

REPORT OF THE WSCUC VISITING TEAM

SEEKING ACCREDITATION VISIT 2

For Institutions Seeking Initial Accreditation

To SUM Bible College and Theological Seminary

March 26-28, 2019

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

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SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution and Visit

SUM Bible College and Theological Seminary (SUM) is a not-for-profit institution of higher education established in 1992 and located in El Dorado Hills, CA. The highly focused mission of SUM is to offer an affordable theological education by combining academic instruction alongside ministry and mentorship in the United States (U.S.) and internationally. SUM offers one undergraduate program face-to-face at its main campus and online through its cohort model (Bachelor of Arts in Biblical Studies), and three graduate degree programs (Master of Arts in Biblical Studies, Master of Arts in Christian Leadership, and Master of Divinity) through the same online cohort model delivered globally and throughout the U.S.

SUM's main campus and operations were originally located in New Orleans, LA, with a second location in Oakland, CA, that opened for classes in 2000. Following the Gulf Coast devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, SUM experienced a 75% decrease of its New Orleans-based student enrollment due to numerous and unexpected relocations. During the 2005-06 academic year, SUM moved its main campus and operations to Oakland, CA, and in December 2017, SUM relocated its main campus and operations from Oakland to El Dorado Hills, CA.

The Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) has accredited SUM since 2006. In 2015, the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) granted SUM Eligibility status, and in December 2016, SUM submitted its Seeking Accreditation Visit (SAV) 1 report followed by a team visit in January 2017. In June 2017, the Commission granted SUM Candidacy for five years and scheduled an SAV 2 visit in spring 2019.

As of fall 2019, SUM enrolled 637 students (448 undergraduate, 189 graduate) across 17 states (Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky,

Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Texas) and 11 international countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Jamaica, Mexico, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Thailand, and Zambia). The U.S. and international student cohorts are supported by 54 cohort advisors, 6 full-time faculty, 55 adjunct faculty, 20 full-time employees and 3 part-time employees.

B. The Institution's Seeking Accreditation Visit Report: Quality and Rigor of the Review and Report

SUM's WSCUC Steering Committee, whose membership includes two board members, the chancellor/chief executive officer (CEO), the chief operating officer, the chief academic and accreditation liaison officer, the chief financial officer, full-time faculty and staff members, drafted the SAV 2 report. The report was organized around the four Standards and 21 relevant CFRs to evidence compliance with all four Standards at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation (i.e., CFRs 1.2-1.4, 2.2, 2.2a, 2.6, 2.7, 2.9-2.11, 3.2-3.4, 3.7-3.10, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.6).

The team reviewed the report and the supporting attachments prior to the visit, followed by a team conference call to develop a number of questions and lines of inquiry to clarify the information provided by SUM. The team requested additional documents be made available prior to the visit through Box, the WSCUC cloud-based content management and file sharing system that included information pertaining to job descriptions, organizational structures, assessment and program review, and financials. SUM was responsive to providing the team-requested materials ahead of the visit and as requested during the visit.

For each Standard, SUM included a synthesis and reflection piece that included two or three self-identified important issues, areas of strength, and areas to be addressed or improved. The Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators was the only WSCUC-required appendix for the SAV 2 visit; SUM also included multiple self-selected attachments as evidence to support the institution's report narrative.

SUM's SAV 2 report provided the foundation for the campus visit that included interviews and discussions with a cross-section of key stakeholders. The team found that for the 21 recommendations, the collection, review, and reporting of data and findings was disseminated across SUM and in final form, was approved by the board of trustees prior to submission to WSCUC.

C. Response to Issues Raised in Past Commission Letters

Standard 1 Recommendations

***CFR 1.2.** Better alignment of program learning outcomes with the further content of the syllabi to ensure valid measurement of student learning outcomes. The Commission is also concerned with the team's finding that SUM does not post publicly available and easily accessible retention and graduation rates, and recommends that the institution add additional data and disclosures in the fact sheet or other easily accessed appropriate published locations to include enrollment, financial aid performance, student engagement, and updated alumni outcomes.*

Syllabi have clear alignment between teaching and learning outcomes at the program and course levels. Course assignments are mapped to both program and course learning outcomes. SUM has updated its website with disclosures and links to College Navigator, College Scorecard, and College Results. School performance fact sheets are easily available and the Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment webpage includes transparent reports and documents to support student achievement, including measures of retention and graduation, and evidence of student learning outcomes.

***CFR 1.3.** The faculty academic freedom policy is not comprehensive, nor does it clearly reflect SUM's expectations and culture. The current academic freedom policy seems to emphasize what instructors should avoid saying or teaching in the classroom, rather than outlining an appropriate academic freedom culture for an institution of Biblical higher education. In addition, SUM needs to develop academic freedom policies that apply to students and other members of the campus community.*

The current academic freedom policy has moved away from emphasizing what can or cannot be said or taught in the classroom; however, the team observed that faculty had minimal input in creating the policy through a shared governance process. Students and staff had little familiarity

with the policy, but genuinely expressed that they had an open space to voice conflicting thoughts and opinions that might be in opposition to SUM's identity.

***CFR 1.4.** The Commission recommends that SUM continue to explore its diversity practices and policies, taking into consideration all aspects of WSCUC's diversity policy: representation, community on campus, and co-curricular development of cultural acceptance. While recognizing the challenges of finding academically qualified candidates within its faith community, the Commission recommends continued and aggressive attempts to hire a more diverse faculty.*

SUM faculty, staff, and students expressed a commitment to diversity and its commitment to diversity is visible through its international footprint. However, while somewhat understandably focused on the assessment of student learning and program review, SUM had not formally addressed issues specific to diversity since the SAV 1 and as noted in the Commission Action Letter. SUM's approach to increasing faculty diversity appears more relational than intentional as targets to increase non-White faculty members is a goal, but one without a formal plan and benchmarks. SUM's diversity definition comprises international, urban, race, and ethnic definitions, but little evidence of how the institution uses the disaggregated data to ensure its subpopulations of students are meeting academic and co-curricular expectations and "closing the gap" was available. As important, to not include the experiences and voices of other protected groups, [e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ)] in the curriculum and community, limits SUM students to authentically be able to minister to the diverse groups of peoples they will encounter outside of the institution.

Standard 2 Recommendations

***CFR 2.2.** Some cohort students receive their entire baccalaureate program in a language other than English. In such instances, programs must conform to the WSCUC Instruction in Languages other than English Policy.*

The Spanish-only baccalaureate program addresses the elements in the WSCUC *Instruction in Languages other than English Policy*. College-level written and oral communication competencies are available in both Spanish and English on curriculum maps and syllabi

templates. Bilingual faculty deliver the program and course materials, and student support services are also provided in Spanish and English. Areas to be addressed as program grows and to stay aligned with the policy are identified.

***CFR 2.2a.** The formal statement of general education philosophy and purpose needs to reflect deeper engagement with the value, purpose, and institutional commitment to general education.*

Developed collaboratively with faculty and the general education chair, SUM's *Statement of General Education Philosophy and Purpose* is included in its academic program reviews, course syllabi, and catalog. While reflecting the core competencies purpose across the SUM curriculum, the statement wants for a "deeper engagement with the value, purpose, and institutional commitment to general education."

***CFR 2.6.** Assessment of student learning, especially at the program level, needs further development. For each set of program learning outcomes, the faculty should identify when each outcome will be assessed and on the basis of what kinds of evidence. The assessment of a program's learning outcomes should be completed in accordance with a plan and timetable so that a complete set of program learning outcome assessment reports are available for the commencement of program review.*

The *Five-Year Assessment Plan 2018-2022* outlines procedures for both academic and non-academic units. The *Academic Department Assessment Schedule and Guidelines* is specific to every academic program placed on a five-year assessment cycle. Curriculum maps are in place for each academic program, and rubrics are used for assessment purposes.

***CFR 2.7.** A formal program review process needs to be developed, as described in WSCUC's Resource Guide for "Good Practices" in Academic Program Review. This process should include a consistent presentation of graduation and retention rates.*

A comprehensive formal program review process is evidenced in SUM's *Academic Program Review Guidelines 2018-19*, a document informed by the WSCUC's *Resource Guide for "Good Practices" in Academic Program Review*. The program reviews completed in 2019 include more data analysis on student success indicators (retention and graduation) than the single program review conducted in 2018, indicating institutional growth in this area.

CFR 2.9. Performance evaluation of faculty should include the relationship between scholarship, teaching, student learning, and service.

An annual administrative evaluation of faculty process has been developed that measures classroom performance, attainment of goals, course administration, service to church, college and community, and continuing academic and scholarly development. Although SUM is a “teaching institution,” requirements regarding faculty expectations for research and scholarship could be more definitive and understood across the faculty.

CFR 2.10. The current mechanisms used to gather information about student needs, achievement, satisfaction, and campus climate should be formalized to bring consistency and standardization.

The *Five-Year Assessment Plan 2018-2022*, the *Academic Program Review Guidelines 2018-19*, and the *Strategic Plan 2017-2022* include expectations and standards for student achievement and satisfaction. The five-year assessment plan is applicable to all academic departments, distance education, student life, enrollment, and finance. Student feedback is collected through course evaluations, student surveys, alumni surveys, and focus groups.

CFR 2.11. Each co-curricular program should undergo a program review similar to an academic program review.

Since the SAV 1 visit, co-curricular opportunities are now developed and centralized in the SUM cohort office, faculty and staff receive training and support, and teaching and learning materials are delivered through the use of Canvas (the campus learning management system). While the annual assessment planning and implementation are steady, the culmination of the annual assessment reporting into a summative stand-alone program review remains.

Standard 3 Recommendations

CFR 3.2. Evaluation of faculty must include a record of evaluation results and steps being taken if the results are negative.

Since the SAV 1 visit, SUM's faculty evaluation process has become more robust, includes good record keeping, and improved communication with individual faculty members. A structure for performance measurement and follow-up is in place.

CFR 3.3. *SUM has undertaken several faculty and staff development activities and should continue to find potential areas for further development.*

SUM offers professional development activities for staff including computer system training, job cross-training, and regular meetings. Faculty engage in monthly institutional and departmental meetings and self-guided online tutorials. SUM is also compiling suggestions from individual faculty members for professional development.

CFR 3.4. *Long-term budget scenarios need to be developed, taking into consideration the creation and maintenance of programs, operations, staffing, and fundraising efforts. While noting that the institution has experienced solid enrollment growth, the Commission encourages caution in not basing budgets on overly optimistic projections.*

SUM's budgeting process is adequate for an institution of its size. The five-year budget shows growth in expenses over time at a significantly lower rate than that of enrollment and revenue. A mitigating factor is the rental revenue received from tenants at the El Dorado Hills, CA campus, which includes two office buildings. SUM's plans are to occupy one-quarter of the space, and lease the remaining three-quarters at market rates to tenants. It is anticipated to provide over \$500,000 per year, before interest expense, in revenue to SUM.

CFR 3.7. *With the planned expansion of the cohort model to additional cities in the United States and countries around the world, SUM should continue its efforts to reorganize its administrative structure to plan for such growth.*

SUM added two full-time executive positions since 2016, the chief operating officer (COO) and the chief financial officer (CFO). The organizational structure of SUM is appropriate for an institution of its size. The staff are well qualified and dedicated to their work and SUM's mission.

CFR 3.8. *Given the size and complexity of SUM, a full-time Chief Financial Officer must be hired on an expedited basis to meet WSCUC expectations.*

A full-time chief financial officer was hired and began work in 2017. However, there are some duties often assigned to the position in an organization of SUM's size that are under the COO.

CFR 3.9. *The Board needs to develop an evaluation process for the CEO. The Commission also recommends that SUM consider expanding the size of its Board.*

An evaluation of the CEO by the board was performed in the summer of 2018. The CEO completed a self-evaluation and found the process to be constructive and helpful. In 2018, the board began implementing a plan to grow from 7 to 11 members by adding 2 members per year in 2019 and 2020. While the current membership is mostly representative of the business world, candidates currently being considered are educators, active ministers, or those acting in both roles.

CFR 3.10. *SUM should consider developing more robust and formal faculty governance processes.*

Since the SAV 1 visit, SUM has implemented several changes intended to increase the involvement of faculty in policy, curriculum, and performance evaluation decisions. The faculty chair position in each academic department has been added, as has a coordinator for the Spanish language program. The Academic Council was created in May 2018, and its role is to provide oversight, discussion, review, and make recommendations on academic policies, faculty review, program review and the academic and faculty handbooks.

Standard 4 Recommendations

CFR 4.1. *A formalized evaluation process for data collection and analysis needs to be developed, including multiple mechanisms for assessing student performance using both direct and indirect measures.*

A new five-year assessment plan has been developed that addresses assessment across all departments at SUM. There is improvement in the new assessment plan, with more data sources listed and clear identification of goals and benchmarks. The plan also includes information on

the assessment cycle, and identifies various kinds of direct and indirect measures that can be used as evidence.

CFR 4.2. *The full-time institutional researcher to be hired will need to develop a formalized approach to institutional research beyond the current approach of compiling survey data.*

SUM has developed the institutional research function from a part-time role combined with the registrar into a separate, full-time position under the office of institutional effectiveness. The job description for the director of institutional effectiveness shows that this position has responsibility for typical institutional research functions, as well as for leading assessment efforts across the institution.

CFR 4.4. *SUM needs to develop standards of performance for the institution and ensure that they are achieved. Institutional effectiveness assessment results should be used to improve student learning and success.*

SUM has developed multiple assessment plans that include benchmarks and goals for performance. The program review reports were used to review student performance on the program learning outcomes. The five-year assessment plan and program review process indicate a continuing commitment to the assessment cycle and using data on student learning to make decisions to improve student success.

CFR 4.6. *Greater awareness of the institution's strategic plan is needed on the part of the Board of Directors and other campus groups. The strategic plan needs to be aligned with the institution's budget, address key priorities for the future, and undergo regular monitoring and revision.*

SUM has undertaken a process over the past two years to increase knowledge and use of the strategic plan across the institution. A strategic planning committee consisting of executive team, staff, and board members reviewed the *Strategic Plan 2017-2022* and expanded the text to include more narrative statements and explanations of goal and priorities. Annual reports on the strategic plan from each department are submitted to the board for review. These reports demonstrate progress on the detailed action plans developed by the strategic planning committee.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE WITH WSCUC’S STANDARDS AND IDENTIFIED CFRs FROM PRIOR SEEKING ACREDITATION VISITS

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

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

The team finds that SUM Bible College and Theological Seminary meets Standard 1 at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation. Only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards.

CFR 1.2. Better alignment of program learning outcomes with the further content of the syllabi to ensure valid measurement of student learning outcomes. The Commission is also concerned with the team’s finding that SUM does not post publicly available and easily accessible retention and graduation rates, and recommends that the institution add additional data and disclosures in the fact sheet or other easily accessed appropriate published locations to include enrollment, financial aid performance, student engagement, and updated alumni outcomes.

A review of more than 50 syllabi indicated clear alignment between teaching and learning outcomes at the program and course levels. Additionally, course assignments were mapped to both the program learning outcomes (PLOs) and the course learning outcomes (CLOs), and signature assignments that aligned to core competencies.

Since the SAV 1, SUM has updated its website with disclosures and links to College Navigator, College Scorecard, and College Results. Additionally, school performance fact sheets are easily available for the one undergraduate and two graduate programs with three years of trend data. While there is a section for student achievement, the report is focused on alumni placement data, rather than retention and graduation rates, and the graduate performance report (2011) also comprises completion, placement, and salary information for SUM graduates.

The Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment webpage includes transparent reports and documents to support student achievement, including measures for retention and graduation, and evidence of student learning outcomes (e.g., assessment reporting, fact sheets, performance

indicators, graduation and retention rates, program reviews, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) reporting, WSCUC and ABHE annual reports).

CFR 1.3. *The faculty academic freedom policy is not comprehensive, nor does it clearly reflect SUM's expectations and culture. The current academic freedom policy seems to emphasize what instructors should avoid saying or teaching in the classroom, rather than outlining an appropriate academic freedom culture for an institution of Biblical higher education. In addition, SUM needs to develop academic freedom policies that apply to students and other members of the campus community.*

Since the SAV 1, SUM revised its *Academic Freedom Policy* and the team found that it is comprehensive and clear in its purpose. The current policy has moved away from emphasizing what can or cannot be said or taught in the classroom. However, while the SUM *Academic Freedom Policy* authentically reflects SUM's identity as a faith-based institution, the team was concerned with the process of its development and its application to all campus stakeholders.

Through several meetings with faculty, staff, and students, the team found that the policy had been revised, updated, and distributed from an administrative level out to faculty and staff. Students interviewed were less familiar with the policy, although all indicated that they believed and felt they could openly discuss any issue or perspective in their classes. While faculty were more familiar with the policy, they indicated they had a minimal, if any, role in its revision through a shared governance process—one that would be expected for such a policy. Finally, staff had almost no familiarity with the policy, but again as with the students, believed and felt they had an open space to voice opposing thoughts and opinions to SUM's identity.

CFR 1.4. *The Commission recommends that SUM continue to explore its diversity practices and policies, taking into consideration all aspects of WSCUC's diversity policy: representation, community on campus, and co-curricular development of cultural acceptance. While recognizing the challenges of finding academically qualified candidates within its faith community, the Commission recommends continued and aggressive attempts to hire a more diverse faculty.*

Both in the institution's report and during the visit, SUM faculty, staff, and students expressed a commitment to diversity. SUM noted that as part of the SAV 2 process, it had

facilitated a comprehensive examination of the college that provided the SUM community with an accurate lens through which to view its current culture of diversity. Indeed, SUM's commitment to diversity is visible through its international footprint—its presence in many countries that do not “look” like the United States. The team found that the passion and commitment to international and urban diversity was embedded throughout all its operations. To be sure, SUM stands for the “School of Urban Missions” from which it was founded and built for a reason.

As part of the visit, the team met with the Diversity Committee, a committee that also functions as the Assessment Committee. The committee relayed that it was the group to address diversity issues as led by the COO. The committee spoke to the gender composition of SUM, one that is 47% female and slightly lower than other institutions affiliated with the Assemblies of God. However, while somewhat understandably focused on the assessment of student learning and program review, the committee admittedly had not met once to address any items or issues specific to diversity—either intrinsically or in response to the Commission's recommendation regarding diversity efforts following the SAV 1 in its action letter.

SUM collects data on gender, ethnicity, and race distributions of its student and faculty populations. As of fall 2018, SUM's undergraduate student distribution included 14% international (38% female) and 86% U.S. (54% female) with black or African American students representing 13% and Hispanic students 30% of the total U.S. undergraduates. For SUM's graduate student distribution, 64% of students are international (32% female) and 36% U.S. (54% female) with black or African Americans representing 13% and Hispanics 6% of the American graduate students.

Also as of fall 2018, SUM's 53 faculty gender and demographic distributions were 34% female, with 11% African American and 11% Hispanic or Latino/a overall among male and

female (N = 62). During the visit, the approach to increasing faculty diversity appeared more relational than intentional. The SAV 2 report included targets to increase non-White faculty members from 34% to 50%, but little evidence besides relational (i.e., networking among SUM stakeholders) was provided in the report or onsite during the meetings. Similarly, for the target of increasing the percentage of women as faculty from 34% to 50%, no formal plan or method was relayed to the team. In a higher education landscape, where many institutions are seeking to diversify their faculty composition from the same pools, intentional planning is needed for successful outcomes. Additionally, while one PLO was specific to diversity at the one undergraduate degree program, none of the three graduate programs included a PLO specific to diversity.

SUM's diversity definition comprises international, urban, race, and ethnicity definitions, however little evidence was presented to the team for how the institution uses the disaggregated data to ensure its subpopulations of students are meeting academic and co-curricular expectations. SUM noted that support is provided to students of color as needed, the use of subpopulation data in aggregate to compare against the general student population is absent. The team appreciated the effort, commitment, and responsiveness that faculty illustrated with an example of a struggling student who may be Hispanic; however, the team was less assured that SUM faculty and administration appreciate the difference between one Hispanic at-risk student versus the subpopulation of Hispanic students who may be at risk. SUM is not systematically determining if achievement gaps exist, and if they do exist, is not developing purposeful plans to close the achievement gap(s). As a part of the discussions, the committee recognized the value for using disaggregated data to identify and better support students who have been historically underrepresented and/or first-generation.

Finally, as WSCUC's Equity and Inclusion Policy has been updated to reflect the currency of equity and inclusion, SUM faculty, staff, students, and administration are in a similar position of many other faith-based institutions, i.e., how to remain true to one's tenets while welcoming all people into the fold. While SUM's Statement of Faith and its conduct codes for faculty, staff, and students is federally protected, to not include the experiences and voices of other protected groups (e.g., LGBTQ) in their curriculum and community, greatly reduces meaningful exposure and dialogue for SUM's students to appreciate and be able to meaningfully minister to the diverse groups of peoples they will encounter in their churches, communities, and mission fields.

Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions

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

The team finds that SUM Bible College and Theological Seminary meets Standard 2 at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation. Only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards.

CFR 2.2. *Some cohort students receive their entire baccalaureate program in a language other than English. In such instances, programs must conform to the WSCUC Instruction in Languages other than English Policy.*

In 2018, SUM added a Spanish instructional coordinator to bring the Spanish-delivered BABS program in alignment with the *WSCUC Instruction in Languages other than English Policy*. SUM added English-only courses to the Spanish program so that students are able to meet college-level written and oral communication competency goals in both in Spanish and English. Evidence included the BABS in Spanish curriculum maps and syllabi templates. Bilingual faculty deliver the program and are therefore able to interact at stay connected with

SUM's English-only speaking faculty and staff. Student support services are provided in Spanish and English, and while the current enrollment in the BABS in Spanish is four students, SUM's recruiting efforts have a goal to increase enrollment by four- or five-fold in fall 2019. With that projected increase, SUM has already identified key areas that will ensure continued alignment with the WSCUC policy: additional online learning resources for theological and biblical studies through its ATLA/EBSCO subscriptions, recruiting and retaining qualified Spanish-speaking Pentecostal faculty, and additional bilingual staff support for the Spanish-speaking cohort leaders.

CFR 2.2a. *The formal statement of general education philosophy and purpose needs to reflect deeper engagement with the value, purpose, and institutional commitment to general education.*

Following the SAV 1, SUM developed a *Statement of General Education Philosophy and Purpose* collaboratively with faculty and the general education (GE) chair that includes the five core competencies of written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and critical thinking. The BABS curriculum map includes where the core competencies are delivered and assessed throughout the curriculum. SUM's *Statement of General Education Philosophy and Purpose* is also included in its catalog, academic program reviews, course syllabi, faculty meeting notes, and Zoom video conference calls. However, the GE philosophy and purpose statement could further reflect a "deeper engagement with the value, purpose, and institutional commitment to general education."

For example, while the statement includes holistic and life-success wording, it also includes wording linked to tasks, requirements, and ability—wording that somewhat adds a tone of compliance and conformity versus an emphasis on students' breadth of knowledge on which to build depth of knowledge from their major and degree program. Additionally, within higher education, the general education experience is one that is generally accepted to encourage

students to develop a critical and inquiry mindset, an understanding of complexity and ambiguity, and empathy with persons of different backgrounds or values. As SUM continues to explore its diversity policies and practices, perhaps its *Statement of General Education Philosophy and Purpose* will also be reexamined.

CFR 2.6. *Assessment of student learning, especially at the program level, needs further development. For each set of program learning outcomes, the faculty should identify when each outcome will be assessed and on the basis of what kinds of evidence. The assessment of a program's learning outcomes should be completed in accordance with a plan and timetable so that a complete set of program learning outcome assessment reports are available for the commencement of program review.*

SUM's procedures for the assessment of student learning at the program level are in place and implemented. The *Five-Year Assessment Plan 2018-2022* outlines procedures for both academic and non-academic units. The *Academic Department Assessment Schedule and Guidelines* is specific to every academic program placed on the five-year assessment cycle.

Curriculum maps are in place for each academic program, and in fall 2018, a new syllabus policy was adopted requiring all syllabi to demonstrate which PLOs the CLOs were mapped to and identified the level of instruction as Introduced, Reinforced, or Mastered (I, R, M). All available syllabi were reviewed onsite with a number of syllabi also demonstrated additional alignment between teaching and learning. Examples included mapping course assignments to both the PLOs and CLOs, and an overview of signature assignments that aligned to core competencies (e.g. cognitive paper linked to critical thinking and written communication, literature review linked to information literacy, and final presentation linked to oral communication). The assessment cycle leads to and culminates with a summative program review for its academic programs (co-curricular programs at the time of the SAV 2 had not conducted a stand alone program review).

The team suggests the SUM *Academic Department Assessment Schedule and Guidelines* might be posted on the SUM [Institutional Effectiveness Assessment and Reporting](#) website for availability to faculty and staff as well as other stakeholders.

CFR 2.7. *A formal program review process needs to be developed, as described in WSCUC's Resource Guide for "Good Practices" in Academic Program Review. This process should include a consistent presentation of graduation and retention rates.*

A comprehensive formal program review process is evidenced in SUM's *Academic Program Review Guidelines 2018-19*, a document informed by the WSCUC's *Resource Guide for "Good Practices" in Academic Program Review*. The guidelines include sections for the purpose of program review, the relationship between program review and the institution's mission and goals, the program review cycle, a step-by-step description of the process and timeline, student learning outcomes assessment, program resources, and data analysis and findings. SUM has also developed a program review schedule and glossary.

Program reviews are well organized and easy to follow. The BABS completed its program review in 2018, with the Master of Arts (MA) in Christian Leadership, the MA in Biblical Studies, and the Master of Divinity (MDiv) completing their program reviews in 2019. All program reviews follow a similar format: overview, history, students (e.g., enrollment, retention and graduation rates), faculty, curriculum and overview of assessment, student learning outcomes assessment, program resources, conclusions, and future goals and planning for improvement. The program reviews outline the program's application of High Impact Practices (HIP) and included a discussion of the integration of GE. The program reviews completed in 2019 include more data analysis on student success, evidencing growth in the process. For example, while the 2018 BABS program review lacked analysis of graduation and retention rates, the 2019 program reviews demonstrated examination, interpretation, and related actions for improving retention and graduation rates.

SUM has developed comprehensive program review guidelines and completed the initial cycle of program reviews. The institution has demonstrated a diligent analysis of student learning outcomes and the prioritization of action items. The team suggests that going forward, program review due dates are staggered so that faculty and chair workloads can be better managed as part of the ongoing cycle of program review and improvement. Finally, while comprehensive, the *Academic Program Review Guidelines 2018-19* could be edited and made more clear for faculty and staff who are becoming familiar with the new process.

CFR 2.9. *Performance evaluation of faculty should include the relationship between scholarship, teaching, student learning, and service.*

An annual administrative evaluation of faculty process has been developed that measures classroom performance, goal attainment, course administration, service to church, college and community, and continuing academic and scholarly development. The process is outlined in the *Faculty Handbook 2018-19* and includes a summary of the process rubrics to be used, items covered during faculty review meetings, reporting, follow-up steps, and results of evaluation. The eight components of the evaluation include a self-evaluation by each faculty member, a class observation (when possible) by peer faculty, review of the syllabus by the department chair, a pedagogical methodology review by the undergraduate dean or department chair, a professional development plan, student course evaluations and grade distribution, an in-person or online meeting via Zoom between each faculty member and the associate academic dean to review each component of the evaluation rubric that includes classroom performance; assessment of learning goals; course administration; service to church, college, and community; and academic and scholarly development. Effective record keeping and improved communications are in place.

Annual evaluations were conducted in spring and summer 2018 for all faculty, including distance education faculty via the Zoom teleconference tool. During meetings with the faculty, the team heard that SUM faculty were generally positive about the first cycle of evaluations.

Faculty feedback included the perceptions of constructive intentions on behalf of administration, fairness of the process, validation by administration, and a clearer vision of how their courses fit into the degree. Now that the first cycle of faculty evaluations have been completed, it will be valuable for faculty to have a clear sense of performance expectations for the next cycle.

Specific to professional development, faculty indicated that they were able to attend conferences and were encouraged to research, write, and publish. However, while an open-ended question specific to scholarship is included as part of the evaluation interview, through shared governance, SUM could clarify more specific requirements regarding faculty expectations for research and scholarship.

CFR 2.10. *The current mechanisms used to gather information about student needs, achievement, satisfaction, and campus climate should be formalized to bring consistency and standardization.*

The *Five-Year Assessment Plan 2018-2022*, the *Academic Program Review Guidelines 2018-19*, and the *Strategic Plan 2017-2022* include expectations and standards for student achievement and satisfaction. The five-year assessment plan is applicable to all academic departments, distance education, student life, enrollment, and finance.

Each academic and non-academic department has created and started to track its benchmarks based on SUM strategic goals and peer institution data provided by the institutional effectiveness office. Student feedback is collected through course evaluations, student surveys, alumni surveys, and focus groups.

In a meeting with SUM students, all students relayed that faculty and staff are responsive to their suggestions, often as a result of the surveys administered at the end of each course. Students indicated that they have observed recommended changes previously suggested in the course surveys. One SUM student provided a specific example of students' distraction with how

technology was being used; changes were made the following term by the same faculty member and students had a better learning environment because of the change.

While numerous forms of data are being collected, an effective way to summarize the data and use for analysis and decision-making is emerging. The team recommends that SUM disaggregate student success data (to include race, ethnicity, and gender), identify any underperforming groups, and use those findings to inform efforts to improve student achievement.

CFR 2.11. *Each co-curricular program should undergo a program review similar to an academic program review.*

Organizationally, student life and student ministry are part of the cohort department and their student learning outcomes have previously been reviewed as part of the BABS program review (versus a standalone program review). As a result of the BABS program review, both student life and student ministry now annually assesses their learning outcomes apart from the BABS's assessment plan. Perhaps in small part to nomenclature, the *Student Life and Ministry Department Five-Year Assessment Plan 2018-2022* has many of the same components as a program review, including looking retrospectively and towards the future specific to the programs' health. Also, the *Student Life and Ministry Assessment Summary 2017-18* reviewed how co-curricular programs related to academic programs and included outcomes, assessments, results, and 14 recommended actions such as improving assessment methods, training, expectations and communication.

At SUM, co-curricular programs reside within student life and include Service of All (SOA), Christian service, physical education, mentoring, and campus life. Student ministry includes three curricular programs: practicum field ministry, internship, and Mardi Gras Outreach. All student deliverables within both units are graded, and co-curricular programs within student life are required. During the visit, while it was clear that cohort leaders receive

weekly training and professional development during the fourth week of every month, it was less clear what the faculty roles and responsibilities were in the same process.

Each of student life's five co-curricular programs have learning outcomes that are assessed, evaluated for findings, and recommendations put in place for the next assessment cycle. SUM provided in-depth examples for all five co-curricular programs of a full assessment cycle, with two of the five programs having assessed at two data points (physical education and mentoring). Examples of noticeable gaps addressed included the SOA program where it was found that no plan of action in place for monitoring students who were not approved for academic warning. Recommended actions included more direct communication between student life and the students, and students being required to submit a success plan to be tracked by the student life director.

While student life has developed a healthy five-year assessment plan, and is currently completing the second year of that plan, there remains no stand-alone program review completed for its co-curricular programs. In its report, SUM noted that student life and student ministry are part of the cohort department, and as such, there is overlap among student life, student ministry, and the cohort department in terms of co-curricular program delivery. However, just as SUM developed a stand-alone assessment plan for its co-curricular programs in student life, it will need complete a program review for its co-curricular programs as part of best practices and accreditation expectations.

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

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

The team finds that SUM Bible College and Theological Seminary meets Standard 3 at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation. Only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards.

CFR 3.2. Evaluation of faculty must include a record of evaluation results and steps being taken if the results are negative.

Since the SAV 1 visit, SUM's faculty evaluation process has become more robust, includes good record keeping, and improved communication with individual faculty members. A structure for performance measurement and follow-up is in place. A formal, documented review of all faculty members took place in 2018 and is scheduled to take place annually going forward.

The administrative evaluation of faculty process includes a self-evaluation by each faculty member, a class observation (when possible) by peer faculty, review of the syllabus by the department chair, a pedagogical methodology review by the undergraduate dean or department chair, a professional development plan, student course evaluations and grade distribution, an in-person or online meeting via Zoom between each faculty member and the associate academic dean to review each component of the evaluation rubric that includes classroom performance; assessment of learning goals; course administration; service to church, college, and community; and academic and scholarly development .

As a result of the 2018 evaluation process and the scores assigned by the rubric, 11 of 46 (24%) faculty members placed in the lowest performance category, defined as a score of 11 or less of a possible 20 points. When asked about the percentage of faculty in this category, SUM indicated that this was likely due to lack of skills in digital delivery of teaching. The team was also made aware that the rubric was not developed or available until midway through the evaluation period. This resulted in faculty not knowing how, or under what expectations, they would be evaluated. The team recognized that the high occurrence of low scores could also be an

indication of an urgent need to immediately improve faculty recruitment and hiring as well as engage in remedial actions for some current faculty.

A review of SUM's *Faculty Support and Remediation Plan* indicated no concrete action plans to be undertaken to raise the level of performance by individual faculty members with low scores on the rubric. Rather, phrases such as "progress in education..." and "normal maturation as a faculty member" were used to describe actions needed by the individual faculty member. In one case an individual identified as needing improvement was told he/she would be provided more opportunities in the Spanish language version of the program, as further development was needed in the English language version for the same opportunities.

The team held an open meeting with faculty which was attended by approximately 20 individuals, 8 of who were in remote cohorts and attended the meeting via Zoom video conferencing. The faculty members in attendance confirmed they received evaluations in 2018, and most indicated they were aware of the significant number of low scores. Several faculty stated they received constructive feedback and were given specific action items to improve performance, however, the team remained unclear why faculty development opportunities were not more formalized for those faculty with less than satisfactory performance noted in their evaluations.

CFR 3.3. *SUM has undertaken several faculty and staff development activities and should continue to find potential areas for further development*

SUM offers professional development activities for staff including computer system training, job cross-training, and regular meetings. Faculty are able to engage in monthly institutional and departmental meetings and self-guided online tutorials. The faculty and staff meetings are emphasized as opportunities for individuals to voice concerns, give feedback and cultivate peer relationships.

In 2018, two senior members of the staff, the chief academic officer and the associate academic dean attended the WSCUC Academic Resource Conference and five faculty members attended the Society for Pentecostal Studies (SPS) annual meeting in 2019. Strategic planning for the academic department at SUM notes the desire to sponsor membership in the SPS, Society for Biblical Literature (SBL) or similar organizations. SUM is also compiling suggestions from individual faculty members for professional development.

While there is no formalized plan for professional development of either staff or faculty, many individuals who attended the open staff and faculty meetings expressed to the team that there is institutional support to attend educational conferences, obtain membership in professional organizations and, in the case of faculty, to publish their work. Staff development also includes regular departmental meetings where subject matter experts present monthly on topics outside of the normal day-to-day operations of the department but which are relevant to SUM and delivery of its mission.

The team observed no evidence of diversity, equity and inclusion or discrimination, harassment and retaliation training. Consistent with the WSCUC *Equity and Inclusion Policy* and, especially at this juncture of seeking accreditation, it is of utmost importance for SUM to engage, at all levels, honestly and constructively with issues of equity and inclusion. SUM should use as a starting point for engagement in this crucial body of work the WSCUC *Equity and Inclusion Policy*.

CFR 3.4. Long-term budget scenarios need to be developed, taking into consideration the creation and maintenance of programs, operations, staffing, and fundraising efforts. While noting that the institution has experienced solid enrollment growth, the Commission encourages caution in not basing budgets on overly optimistic projections.

SUM's budgeting process is adequate for an institution of its size. However, the result of the process is a five-year budget showing highly optimistic, perhaps even unrealistic, growth in enrollment, surpluses, and cash generation. This is not supported by its historical financial

performance which resulted in thin surpluses and extremely low cash positions. Were it not for the gain on the sale of the Oakland, CA campus, there would have been an operational deficit for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2018. The team remained hesitant that the financial projections are to be achieved as stated.

It is noted in SUM's 2018 enrollment report that other competing institutions have adopted the cohort model and are offering stronger financial incentives to host churches presenting a potentially significant challenge to the growth plan. A new form of contract between SUM and host churches provides some protection against student cohorts leaving (as happened recently) but it alone does not protect against new cohorts being formed by other institutions and thereby reducing the pool of potential students.

SUM's chancellor stated the average debt load of students upon graduation has doubled in recent years, which could further hinder admissions efforts to grow enrollment. Expected salary upon graduation from a bible college or seminary is relatively low making the debt load more difficult to repay.

SUM recently made several moves with the intention of increasing enrollment over time including:

- Creation of and hiring for the director of enrollment management position
- Development of the SUM Hub program which allows smaller churches to participate in hosting cohorts
- Opening of a partnership with the Northern California and Nevada District of the Assemblies of God designating SUM as the primary bible college for the district
- Implementation of, and staff training on, new software for admissions and enrollment.

It is unclear at this time whether or not the initiatives will compensate for increased competition from other institutions. Given the challenges noted and the recent adoption of such initiatives SUM should re-visit the aggressive five-year enrollment projections.

The five-year budget shows growth in expenses over time at a significantly lower rate than that of enrollment and revenue. It is unclear to the team how costs will be kept in check given the uncertainties of operating an entirely new campus while increasing the number and geographic spread of student cohorts. Additionally, the historical financial performance does not indicate the likelihood of expenses growing at a lower rate than revenue.

A mitigating factor is the rental revenue received from tenants at the El Dorado Hills, CA campus, which includes two office buildings. SUM's plans are to occupy a quarter of the space, and the remaining three-quarters are to be leased at market rates to tenants. It is anticipated to provide over \$500,000 per year, before interest expense, in revenue to SUM.

CFR 3.7. With the planned expansion of the cohort model to additional cities in the United States and countries around the world, SUM should continue its efforts to reorganize its administrative structure to plan for such growth.

SUM provided a document titled *Organizational Chart of Governance* (organizational chart) that included the organizational and personnel structure. Inclusion of the word "Governance" may indicate SUM's emerging understanding of shared governance versus management.

SUM added two full-time executive positions since 2016, the chief operating officer (COO) and the chief financial officer (CFO). However, the responsibilities of the COO and the extent of her decision-making authority were unclear to the team (it is important to note the job description for the position refers to it alternatively as vice president of operations). The organizational chart displays the position reporting directly to the president and all other executives reporting to the COO. The president confirmed this structure to the team. The COO

however, stated she does not directly supervise the executive team. The CFO stated he shares responsibility with the COO for some operational activities including human resources. The team strongly urges SUM to clarify, document, and communicate throughout the organization the roles and responsibilities of staff members at the executive and management levels.

The organizational structure of SUM, with the exception of the questions noted above regarding the COO position, is appropriate for an institution of its size. The staff members, including the CFO, are well qualified and dedicated to their work and SUM's mission.

Of note is the absence of information technology (IT) on the organizational chart. All IT functions are outsourced. The team heard no reports from faculty or staff regarding any shortcomings with IT, indicating the outsource model is working well at this time. The COO relayed to the team a plan to create an in-house IT staff position in the future.

Facilities maintenance is also outsourced to a local property management company. The team heard no complaints or concerns regarding the physical condition of the campus.

CFR 3.8. *Given the size and complexity of SUM, a full-time Chief Financial Officer must be hired on an expedited basis to meet WSCUC expectations.*

A qualified and competent full-time chief financial officer was hired and began work in 2017. However, there are some duties often assigned to the position in an organization of SUM's size that are under the COO as described above under CFR 3.7.

CFR 3.9. *The Board needs to develop an evaluation process for the CEO. The Commission also recommends that SUM consider expanding the size of its Board.*

An evaluation of the CEO by the board was performed in summer 2018. The CEO completed a self-evaluation form—one that is the same and used by all staff members. The CEO reported to the team that he found the process to be helpful, further expressing he received constructive criticism from the board which will help him improve his performance in the future. The team discussed this process with the board and their reflection was consistent with that of

the CEO. The team also discussed with the board the need to externally benchmark the compensation of the CEO.

The composition of the board of directors has not changed since the time of the SAV 1 visit, or the June 30, 2017 Commission Action Letter. In 2018, the board began implementing a plan to grow from 7 to 11 members by adding 2 members per year in 2019 and 2020. It was reported to the team that at the time of the SAV 2 visit there were nine candidates under consideration. It is the intention of the board to ultimately have equal representation from business, education, and ministry. While the current membership is mostly representative of the business world, candidates currently being considered are educators, active ministers, or acting in both roles.

***CFR 3.10.** SUM should consider developing more robust and formal faculty governance processes.*

Since the SAV 1 visit, SUM has implemented several changes intended to increase the involvement of faculty in policy, curriculum, and performance evaluation decisions. The positions of faculty chair in each academic department have been added as has a coordinator for the Spanish language program.

The Academic Council was created in May 2018. Its membership includes the CAO, associate deans, faculty chairs, the Spanish language coordinator, faculty members elected by the faculty in their respective departments and a student representative. The role of the council is to provide oversight, discussion, review and make recommendations on academic policies, faculty review, program review and the academic and faculty handbooks.

There is no council, senate or other body comprised solely of faculty members. While creation of the Academic Council is a welcome step, its membership includes the CAO and associate deans. The team supposes their presence in council meetings may inhibit free and open discussion of issues by individual faculty members.

An example of a process that would have benefited from significant faculty involvement is the revision of SUM's *Academic Freedom Policy*. The team heard from faculty during the open meeting with them and separately in a meeting with the CAO, associate academic dean and a department chair that there was little if any involvement of faculty in development of the policy.

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

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

The team finds that SUM Bible College and Theological Seminary meets this Standard at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation. Only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards.

CFR 4.1. A formalized evaluation process for data collection and analysis needs to be developed, including multiple mechanisms for assessing student performance using both direct and indirect measures.

Since SAV 1, a new five-year assessment plan has been developed that addresses assessment across all departments at SUM. The new *Five-Year Assessment Plan 2018-2022* builds on the previous five-year assessment plan (for years 2012-2017). There is evident improvement in the new assessment plan, with more data sources listed and clear identification of goals and benchmarks. The plan also includes information on the assessment cycle, and identifies various kinds of direct and indirect measures that can be used as evidence. This is a helpful resource for all departments on campus as they continue to refine their assessment processes.

There is some variation in the sophistication of the department assessment plans, with certain departments still relying more on indirect evidence or surveys, while others have developed more direct measures. Discussions with academic and non-academic departments demonstrated that SUM understands the need to continue developing multiple sources of data and evidence. The student life and student ministry department has taken advantage of student work collected in Canvas to augment survey assessments. Additionally, the cohort advisor's assessment of students is now complemented by students' assessment of cohort advisors. In academic departments, the well-developed program review process has faculty reviewing samples of student work to directly assess achievement of program learning outcomes and core competencies. Graduation and retention data are also used to measure student success. Student satisfaction surveys and other indirect measures that were in place prior to this visit have been used to complement the newer direct measures.

It is clear that each department is committed to maintaining the current assessment and quality-assurance processes that have been implemented. Members of each department discussed how the annual assessment plans and strategic plan progress reports were used in monthly or weekly meetings to set priorities and direct their work. The team suggests that SUM continue to monitor the amount of work being given to maintaining these quality assurance processes, and make changes as needed to ensure data collection efforts are not duplicated and the assessment structure is sustainable.

CFR 4.2. *The full-time institutional researcher to be hired will need to develop a formalized approach to institutional research beyond the current approach of compiling survey data.*

SUM has developed the institutional research function from a part-time role combined with the registrar into a separate, full-time position under the office of institutional effectiveness. Efforts have been made to develop the office based on best practices from peer institutions and professional organizations like the Association for Institutional Research (AIR). The job

description for the director of institutional effectiveness shows that this position has responsibility for typical institutional research functions, as well as for leading assessment efforts across the institution. SUM's approach to institutional effectiveness has been formalized through the creation of an assessment committee and assessment plans for each department and the strategic plan.

SUM provided evidence of the typical kinds of institutional research data available, including enrollment, retention, and graduation data. The institutional effectiveness office maintains a page on SUM's website with updated information for use both internally and externally. This data demonstrates that SUM has expanded the institutional research function beyond simply compiling survey data. Further standardization and development of the kinds of data presented should be pursued in order to maintain data integrity and usefulness. Some helpful resources in this area include AIR, California Association for Institutional Research (CAIR), peer institutions, and standardized data collection methods like the Common Data Set.

While the institutional effectiveness office is a centralized location for assessment reporting, some of the basic institutional research functions are decentralized. The registrar's office is responsible for some data extraction and cleaning, and IPEDS reporting requirements are shared between institutional effectiveness, the registrar, and the CAO. While SUM is able to produce the needed data for decision-making and reporting, the team suggests that centralizing the institutional research functions in one office will help to develop consistency and standardization of the data. Professional development for those offices involved in data collection and reporting, and connecting with peers at similar institutions will help SUM to continue developing in this area.

CFR 4.4. *SUM needs to develop standards of performance for the institution and ensure that they are achieved. Institutional effectiveness assessment results should be used to improve student learning and success.*

SUM has developed multiple assessment plans that include benchmarks and goals for performance. The program review reports were used to review student performance on the program learning outcomes. Faculty engaged in a process of determining acceptable levels of performance and reviewing student work against those standards. Student performance was found to be acceptable in some areas and below expectations in others. The action items and recommendations in the program reviews show faculty commitment to improving student learning and success in the identified areas of weakness.

Assessment reports for other departments also listed goals and standards of performance. These were assessed using multiple sources of evidence, including student work. Areas for improvement were identified, and some changes have already been implemented based on the results. For example, the student life and student ministry department reassigned responsibility for grading some student reflection papers on co-curricular activities to professors rather than cohort advisors so students could receive better feedback.

Because many of the assessment reports and program reviews were completed close to the time of the institutional report and visit, only a small amount of evidence was available to show implementation of recommended changes. However, the team heard from faculty and staff about processes and plans to incorporate assessment findings and recommendations into operations moving forward. The five-year assessment plan and program review process indicates a continuing commitment to the assessment cycle and using data on student learning to make decisions to improve student success.

CFR 4.6. *Greater awareness of the institution's strategic plan is needed on the part of the Board of Directors and other campus groups. The strategic plan needs to be aligned with the institution's budget, address key priorities for the future, and undergo regular monitoring and revision.*

SUM has undertaken a process over the past two years to increase knowledge and use of the strategic plan across the institution. A strategic planning committee consisting of executive

team members, staff members, and board members reviewed the *Strategic Plan 2017-2022* and expanded the text to include more narrative statements and explanations of goal and priorities.

The committee created a strategic plan implementation and monitoring process document that outlines how the strategic plan will be communicated and implemented through the various departments on campus. This document also contains a calendar describing the annual reporting cycle to monitor progress on the strategic plan. The committee created “strategic plan tables” for each department that have detailed action plans connected to the strategic plan goals so that each department can clearly see how to operationalize the strategic plan. These changes made it easier for staff and faculty at all levels to engage with the strategic plan and use it to guide their work.

Annual reports on the strategic plan from each department are submitted to the board for review. These reports demonstrate progress on the detailed action plans developed by the strategic planning committee. The completed annual reports reviewed by the team show that SUM is working towards aligning the budget with key priorities for each department.

The team suggests that SUM continue to monitor the process of annual reporting for the strategic plan in conjunction with the annual assessment reporting for each department. While some departments have integrated their strategic plan report with their separate annual assessment report (required as part of the five year assessment plan) it is not clear that all departments have done so. Reviewing these processes over time to ensure sustainability and decrease duplicated effort will help SUM continue to improve data driven decision-making without creating an overwhelming reporting burden.

SECTION III. FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings

The purpose of the review and visit was to assess SUM's compliance with the four Standards established by the WASC Senior College and University Commission. Throughout the review, the team heard from students, faculty, staff, board, and alumni. Whether positive comments or recommendations for improvement, it was clear to the team that there is a supportive and continued focus on student success.

Standard 1

The team finds that SUM Bible College and Theological Seminary meets this Standard at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation. Only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards.

Standard 2

The team finds that SUM Bible College and Theological Seminary meets this Standard at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation. Only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards.

Standard 3

The team finds that SUM Bible College and Theological Seminary meets this Standard at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation. Only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards.

Standard 4

The team finds that SUM Bible College and Theological Seminary meets this Standard at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation. Only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards.

Commendations

The team commends SUM for

- a focused, well developed, and robust mission empowering leaders for the ministry,
- an innovative and forward-thinking cohort model that builds community across the globe,
- an authentic commitment to quality improvement by seeking WSCUC accreditation,
- establishing and implementing a comprehensive faculty evaluation process that includes effective record keeping and improved communication, and
- developing comprehensive program review guidelines and completing the initial cycle of program reviews that demonstrated a diligent analysis of student learning outcomes and prioritization of action items.

Recommendations

1. Consistent with its purposes and character, SUM must fully comply with the WSCUC Equity and Inclusion Policy. SUM's board, administration, and faculty should better mirror the diverse backgrounds of its student body. (CFR 1.4)
2. SUM should establish multi-year financial plans based on realistic projections of enrollment and expenses and informed by historical financial performance. (CFR 3.4)
3. In order to support clear and effective decision-making, SUM should clarify and communicate throughout the institution the Chief Operating Officer's level of responsibility and line of authority. (CFR 3.6, 3.7)
4. SUM should empower faculty to more fully exercise their roles, rights, and responsibilities in academic leadership. (CFR 3.10)
5. The SUM Board of Directors should seek to increase its effectiveness through professional development and a more formalized committee structure. (CFR 3.9; WSCUC Governing Board Policy)

6. SUM should disaggregate student success data (to include race, ethnicity and gender), identify any underperforming groups, and use these data to inform efforts to improve student achievement. (CFR 2.10)
7. SUM should develop its institutional research capacity and effectiveness to standardize data collection and reporting processes and clearly delineate roles and responsibilities for data integrity. Professional development and benchmarking with peer institutions will improve this area. (CFR 4.2)

APPENDIX

The team received and reviewed the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI) that displayed a comprehensive system of program review. Various types of evidence are being collected, analyzed, and used for improvement. As described in the IEEI, the assessment and program review processes lead to completed program reviews.