Tuition Refund Policy	N / A for tuition; fees are refunded pro rata.
1.7k	Credit Hour Policies	 Course Numbering_Nov19,20 Graduate School Credit Hour Policy.doc
1.7l	Human Subjects in Research Protection Policies	City of Hope Human Research Protections Program - HRPP.mht
1.8	Independent Annual Financial Audit	Presented to WASC annually in Annual Report
2.1	Degree Programs, Curriculum, Units	 Course Numbering_Nov19,20
2.2	General Education Requirements	N / A
2.6	Placement Data	Graduate School Alumni Positions 10-17-2013.pdf Graduate Student Placement by Graduation Year 2013.pdf
2.7	Program Review Process / Schedule	Graduate School Program Review Policy.doc
2.8	Faculty Scholarship/Creative Activity	Graduate School Faculty Academic Appointments and Procedures AP 1-10-09.pdf
2.10	Student Evaluation of Faculty	Students evaluate every course and instructor and annually complete an extensive survey. Examples are: C:\Documents and Settings\slovak\Desktop\Cell Biology OverallCourse 2012.pdf C:\Documents and Settings\slovak\Desktop\Cell Biology 2012 Natarajan.pdf
2.12	Academic Calendar	Graduate School Academic Calendar 2013-14.pdf
2.13	Examples of Recruitment and Advertising Material	 rossi recruitment letter.pdf Graduate School Recruitment Flyer 2013.pdf
2.14	Policy on Transfer of Credit	N / A The Graduate School does not accept transfer credit.

3.1	Staff Development Policies	Staff are funded to attend at least one major development meeting per year and enjoy many institutional opportunities for gaining skills.
3.2	List of Faculty with Classifications	Graduate School Professor Series Faculty 2013-14.pdf Graduate School Instructors 2013.pdf
3.3a	Faculty Evaluation Policy and Procedures	Graduate School Faculty Academic Appointments and ProceduresAP 1-10-09.pdf
3.3b	Faculty Handbook	Graduate School Student - Faculty Handbook 2013-14.docx
3.4	Faculty Development Policies	Besides the Orientation they receive, new faculty are invited to attend development workshops. The last one was offered in 2012, presented by hfp consulting. It cost \$15,000. C:\Documents and Settings\snoval\Graduate School Faculty Development Workshop Schedule.pdf
3.4a	Faculty Orientation Policies	
3.4b	Rights and Responsibilities of Non-Tenure Track Faculty	faculty eligibility -- instructors.doc
3.5a	Most Recent Financial Aid Audit	N / A
3.5b	Last Federal Composite Score	N / A
3.5c	Last Report of Two- and Three Year Cohort Default Rates	N / A
3.9a	List of Governing Board Members	City of Hope Board Listing as of 12-16-13.docx
3.9b	List of Board Committees/Members	City of Hope Board Listing as of 12-16-13.docx
3.9c	Minutes of Board Meetings	At Office of General Counsel
3.9d	Governing Board Policies	http://www.coh.org/policy/Policies%20and%20Procedures/CONFLICT_OF_INTEREST_REPORTING_AND_MANAGEMENT.pdf http://www.coh.org/policy/Policies%20and%20Procedures/CONFLICT_OF_INTEREST_AND_COMMITMENT_ESTABLISHMENT_AND_GOVERNANCE.pdf http://www.coh.org/policy/Policies%20and%20Procedures/CONFLICT_OF_COMMITMENT_REPORTING_AND_MANAGEMENT.pdf
3.10a	CEO Biographical Information	
3.10b	Policy and Procedure for Evaluation of President / CEO	Executive Compensation Governance Committee Charter-Final Approved BOD 5-17-13 Redacted.pdf
3.11a	Faculty Governing Body Charges, Bylaws, and Authority	City of Hope Faculty Senate Charter.pdf City of Hope Faculty Senate By-Laws.pdf

3.11b	Faculty Governance Organization Chart	http://www.coh.org/faculty-senate/Pages/standing-committees.aspx Graduate School Faculty -- Instructors 2008.doc
4.1	Strategic Plan	City of Hope Strategic Plan 2013-2022 Education.pdf City of Hope Strategic Plan 2013-2022.pdf
4.2	Planning Process and Monitoring of Implementation	City of Hope Strategic Plan Metrics.JPG City of Hope Strategic Plan Fact Sheet.pdf
4.4	New Degree Approval Process	N / A
4.5	Institutional Research Function and Staffing	Responsibility for institutional research is shared between the Registrar and the Associate Dean for Assessment. Data is periodically shared with members of the Graduate Oversight Committee, and some measures are annually updated and posted on the City of Hope Dashboard of Performance Indicators.
4.8	Academic Advisory Committee	The school has annual meetings with its academic advisory committee, whose members also conduct our program reviews. Academic Advisory Committee Members 2013.doc