

REPORT OF THE WSCUC VISITING TEAM

SPECIAL VISIT (SV)

to

Amity University Uttar Pradesh (AUUP)

March 26 – 29, 2018

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

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## **SECTION I. OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT**

### ***A. Description of the Institution, Accreditation History, and Visit***

Amity University Uttar Pradesh (AUUP) is a private, not-for-profit, co-educational institution of higher education, established in India on January 12, 2005 through the AUUP Ordinance promulgated by the governor of Uttar Pradesh. Its mission is:

*To provide education at all levels in all disciplines of modern times and in the futuristic and emerging frontier areas of knowledge, learning and research and to develop the overall personality of students by making them not only excellent professionals but also good individuals, with understanding and regards for human values, pride in their heritage and culture, a sense of right and wrong and yearning for perfection and imbibe attributes of courage of convictions and action.*

AUUP currently offers bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in engineering, biosciences, architecture, telecom, arts, journalism and communication, management, humanities, social sciences, education, hospitality, law, insurance, health and allied sciences, fine arts, rehabilitation sciences, tourism, and applied sciences. It also offers distance learning programs. The institution currently enrolls approximately 42,650 students and employs 1,896 teaching staff and over 3,000 non-teaching personnel — in total across the four campuses. The main campus of AUUP is located at Sector – 125, Noida, District Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, India.

In September 2013, AUUP applied for Eligibility for WSCUC accreditation. On November 10, 2014, a panel of the WSCUC Eligibility Review Committee (ERC) conducted its evaluation of AUUP's application for Eligibility submitted for the purpose of obtaining WSCUC accreditation. The Commission granted Eligibility until November 2019 to the

campuses in Noida and Greater Noida, Lucknow, and Dubai (United Arab Emirates [UAE]). (Amity Education Group operates a large number of campuses around the world [“the Amity system”], but Eligibility is restricted to these four campuses and not for the Amity system.) AUUP submitted its *Letter of Intent to Apply for Accreditation* in July 2015 and its Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 (SAV1) report on November 7, 2015. A SAV1 took place on January 12–14, 2016. The team reviewed the main campus in Noida and off-campus sites in Lucknow and Dubai.

In June 2016, WSCUC granted Initial Accreditation for a period of six years (through 2022) to AUUP that includes the campuses in Noida, Greater Noida, Lucknow, and Dubai, while requesting a Special Visit (SV) to take place in spring 2018 on the following issues: 1) governing board, 2) diversity, 3) administrative structure, 4) decision-making processes, 5) library, and 6) strategic planning (as detailed below in ***B. Descriptions of Team’s Review Process***). The present report reflects the SV team’s evaluation of the institution’s responses to these six issues as well as its observation of the institution during the onsite review that took place on March 26–29, 2018. The team reviewed the campuses in Dubai (March 26), Greater Noida (March 27), Lucknow (March 28), and Noida (March 29).

### ***B. Descriptions of Team’s Review Process***

The team received the AUUP SV report (henceforth, “institutional report”) on February 13, 2018 — a month later than the expected/targeted submission date of January 15, 2018. The delay was first caused due to an accreditation review being conducted by another agency right before the expected date for the SV report submission. An extension was granted until February 1, 2018, which the institution was unable to meet. After the team’s repeated requests, the university submitted its institutional report on February 6, 2018, but the team

found it incomplete because the institution did not follow the SV report guide and template — missing all the required elements except for “Response to Issues Identified by the Commission.” Responding to the team’s request, the institution re-submitted a revised and expanded report on February 13, 2018. Due to the further delay, the team was given only one week to review the institutional report and materials to prepare for the team conference call scheduled for February 21, 2018. Despite the haste, the team was able to complete all the required preparatory work and held a productive conference call.

Immediately after the call, the team requested additional information to be made available in three weeks. It also asked for changes and additions to be made to the draft visit schedules in one week and then in two weeks. Despite the team’s repeated requests, however, the institution remained non-responsive until the information was finally made available on March 19, 2018 — a week before the first day of the site visit. In addition, the visiting team found that the institution had not communicated the university community about the confidential e-mail account established for the purpose of the review. The team takes note of the institution’s lack of responsiveness to pre-visit requirements, and recommends that the institution be punctual and responsive to team requests and needs in order to facilitate the team’s pre-visit preparation. (CFR 1.8)

During the onsite review on March 26–29, 2018, the visiting team reviewed documents made available onsite and met with multiple constituencies in order to explore the six areas for continuing attention and development as described in the following excerpts from pp. 2-3 of the July 8, 2016 Commission action letter (CAL):

- 1) **Governing Board** — [... the Commission] recommends that [the governing board] continue to develop and expand its membership, giving thought to engaging board

*development professionals for assisting in the development of criteria for prospective member composition including appropriate processes for the evaluation of member qualifications, which would include more diversity, both in gender and age, while ensuring that the majority of members remain independent. The Commission recommends the creation of a nominating committee of the board. (CFR 1.4, 3.9).*

- 2) **Diversity** — *The Commission appreciates the university's efforts to collect data and disaggregate them based on different aspects of diversity. As the university continues to grow and becomes more global, the team recommends that the university demonstrate greater sensitivity toward the issue of diversity, including racial, ethnic and economic diversity, while maintaining excellence. (CFR 1.4)*
- 3) **Administrative Structures** — *The Commission recommends that Amity University revisit the issue of the vice chancellor serving as the CEO, the CAO, and the ALO in order to ensure that sufficient resources are devoted to both institutional and various academic demands. The Commission recommends that the university strongly consider adding an ALO reporting to the vice chancellor. While state law may preclude Amity University from separating the position of CAO and CEO, the university should consider adding additional pro vice chancellor positions (equivalent to vice provost or associate provost in the United States) in the future. (CFR 3.8)*
- 4) **Decision-making Processes** — *The decision-making processes of the university appear to be complicated by both the number of committees involved in each decision and the modest number of meetings held annually by key committees. The Commission recommends that the university streamline its decision-making committees and increase the number of meetings for the remaining key committees. (CFR 3.7)*

- 5) **Library** — *The Commission recommends that the university conduct an evaluation of the library holdings that should include benchmarking of similar library holdings for WSCUC-accredited universities of comparable size and program delivery. (CFR 3.5)*
- 6) **Strategic Planning** — *With Amity’s compelling mission and vision, the Commission recommends that the strategic plan of the institution be the foundational and unifying document, where the university’s intentions regarding its place in global and regional higher education are explicit and transparent to decision-makers and appropriate stakeholders. It would be useful to see an interpretive report synthesizing the results of both institutional and academic assessment in one study. (CFR 4.3, 4.7)*

Overall, AUUP took the SV issues seriously, responded to each of them, and has made a number of changes based on the WSCUC recommendations. Onsite, the team found institutional involvement in the accreditation process and review extensive. The campus community members whom the team met demonstrated a sincere commitment to the process. Representatives of the campus leadership and community were also ready to provide any information the team requested. The team commends the university community for its serious engagement in the accreditation process. The team would like to express its appreciation to the university community for the openness and transparency with which they responded to questions and for their effort in making the site visit hospitable. (CFR 1.8)

***C. Institution’s Special Visit Report: Quality and Rigor of the Report and Supporting Evidence***

AUUP’s institutional report submitted in preparation for the spring 2018 SV was written

more effectively and better organized than that submitted for SAV1 in 2016.<sup>1</sup> Overall, the institution responded to each recommendation in the report, but without an integration or synthesis of evidence based on action taken. It would have been helpful to provide a discussion and documentation on the policy or practices put into place that support recommendations made. Additionally, it would have been informative to provide an explanation as to the intent to gather data, integrate data into modified practices, and synthesize that information, along with concrete examples of these processes.

Many times, the institutional report did not provide a beginning and ending reference point for the team to understand what change actually took place. Moreover, the evidence presented tended to be structural and quantitative — e.g., more qualitative assessment and comparative (“before and after”) presentation of evidence would have been helpful. The university would be encouraged to establish milestones, benchmarks, and concrete assessment methods, practices, and timeframes to determine if change was occurring. More specifically, it would have been informative if the report had included further inquiry focusing on: (a) assessment efforts — how, when, by whom; (b) monitoring over time with benchmarks and

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<sup>1</sup> SAV1 team described the 2016 AUUP SAV1 report as follows: “SAV1 report was written and organized in a way that differed from the format and style normally used in WSCUC institutional reports. (The team learned that the university’s method of writing is typical in style to that of most organizational documentation in India). First, the report was not written in a narrative form. It rather provided much numerical evidence with the details in numerical order. The evidence submitted for each Standard and accompanying Criteria for Review (CFR) was appropriate but inconclusive, lacking the depth of its analysis. Secondly, the report did not address in a self-reflective manner its compliance with the Standards. While it focused more on numerical evidence than self-analysis, the report did not identify areas of strength and needed improvement. Thirdly, the report lacked several important details and context as the institution seemed to have tried not to repeat what was in the Eligibility application, which is not normally shared with teams.”

milestones for proposed accomplishment; and (c) establishing how and by whom decisions were to be made.

Much of the information provided in and appended to the institutional report was outside the scope of the issues identified for the SV, describing the overall progress the institution has made over the past two years — e.g., enhancements in university rankings, research metrics, etc. The team would have liked to see in the report more rigor and consistency of supporting evidence focusing on the SV issues. Nonetheless, the team commends the university for its efforts to document the scholarly and professional development of its faculty effectively and appropriately as expected for an institution with graduate studies. Details of research, innovation, and extension depict a comprehensive picture of scholarly activity in the form of internships, fellowships, publications, grants, patents, and research papers. (CFR 4.1)

By and large, the report demonstrated a wide range of institutional engagement with the key issues identified for the review as well as a good range of institutional involvement in the accreditation process. More importantly, the information provided by the institution during the site visit and the observations obtained onsite helped the team understand the progress the institution has made since the last review.

## **SECTION II. TEAM'S EVALUATION OF ISSUES UNDER THE STANDARDS**

The visiting team found that the six issues identified for the SV resulted in significant activity by the university, which is reflected in the team findings presented below.

***A. Issue 1 — Governing Board***

In the July 8, 2016 CAL, the Commission recommended that AUUP address the issue of governing board (“Court”) by developing and expanding its membership, giving thought to engaging board development professionals for assisting in the development of criteria for prospective member composition including appropriate processes for the evaluation of member qualifications, including more diversity, both in gender and age, while ensuring that the majority of members remain independent, and by creating a nominating committee of the board. (CFR 1.4, 3.9)

Prior to the onsite review, in order to ensure review of appropriate materials, the following additional information was requested to further address the university’s response to this issue:

- Board bios, board bylaws, and demographic data of the board;
- Data/table showing the independent and non-independent board members;
- Policies specific to the board that have been created since the last visit in 2016.

Based on the additional information provided as well as the insight gained during the onsite review, the visiting team found that the composition of the board had not changed significantly. New members had been added — most noteworthy was the addition of an alumnus, but there was no significant diversification, especially in gender.

Discussions with the chancellor and vice chancellor revealed a thoughtful plan for providing diversity in the future. The board was originally constituted without term limits. Consequently, an important step has been taken to install term limits. The board will now have opportunities to add diversity in gender and age beginning January 1, 2019 — i.e., after some of the board members’ terms expire in December 2018. Committees have also been

added to the board — most importantly, including a nominating committee (“Oversight Committee for Nominations”).

While the visiting team recognizes the response of the university to the issue of the composition of the governing board by creating functional committees and by recognizing the need to increase the gender of the membership, it recommends that the university continue to review the policies regarding the selection of board members, paying particular attention to the issue of gender diversity. (CFR 1.4, 3.9)

***B. Issue 2 — Diversity***

In the July 8, 2016 CAL, the Commission recommended that AUUP address the issue of diversity by demonstrating greater sensitivity toward racial, ethnic, and economic diversity, while maintaining excellence. (CFR 1.4)

Prior to the onsite review, the visiting team found that the university had identified the categories of diversity it intended to address. To ensure review of appropriate materials, it requested the following additional information to further address the university’s response to this issue:

- Data for each of the categories of diversity the institution intends to address, coupled with “intentional goals,” and with measures by which these goals are monitored;
- Benchmarks and/or national statistics relating to diversity data in higher education in India.

Based on the additional information provided as well as the insight gained during the onsite review, the visiting team found that AUUP is especially effective in responding to the issue of diversity, with evidence of a clear identification of what constitutes diversity for the

university aligned with policies, programs, and practices evidencing implementation and integrations of efforts to address this issue. The visiting team was impressed with the overall progress in this area.

Diversity for AUUP is defined and identified within a broad framework of parameters including: (a) gender; (b) regional; (c) economic; (d) social; and (e) physically challenged. This early-on identification is commendable and establishes the possibility to making a difference. Efforts to address diversity include development and delivery of services — e.g., co-curricular efforts for language development, expanded scholarship for diverse categories of students.

Sensitivity toward or consideration of diversity is relatively new to higher education in India. The team believes it is important to stress that AUUP is clearly on the cutting edge of desegregating and understanding data on diversity. As examples, before its initial review, no group or body had asked about diversity related to caste. Moreover, the university did not have access to student demographic data related to income. It was only a year or so ago that the Indian government set ₹800,000 INR [Indian Rupee] (approximately \$12,000 USD) as the income level associated with low-income students. Considering the timing and AUUP being in the forefront in India, it makes the progress even more significant.

It is also noteworthy that each campus has identified cross-cutting needs but also recognizes the differences in populations at each location. An important connector for all campuses is the Amity intranet zone (“Amizone”). This “Student Life Cycle” online system provides tools and resources for all students, faculty, and staff. The team was impressed that each campus location, while embracing the overarching mission and vision of AUUP and the

principles of WSCUC, was also sensitive and attentive to the local community and associated culture (all campuses) and UAE regulations and laws (Dubai).

Dubai — While all four locations are unique, the Dubai campus provides the greatest diversity in nationalities represented on campus. Students from 50 nationalities attend Dubai. The faculty and administration at the Dubai campus are diverse themselves and embracing diversity. A good example presented to the team was the recent increase in students from China. The faculty quickly recognized achievement issues associated with English as a second language (ESL) and implemented changes to enhance student success by providing ESL support.

Greater Noida — This campus also has a unique position within the AUUP family. As India is built upon villages, this campus has been very successful in adapting and embracing the concept of villages. The Greater Noida campus has the highest percentage of non-general caste (lower socio-economic) students. As for other locations, the campus has a lower percentage of female students than traditional Indian universities (20% vs. 46%). Consistent with the concept of villages, Greater Noida has a greater percentage of rural students.

Lucknow — Of interest for student success, this campus emphasizes a third language — Spanish as recognizing its importance in the U.S. The majority of students at Lucknow are female. The visiting team was pleased to find that approximately 40% of the faculty are female. The student body at Lucknow is approximately 20% non-general caste and 43% female.

Furthermore, each campus reviewed onsite was presented with documentation of the ways in which diversity was being monitored, with evidence of implementation of effective and appropriate practices. The visiting team commends that each campus respects the differences

of the populations served within their geographic area, with demonstrated support to the collective vision, mission, and purpose for the university as a whole. This reinforces the alignment of all campuses. The visiting team appreciates and commends the university's efforts to collect data and disaggregate them based on different aspects of diversity. The university made significant progress in this area. (CFR 1.4)

As additional data on income, racial, ethnic and economic data are collected, the team recommends that the institution continue with its efforts in data collection and analysis and review available resources for financial aid available for low-income students. (CFR 1.4)

### ***C. Issue 3 — Administrative Structure***

In the July 8, 2016 CAL, the Commission recommended that AUUP revisit the issue of the vice chancellor serving as the CEO, the CAO, and the ALO in order to ensure that sufficient resources are devoted to both institutional and various academic demands, and the university strongly consider adding an ALO reporting to the vice chancellor. (CFR 3.8)

Since the SAV 1 in January 2016, several important changes regarding the university's administrative structures have occurred, including the appointment of the registrar as the ALO, the decision to add additional pro vice chancellor positions at the Noida campus, and a director general position to oversee a number of administrative departments, including security, maintenance, and residence halls.

Currently, four pro vice chancellor positions are advertised on the AUUP website, academics, research, international, and industrial relations. In Amity's context, pro vice chancellors are the most senior officers of the institution, reporting directly to the vice chancellor (CEO) and playing major leadership and administrative roles. While the searches

for the pro vice chancellor positions have not been successful to date, the searches continue. However, the director general position was filled at the time of the SV. The visiting team also found that an outcome monitoring department was added to assist the vice chancellor in monitoring progress on goals and objectives of the university's academic units and staff.

The visiting team commends the university's response to the Commission's recommendation regarding its administrative structures by appointing a new ALO, and by creating additional pro vice chancellor positions to assist the CEO in the leadership and administration of the university and suggests that the university fill the pro vice chancellor's position as soon as possible. (CFR 3.8)

#### ***D. Issue 4 — Decision-making Processes***

In the July 8, 2016 CAL, the Commission recommended that AUUP streamline its decision-making committees and increase the number of meetings for the remaining key committees. (CFR 3.7)

Prior to the onsite review, the institution was requested to provide specific examples of changes that had occurred in concert with the reduction in both number of decision-making entities and time required to initiate the change, along with documentation of the process:

- Clear identification of specific changes made to the decision-making process, with a comparison of what was in place and what is now in place;
- Flowchart showing the process of decision making;
- Meeting minutes (selected good examples) showing how decisions have been made;
- Meeting minutes (selected good examples) detailing merger of groups, disbanding of groups, creation of a more effective and streamlined decision-tree of efforts;

- Concrete actions (closing the loop) to establish evidence that the newly-created structure allows decisions/actions to occur in a reduced period of time, with more clear communication and fewer key individuals required to be involved.

Based on the additional information provided as well as the insight gained during the onsite review, the visiting team found that AUUP has made a significant increase in the number of meetings for many of the statutory bodies for the time period from 2015 to 2018.

Review of materials at each physical location, supplemented by meetings with key decision-makers, confirmed there was:

- Clear identification of specific changes made to the decision-making process, with a comparison of what had been in place, and what is in place now.
- Meeting minutes detailing merger of groups, disbanding of groups, creation of a more effective and streamlined decision-tree of efforts.

AUUP's response to this recommendation began with a careful review of its committee structures, which included the input from all levels of the institution. The study resulted in the merger of several committees and increased the number of meetings per year of key committees, especially at the domain and institution level. For example, at each level within the organization, institution, domain, university, a Program Review Committee and a Program Outcome Assessment Committee existed. These were combined into a Program Review and Outcome Assessment Committee at all levels. The process began at the institution and domain levels, where they were considered by members of the committee, primarily faculty, and recommendations then sent to the university's Institutional Assessment and Quality Assurance Committee (IQAC) for review. In early January of 2018, the IQAC approved the merger of these committees within the entire university. The minutes of several meetings

indicate widespread faculty involvement, and a belief that the mergers will result in time, and human hours saved. The following table illustrates the actions taken by university in response to this recommendation:

<b>Structure at the SAV 1</b>		<b>Structure at the Special Visit</b>	
<b>Program Level</b>			
Program Review Committee (PRC)		Program Review and Outcome Assessment Committee (PROAC)	
Program Outcome Assessment Committee (POAC)			
<b>Institutional Level</b>			
Institutional Research and Planning Committee (IRPC)		Institutional Quality Assurance Committee (IQAC)	
Institutional Quality Assurance Committee (IQAC)			
Institutional Outcome Assessment Committee (IOAC)			
<b>Domain Level</b>			
MRM (Domain)		Domain Institutional Quality Assurance Committee (Domain IQAC)	
Domain Outcome Assessment Committee (DOAC)			
Domain Research Planning Committee (DRPC)			
Domain Institutional Quality Assurance Committee (DIQAC)			
<b>University Level</b>			
MRM (University)		University Institutional Quality Assurance Committee (University IQAC)	
University Outcome Assessment Committee (UOAC)			
University Statistical Research and Planning Committee (USRPC)			
University Planning Sub-Committee (UPSC)			
University Institutional Quality Assurance Committee (IQAC)			

Scheduled meetings of key committees at the university are typically twice per year; however, they have met more often when needed — e.g., the IQAC met in January to consider the committee restructure effort. In addition, the domain and institutional committees are encouraged to meet more often. Faculty reported that they were able to get timely decisions about curricular changes that they felt were necessary. Two examples were given by

faculty at the Dubai campus — one for the “MBA for Working Professionals” program that took less than three months, and one for the fashion design program that was handled “quickly.” Faculty at the other campuses also reported prompt actions are curricular change recommendations. Decision making for the remote campuses follow the same format as does the main campus. The local campuses stated that they were locally enabled to adapt their curriculum to best serve their particular markets; however, program learning outcomes still have to go through the formal approval processes.

At the present time, and since the WSCUC recognition for Initial Accreditation, the university has evidenced significant progress in establishing, through change, clear and consistent decision-making structures and processes that evidently reduce the time to action requested. The effect of these changes has already brought about confirmation of the ability to sustain institutional capacity and educational effectiveness. It is anticipated, as the university and the processes mature, substantial compliance will be evidenced with this recommendation.

While the visiting team recognizes the university’s progress in clarifying and simplifying the decision-making processes of the university, it is recommended that the levels of authority at each level of the committee structures — i.e., program, institution, domain, campus, and university — be clarified and the university evaluate the effectiveness of the recent changes made in the committee restructuring. (CFR 3.7)

***E. Issue 5 — Library***

In the July 8, 2016 CAL, the Commission recommended that AUUP conduct an evaluation of the library holdings that should include benchmarking of similar library

holdings for WSCUC-accredited universities of comparable size and program delivery. (CFR 3.5)

The 2016 SAV1 team report indicated: “The library building is impressive and large; however, the holdings of 200,000 books, of which over 50% are multiple copies of textbooks, is very low for a university of Amity’s size and program delivery. In addition, many of the e-journals usually found are not available.”

Prior to the onsite review, in order to ensure review of appropriate materials, the following additional information was requested to further address the university’s response to this issue:

- Data regarding the library collections at other AUUP campuses;
- Benchmarking for the library collection — i.e., data comparison showing other universities’ library holdings;
- More specific information about journal holdings (e.g., JSTOR, etc.);
- More specific data or table showing what categories of holdings are already in the collection and what will be added.

Based on the additional information provided as well as the insight gained during the onsite review, the visiting team found that university’s response to the Commission’s recommendations regarding the library were commendable. The number of electronic databases and the number of books has been significantly increased, and a five-year plan to further increase the holdings has been developed. The university has also created a set of institutions to which it now benchmarks itself regarding its library holdings.

AUUP also conducted an analysis of its holdings by domain (discipline or subject area). The study revealed that some of the domains, e.g., the domain of Hotel Management, Hospitality, Tourism, and Travel only had 645 book titles, lagging well behind many of its

other domains. The Library Committee then engaged in a dialogue with the dean of the area to encourage the nomination of additional titles to be purchased. Through this process, many of the 33,336 additional volumes were added. Likewise, the e-journal collection was greatly expanded, adding over 10 additional data bases, including JSTOR, Lexis Nexus, and Web of Science. (It should be noted that JSTOR was not yet available at the remote campuses, but this expansion is planned within this calendar year.)

The set of comparative institutions chosen by the university are shown in the table below:

Name of University	Category	No. of Students	Print Books	E-Books	Print Journals	E-Journals
Sharda University	India private	21,000	1,00,000	--	100	5,000
Galgotias University	India private	15,000	63,236	4,513	416	16
University of Delhi	India central university	1,32,435	14,50,000	3,000	380	43,286
Kurukshetra University,	India state govt.	45,000	3,75,030	--	250	15,000
G.G.S. I.P. University	India state govt.	3,500	65,000	5,000	350	18,000
<b>Amity University</b>	<b>India private non-profit</b>	<b>32,000</b>	<b>2,58,135</b>	<b>250-</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>8,000</b>
Allahabad University	India central university	34,000	732,622	2,155	285	24,375
University of San Francisco	US private non-profit	11,018	600,000	237,000	--	200
San Jose State University	US state, public	32,773	920,971	305,030	215,115	160,561

*Source: PPT presentation by the AUUP Library Committee on March 29, 2018 – slightly modified*

The study of its comparative institutions included the holdings, in terms of print books, e-books, print journals, e-journals and audio-visual materials. AUUP's goal is to achieve parity within five years. The visiting team suggests that more finite goals for its collections in print

books, e-books, print journals, and e-journals, be established as parity is difficult to determine as some of the institutions do not have doctoral programs, and some are much larger in student population. The university has budgeted \$538,461 for library collection upgrading between 2018 and 2020. The visiting team found that the university has made adequate progress on this goal and commends the university for its progress and encourages the university to refine its comparative set of institutions and to set discrete goals as to achieving parity. (CFR 3.5)

***F. Issue 6 — Strategic Planning***

In the July 8, 2016 CAL, the Commission recommended that the strategic plan of the institution be the foundational and unifying document, where the university's intentions regarding its place in global and regional higher education are explicit and transparent to decision-makers and appropriate stakeholders. It also recommended that AUUP produce an interpretive report synthesizing the results of both institutional and academic assessment in one study. (CFR 4.3, 4.7)

Prior to the onsite review, the visiting team found that the framework to address expectations of CFR 4.3 and 4.7 exists within the current strategic plan. Onsite, the team examined to see if these expectations could be validated. To ensure review of appropriate materials, the following additional information was requested to further address the university's response to this issue:

- Actual data evidencing the accomplishment of strategic planning goals for the 2012–2017 period. From 2012–2017 (What were the actual changes that occurred? This can

well serve to project the effectiveness of the newly adopted strategic plan, or to suggest where the plan might be strengthened);

- Details and documentation (specific actions) of the university bodies engaged in developing initiatives and goals;
- Projections of expectations for initiatives within prescribed periods of time, measures that evidence accomplishment or progress, and identification of fiscal and human resources required.

Based on the additional information provided as well as the insight gained during the onsite review, the visiting team found that AUUP's current strategic plan (2017 – 2022) has a framework of 10 goals and initiatives that are consistent with the mission, vision, and values of the institution. The current plan details a broad spectrum for change, representing improvement on many levels.

Documentation on the achievement of the prior strategic plan (2012 – 2017) was impressive, while the breadth of detail represented in the current plan (2017–2022) shows growth relative to implementing strategic efforts aligned with WSCUC expectations. Addressing a broad range of initiatives and goals within the strategic plan, the plan itself did not initially incorporate the inquiry, evidence, and evaluation, aligned with the expectations of CFR 4.3. Additionally, the initial materials did not identify:

- By whom the strategic plan was developed;
- Policies and practices to be addressed within the plan; nor
- Clarity as to how the academic and co-curricular components of the university were to be enhanced through the efforts of planning.

Meeting with significant and appropriate groups of individuals with the onsite review at the four locations of Dubai, Greater Noida, Lucknow, and Noida, it immediately became apparent that the strategic plan for 2017-2022 was developed with both a top-down (governing board and site administrators) and bottom-up (faculty of all sites) input. Implementation of the plan, consistent with the AUUP vision and mission statement, was readily apparent, with an emphasis to address the unique populations served at each AUUP campus.

Through meetings and with review of additional materials provided prior to the visit and while onsite, it was clear the core concepts of CFR 4.3 and 4.7 were understood, articulated within the parameters of the university operation. Structures, processes, and forms to put into operation specific efforts relative to the strategic initiatives of the plan were evidenced. The concepts were internalized by the administration and by faculty at each location.

Both curricular and co-curricular efforts were detailed with documentation as to how each of the strategic initiatives was being implemented. Information was readily available and presented, at each of the campus sites reviewed, with aggregated detail on the collective efforts of the university as a whole. AUUP has fully embraced its strategic plan with 10 broad-based goals and strategic initiatives for 2017 – 2022. While still early in the process of implementing this strategic plan, which aligns all campus sites toward a common and mutually-agreed upon direction, the university has made significant progress with implementation.

Overall, the team found that the institution is compliance with CFR 4.3 requiring improvement, based on data and evidence, and systematic assessment of teaching, learning, campus environment, and utilization of results was readily apparent, with significant progress

already reflected in the processes of both implementation and collective evidence. The institution is also found to be compliance with CFR 4.7, with expectations of anticipation and response to a changing higher educational environment was also readily apparent. The university has fully incorporated and responded to expectations of WSCUC, with an alignment of language of the Commission, and incorporation of expectations with Standard 4.

Over the course of the time period for their present award of Initial Accreditation, substantial compliance is expected to become even more evident. It is recommended, moving forward, that the institution assess its progress for each strategic initiative, and document outcomes on a site by site basis, to establish the commitment for each campus stakeholder. (CFR 4.3, 4.7)

### **SECTION III. OTHER TOPICS**

*None*

### **SECTION IV. FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TEAM REVIEW**

The team was impressed with the seriousness, openness, and transparency with which AUUP undertook the accreditation review process. The present report concludes with the team's six commendations and five recommendations as follows:

#### **Commendations**

1. AUUP took the SV issues seriously, responded to each of them, and has made a number of changes based on the WSCUC recommendations. Onsite, the team found institutional involvement in the accreditation process and review extensive. The

visiting team commends the university community for its serious engagement in the accreditation process. (CFR 1.8)

2. The visiting team commends the university's efforts to document the scholarly and professional development of its faculty effectively and appropriately as expected for an institution with graduate studies. (CFR 4.1)
3. The visiting team commends the university's efforts to collect data and disaggregate them based on different aspects of diversity. The university made significant progress in this area. (CFR 1.4)
4. The visiting team commends that each campus respects the differences of the populations served within their geographic area, with demonstrated support to the collective vision, mission, and purpose for the university as a whole. This reinforces the alignment of all campuses. (CFR 1.4)
5. The visiting team commends AUUP's response to the Commission's recommendation regarding its administrative structures by appointing a new ALO, and by creating additional pro vice chancellor positions to assist the CEO in the leadership and administration of the university and suggests that the university fill the pro vice chancellor's position as soon as possible. (CFR 3.8)
6. The visiting team commends the university's response to the Commission's recommendations regarding the library, by increasing its holdings, while benchmarking with similar institutions, both within India and in the U.S. The visiting team suggests that this effort be continued, refine its comparative set of institutions, and set discrete goals as to achieving parity. (CFR 3.5)

## Recommendations

1. **Pre-visit Preparation** — The team takes note of the institution's lack of responsiveness to pre-visit requirements and recommends that the institution be punctual and responsive to team requests and needs to assist and facilitate the team's pre-visit preparation. (CFR 1.8)
2. **Governing Board** — While the visiting team recognizes the response of the university to the issue of the composition of the governing board by creating functional committees and by recognizing the need to increase the gender of the membership, it recommends that the university continue to review the policies regarding the selection of board members, paying particular attention to the issue of gender diversity. (CFR 1.4, 3.9)
3. **Diversity** — The visiting team recognizes the university's progress in its efforts to collect data and disaggregate them based on different aspects of diversity. As additional data on income, racial, ethnic and economic data are collected, the team recommends that the institution continue with its efforts in data collection and analysis and review available resources for financial aid available for low-income students. (CFR 1.4)
4. **Decision-making Processes** — While the visiting team recognizes the university's progress in clarifying and simplifying the decision-making processes of the university, it is recommended that the levels of authority at each level of the committee structures — i.e., program, institution, domain, campus, and university — be clarified and the university evaluate the effectiveness of the recent changes made in the committee restructuring. (CFR 3.7)

5. **Strategic Planning** – The university has fully embraced its strategic plan. The visiting team recommends, moving forward, that the institution assess its progress for each strategic initiative, and document outcomes on a school site by school site basis, to establish the commitment for each campus stakeholder. (CFR 4.3, 4.7)