

REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM
For Reaffirmation of Accreditation

To FRANCISCAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Date of Visit

October 11-13, 2016

Team Roster

Chair:

Douglas McConnell

Professor of Leadership and Intercultural Studies, Provost Emeritus,
Fuller Theological Institute

Assistant Chair:

Ariane Schauer

Provost and Executive Vice President, Marymount California University

Team Members:

Mike Cairns

Vice-President for Finance and Operations, San Francisco Theological Seminary

Julia Carrano

Dean of Students, John Paul the Great Catholic University

WSCUC staff liaison:

Richard Osborn, Vice President, WSCUC

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

- A. Description of the Institution and its Accreditation History, as Relevant
- B. Description of Team’s Review Process
- C. Institution’s Reaccreditation Report and Update: Quality and Rigor of the Report and Supporting Evidence

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS

- A. Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions
- B. Component 2: Compliance with the Standards
 - Standard I
 - Standard II
 - Standard III
 - Standard IVCompliance with federal requirements
Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators
- C. Component 3: Degree Programs: Meaning, quality and integrity of degrees
- D. Component 4: Educational Quality: Student learning, core competencies, and standards of performance at graduation
- E. Component 5: Student Success: Student learning, retention, and graduation
- F. Component 6: Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program review, assessment, use of data and evidence
- G. Component 7: Sustainability: Financial viability, preparing for the changing higher education environment
- H. Component 8: Optional essay on institution-specific themes
- I. Component 9: Reflection and plans for improvement

SECTION III – OTHER TOPICS, AS APPROPRIATE (such as Substantive Change)

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

APPENDICES

- A. Federal Compliance Forms
 - 1. Credit Hour Review
 - 2. Marketing and Recruitment Review
 - 3. Student Complaints Review
 - 4. Transfer Policy Review

SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution and Reaccreditation Process

Franciscan School of Theology (FST) traces its roots to Old Mission Santa Barbara and the Franciscan missions of California. Originally a seminary that trained men to become priests, today FST is a seminary and a theological graduate school that prepares laywomen and men, religious and clergy, for shared ministry in the Roman Catholic Church. FST offers two degree programs: a Master of Theological Studies and a Master of Divinity, with an option to pursue both degrees concurrently.

FST is affiliated with the University of San Diego (USD) since 2012. It moved from Berkeley, California to Mission San Luis Rey in Oceanside, California, in 2013, with a year of “teach out” overlap in 2013-14 in Berkeley. Through this association, FST and USD aim to form the premier center of Franciscan graduate theological education in the English-speaking world while ensuring the sustainability of FST’s mission and finances. FST continues to be owned and operated as a separately incorporated graduate educational institution by the Province of Santa Barbara of the Order Friars Minor. FST has two levels of governance: a Board of Trustees (8 members who are members of the governing body of the Province of Santa Barbara) and a Board of Regents (who determine administrative policy, fiscal activities, physical plant planning and personnel policies). The agreement with USD is a “service and curricular” agreement. The agreement is in effect through June 30, 2018, with the intent to periodically evaluate and renew the association.

Since the 2008 WASC-CPR (Capacity and Preparatory Review) and the 2009 EER (Educational Effectiveness Review), FST was issued an official Notice of Concern in 2010. An Interim Report in November 2012, a WASC Action Letter in April 2013, a Special Visit in April

2014 and the July 2014 removal of the Notice of Concern confirm that FST has steadily worked to address the issues of leadership, strategic planning, financial management, assessment, program review, student success, and sustainability of educational effectiveness initiatives.

B. Description of Team's Review Process

The team reviewed the Institutional Report and related documents and conferred telephonically in preparation for the Off-Site Review (OSR). The April 18-19, 2016 OSR was held at WSCUC headquarters, where the team met to deliberate, review the institution's documents under the Standards and formulate the Lines of Inquiry for the Accreditation Visit. The team held a video conference call with the institution on April 19, 2016, to share the Lines of Inquiry and to confirm the dates of the Accreditation Visit for October 11-13, 2016, with a request to also meet with the Provost of USD prior to the FST visit. Institutional representatives on the call were the FST President, the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, the Chairman of the Board of Regents, the Research Officer and the CFO.

The same team reconvened on October 10th, 2016, and visited the FST campus in Oceanside on October 11-13. The visit included meetings with the new President (appointed from within, a Franciscan father and the former chief academic officer), the VP for Academic Affairs (a Franciscan father and former faculty member and research officer), the Chief Financial Officer, members of the Board of Trustees (Franciscans of Santa Barbara Province), members of the Board of Regents (including the President Emerita of USD), faculty, students, and staff from Development, Student Affairs, Library, and Registrar. The team Chair and Assistant Chair met with USD's Provost on October 10th at USD.

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

The team noted that the Institutional Report read well and reflected cohesiveness across sections. It thoughtfully addressed mission and identity. It presented key steps taken toward institutional sustainability, notably the move from Berkeley to the Mission San Luis Rey campus in Oceanside. And it described the two degree programs and intended program learning outcomes.

FST's preparation for the WSCUC visit was led by a steering committee composed of the President (who at the time of the visit still held the position of ALO), the VP for Academic Affairs (recently promoted from his faculty position to Rector and VPAA), and a long-time faculty member who made the move from Berkeley. The team appreciated the administration's earnest commitment to FST and their responsiveness, transparency and candor in their interactions with WSCUC.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS

Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions

The institution has a history of open communication and positive response to WSCUC feedback. The Institutional Report provides a detailed overview of WASC/WSCUC recommendations or reports since 2008 [CFR 1.8].

Since the CPR Report of 2008, the EER Report of 2009, and the 2010 Notice of Concern, FST has actively worked to address issues that threatened its sustainability and ability to sustain educational quality. An Interim Report in November 2012, a WASC Action Letter in April 2013,

a Special Visit in April 2014 and the July 2014 removal of the Notice of Concern confirm that FST has steadily worked to address the issues of leadership, strategic planning, financial management, assessment, program review, student success, and sustainability of educational effectiveness initiatives.

- Leadership

The President extended his term of service to provide stability and leadership through a period of great institutional re-visioning and transformation. At the time of the 2016 Off-Site Review (OSR), with FST well established in its new site, the team learned that a search led to the appointment of the Vice President for Academic Affairs as the next President of FST, further ensuring continuity of institutional vision and direction. The new president was well established by the time of the October 2016 Accreditation visit [CFR 3.8].

- Strategic planning

The institution embraced a critical review of planning and governance and creatively and constructively sought to address the institution's challenges, leading to deep restructuring and a relocation that has the potential to benefit from reduced costs, synergies through the USD affiliation and a broader constituent or completed its strategic planning process [CFR 4.6, 4.7].

- Financial management

FST has strengthened its financial position through its relocation to Old Mission San Luis Rey, recapitalization of the institution, technical assistance from USD, adoption of new financial processes and the appointment of a full-time CFO. As of October 2016, however, FST experienced an enrollment shortfall vis-a-vis budget and projected a financial deficit in 2016-17 and 2017-18 [CFR 3.8].

- Assessment and student success

FST was commended in 2014 for establishing useful and sustainable assessment plans. FST has made significant strides in defining Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), portfolios and rubrics for assessing student learning. Work has continued in this area, especially in coordinating rubrics across courses. Faculty appear well engaged in this work, as it relates to program quality and student learning [CFR 3.10, 2.3, 2.4].

- Program Review and sustainability of educational effectiveness initiatives

The 2014 Recommendation to complete Program Review is being attended to. At the time of the 2016 OSR, FST had completed its review of the MTS degree. By the time of the Accreditation Visit, the faculty were mid-way into the Program Review of the MDiv [CFR 2.4, 2.7].

In addition, the 2014 Commission Action Letter called for FST to initiate a branding strategy to support its relocation to Southern California, along with corresponding enrollment and development plans. As of October 2016, this remained a concern. The team recommends renewed attention in this area, both to strengthen its regional presence as a new institution in the San Diego County and Orange County areas and to support its stated goal of becoming the premier center of Franciscan graduate education in the English-speaking world. With the campus move and the leadership transition behind them, FST needs to turn full attention to marketing, enrollment and financial sustainability [CFR 3.4, 3.7]. The team was reassured to see that Trustees, Regents, the President, faculty and staff recognize this priority. At the time of this visit, however, the strategic plan was not yet complete, and the team did not see concrete steps

to market the institution either locally or nationally. Furthermore, the team sensed a lack of clarity of where strategic planning resides and how marketing/recruiting will be structured and coordinated [CFR 3.7].

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

Standard I

The Institution's Review Under the Standards led FST to identify areas to address. Under Standard I (Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives), they identified financial oversight and student portfolios as strengths, while noting areas to improve, specifically: coordination of curriculum across classes, coordination of rubrics for consistency, coordination of staff responsibilities, updating of student and faculty evaluation processes and data, and creating a system for consistently updating data on the website. The team concurs with the institution's self-evaluation, noting deep and visible commitment to Franciscan education [CFR 1.1, 1.5] as well as attention to improvement in areas of operational coordination.

The team is impressed by the institution's examination of its mission and strategy and its institutional reorganization, affiliation with USD and relocation to Old Mission San Luis Rey, all of which position FST to pursue its historical mission while addressing financial sustainability [CFR 1.1, 1.2, 4.6, 4.7].

The team drew attention to the continuous need to generate, track and review data on student learning, success, and career placement [CFR 1.2.] The team also noted that the student body is diverse, there is meaningful Hispanic membership on the Board of Trustees, and FST is located in a region of great ethnic and socio-economic diversity; FST staff and faculty are still

predominantly Caucasian, however, an area that the institution can examine as part of its strategic plan, hiring practices, and adjunct affiliations [CFR 1.4].

Standard II

Under Standard II (Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions), the Institution's Self-Review identified faculty quality [CFR 2.1], faculty feedback to students [CFR 2.5], and student services [CFR 2.13] as strengths. The Review articulated a need for improvement in the areas of faculty evaluation and scholarship promotion, as well as the ongoing MDiv program review [CFR 2.8, 2.9]. Discussions between the team and FST faculty, students, and senior staff validated the self-assessment and provided additional insight in key areas.

The team found FST's integration of curricular and co-curricular learning to be highly commendable and well-suited to student needs [CFR 2.10, 2.11]. The alignment between activities, programs, and opportunities outside the classroom with academic learning and Franciscan spirituality explored inside the classroom is profound; the spiritual and intellectual depth exhibited by the students reveals the efficacy of this approach. While co-curricular assessment has not reached a mature level at the institution, existing evaluation through surveys, the Spiritual Formation plan and process, and advisor meetings appears adequate for current needs.

FST has made significant progress towards articulating and assessing Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), particularly with the use of portfolios and in the completion of the MTS program review [CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.7]. Additional work needs to be done to complete the MDiv program review. Furthermore, the team noted that while external assistance was sought in developing an assessment plan, the program review template does not include the use of external evidence or evaluators [CFR 2.7]. This could be a valuable opportunity for programmatic feedback for the institution to explore.

Standard III

FST completed the review of Standard III (Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability) in a reflective and analytical way and noted several areas for improvement. In the past two years FST has implemented a robust system for performance review for staff, including the President, Vice President, and CFO. FST should implement similar performance reviews for faculty, including student feedback for faculty improvement [CFR 3.2]. FST needs to develop a diversity policy for hiring decisions [CFR 1.4, 3.1].

The comments in the self-study for CFR 3.4 states “There is an impression that the school is not meeting its enrollment goals. The school is not operating at a deficit – however this CFR needs to be handled by the president and the CFO.” This indicates a lack of communication within the institution’s leadership; this is particularly significant given the current net loss and budgeting for a consecutive year of loss. FST’s self-report indicates that leadership is a strength but goals are often more aspirational than realistic and along with accountability are areas for improvement [CFR 3.6].

The Report identified lines of communication and responsibilities as areas of concern and made corresponding recommendations to address the key areas, notably with respect to strategic planning, marketing and enrollment [CFR 3.7].

The FST self-study noted that knowledge of the school on the part of the Trustees could be improved through regular reporting and visits. FST noted the Board of Trustees and Board of Regents as being unfamiliar or disconnected with the institution. The team observed that the Trustees they met seem relatively familiar with FST operations and have consciously delegated certain responsibilities to the Regents with the understanding that they retain fiscal

responsibility. The team met with three members of the Board of Regents who seemed very much engaged with, and knowledgeable about, the school. This may be another instance of unclear internal communication about one another's roles [CFR 3.7].

Standard IV

Under Standard IV (Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement), FST reviewed each CFR with regard to practices identifying both strengths and areas for improvement. Strengths include an overall commitment to the WSCUC standards; implementation of data collection [CFR 4.1], analysis, and interpretation to ensure data based decisions [CFR 4.2], a solid commitment to be a learning organization in the areas of institutional learning and improvement [CFR 4.3-5]. Areas for improvement reflect the reinvention of the institution after the move in partnership with USD. These include the need to assign the oversight of institutional research and analysis to a specific role within FST [CFR 4.1], more robust use of the Banner database [CFR 4.2], better communication [CFR 4.5, 4.6], and sufficient time allocated to process learning, anticipating and responding to the changing context [CFR 4.3, 4.7].

The demands of settling into the new campus while moving through a presidential search with the change in the administrative leadership team, all while preparing their self-study for the WSCUC and ATS team visits, stressed their capacity to implement changes in the areas of improvement. The team is confident that the administration, faculty and staff are committed to working diligently on each of the areas of needed improvement in the coming two years.

The team Chair and Assistant Chair met with USD's Provost to gauge the scope and depth of USD's institutional commitment to the partnership with FST. The Provost expressed the commitment in terms of the mission of USD and the growing areas of partnership between

the two. For example the Director of Center for Catholic Thought & Culture and the Center for Christian Spirituality shares an appointment at both institutions [CFR 3.1, 4.1]. In interviews with the President of FST, it was further reinforced that this is intended as a growing partnership, with deep resources that could be brought to bear in most of the areas identified as in need of improvement [CFR 4.4, 4.5].

Compliance with Federal requirements

The team confirmed compliance with the credit hour policy and recruiting policy. However, the team did not see a formal procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable.

The team verified the transfer policy and student complaint policy and process. In light of the affiliation with USD and services provided to FST students by USD, however, the team recommends that the Student Complaint Policy and process be updated to integrate services delivered to FST students by USD [CFR 1.7, 2.13].

See appendix to this report.

Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators

FST completed its Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI), indicating that they have developed formal learning outcomes at the institutional level as well as for the MTS degree and the MDiv program. The team confirmed that these are published. The team also received samples of student work and met with faculty involved in assessment. The team recognized a faculty commitment to assessment and continuous improvement [CFR 4.3], especially in light of the move to a new region and the faculty's perception that they are serving a somewhat less academically prepared student body than they did in Berkeley.

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

The team reviewed Component 3, concluding that the faculty efforts to establish strong programs through PLOs in both degree offerings, Master of Theological Studies and Master of Divinity, was clearly demonstrated both with evidence of their program review and student work [CFR 2.1-2.7]. In the team interviews with students, faculty, and senior administration the commitment to teaching and learning was evident, again demonstrated in both collective affirmation and individual examples. The recommendation that the faculty complete the MTS program review and establish a regular program review for the MDiv degree raised in the special visit (Recommendation 1 Special Visit Report 4/14/2104) were met [CFR 2.1, 2.2b, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.9, 2.11].

Four specific questions were raised in the Lines of Inquiry under component 3 after reviewing the self-study in the OSR. The first asked for further clarification of the Franciscan degree/graduate; intellectual, spiritual path, charism, and community commitment [CFR 1.1, 2.1, 2.2]. Evidence was provided through the results of the GSQ for 2013-2016 addressing issues embedded in the question. FST provided enrollment data that further clarified the team's questions, particularly related to the distinctiveness of the student experiences within the FST and the wider communities. Further review of the course portfolios addressed the expectations and evidence of learning in both the MST and MDiv degrees with regard to the Franciscan distinctiveness.

The second question related to the vocational goals for the degrees and their relationship to admission and academic requirements [CFR 2.1, 2.2]. The two primary groups of students were those pursuing the priesthood and/or the Franciscan Order and those seeking to serve either as lay workers in the Church or within the broader social ministries and professional placements

(e.g. chaplaincy). GSQ Tables 13-26 and the Alumni database provided evidence of the vocational goals of students with the opportunities for vocational placement as seen in the alumni database. The team raised this question in interviews with faculty, administrators, and students. In each case there was agreement on the successful placement of graduates.

The third question addressed the role of online education in the strategic vision of FST [CFR 2.10, 4.6, 4.7]. The faculty and the administrative leadership engaged in an in-depth conversation with the Continuing Education division at USD to explore the possibilities of launching a fully online MDiv degree. However, that work was tabled, perhaps partly due to the pressures of the major move, the presidential and vice presidential transition, and preparations for the WSCUC and ATS accreditation visits, but perhaps also as a result of what the team sensed to be internal ambivalence about developing FST's online presence. The Strategic Plan is still in process so there is no normal statement on the response to this aspect of the changing educational environment. The team interviewed students, faculty, administrators, Regents and Trustees during the visit on the topic of alternate forms of delivering FST programs. While there is openness to explore online and other alternate forms of delivery, there is also a strong concern for preserving the Franciscan tradition and theology. Understanding the concern, the team recommended further exploration of creative responses to the changes in the educational landscape in relation to the enrollment challenges facing FST.

The last question raised the issue of the institution's commitment to the immersion experience, a hallmark of the Franciscan tradition [CFR 2.11]. Chapter two of the self-study provides the importance of the immersion experience as it relates to both the degrees and the distinctiveness of the Franciscan tradition. The question did not query the philosophical or theological commitment, rather the more pragmatic issues of cost and logistics evident in the ten distinctive co-curricular immersion experiences highlighted in the self-study. Student surveys

confirm the impact of fieldwork, which is directly tied to student vocational goals. The team found strong indication that FST plans to reprioritize the Immersion Program with the endowment, funded in part by the former President.

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

FST demonstrates an increasingly mature understanding of student learning assessment and a commitment to on-going, robust program review to ensure the achievement of core competencies. The faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs have established appropriate Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), which provide the necessary framework for meaningful assessment. The MTS program review is recently complete, while the MDiv program review is in progress, with an estimated completion date at the end of the 2017/18 academic year.

The use of portfolios to measure a sub-set of SLOs each semester appears to be an effective and sustainable method to collect and analyze evidence of student learning, and the team commends FST for bringing in external consultants to refine this process. In addition, discussions with faculty indicated that the use of portfolios has led to greater collegiality and openness to share assessment of student work; this increased communication is much needed and should be further encouraged.

At the same time, the team notes that FST must continue to refine the program review process. A clear program review template and cycle would help ensure continuity of review within each program and parity between programs. Given the small size and lack of diversity within the faculty at FST, the institution should also consider external input in the program review and portfolio assessment process, in particular within the USD partnership [CFR 2.7].

A significant concern among faculty is the shifting student population engendered by the move to Oceanside. Among the issues are a declining level of preparedness for graduate work, particularly in the areas of writing and critical thinking, and an increase in international students with significant challenges in English. In general, the team found FST faculty well-equipped and enthusiastic to help close this achievement gap [CFR 2.5, 3.1].

As a result in part of the MTS program review, the faculty is employing specific strategies to address these new challenges, including: the development of online study skills workshops, rigorous ESL tutoring, a shift of pedagogy in the classroom to better fit student interest in experiential and practice-based learning, and the introduction of optional comprehensive exams instead of the thesis. Discussions with students and portfolio exemplars indicate the efficacy of these approaches [CFR 2.6, 2.13].

To further address the needs of a shifting student population, it is crucial moving forward that faculty examine the ability of FST to offer alternative methods of program delivery, such as online and hybrid courses. The need for such methods is both pedagogical (providing additional time on task for language learners), and enrollment and retention driven (extending enrollment geographically and increasing options for adult learners working full-time). The team is optimistic that through open dialogue with Recruitment, the Board of Regents, and others, faculty can develop methods of delivery that maintain relational elements essential to the Franciscan charism as well as academic integrity [CFR 4.4, 4.7].

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

FST has a clear definition of student success, closely aligned with the institution's mission and character. FST strives to prepare candidates to become professional ministers and

theological educators, integrating the pastoral and academic dimensions of theological study within a religiously and culturally diverse world.

The team witnessed the clarity of this vision in discussions with students, faculty, and staff. Lay students are able to articulate in an impactful way why they chose FST and show a remarkable depth of commitment to the mission. High student satisfaction levels as well as high retention rates (83% in the MDiv program and 90% in the MTS program from 2011-15) further suggest that students value what they receive at FST [CFR 2.10].

In addition to the institution's compelling and unique mission, the team noted the importance in attracting and retaining students of: generous financial aid packages; the location at Mission San Louis Rey; integrated and student-led co-curricular opportunities; and rich interpersonal interactions with fellow students and faculty [CFR 2.10, 2.11]. At the same time, the team heard from both students and recruitment staff that alternative methods of course delivery, such as online or hybrid courses, could have a positive effect on students' ability to successfully enroll and complete the programs [CFR 2.10, 4.7].

The Institutional Report shows sensitivity to the challenges some graduates face in finding meaningful employment after graduation, while also noting that the new affiliation with USD should help improve student success through access to broader curricular and service offerings [CFR 2.13]. Since most of these benefits have not been actualized to date, this is an area where FST may need to drive the USD collaboration forward with greater purpose and urgency.

As the institution grows, it will be imperative for FST to further develop the role of institutional research and reveal a firmer grasp of retention and graduation rates in institutional-wide discussions of student success [CFR 4.1, 4.3]. Although the small data sets currently make meaningful disaggregation of this data difficult, it will likely be fruitful to analyze additional

indices of success, such as years-to-completion [CFR 2.10, 4.1]. FST should also consider methods or practices that would allow for greater awareness of the forces that affect retention and graduation; for example, an exit interview process could record and help analyze why and when students choose to leave the institution.

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

FST delivers a quality academic program with a high degree of student satisfaction. Assessment based on feedback, primarily from student portfolios, is utilized to adjust student learning objectives in courses [CFR 4.1]. Syllabi and associated student learning objectives are tied into program learning objectives. Faculty evaluate syllabi and course work performed by students in classes other than their own.

FST describes in their institutional report issues with student preparedness in their new location compared to the prior location in Berkeley. However, while that may be an issue, faculty have developed support mechanisms, specifically, writing workshops, writing tutorials and writing rubrics that help bring struggling students to the level required to be successful [CFR 4.3]. In addition, the timing of first year required courses has been adjusted to build on each other so that students learn the necessary skills to succeed at each successive level [CFR 4.4].

The team did not observe institutional data being utilized to any significant degree in any analysis provided. FST could not provide specific retention / attrition data by program by year during the visit. FST's institutional research functionality, with the implementation of new systems and what should effectively be the same reporting functionality as USD, has the potential to provide FST with extremely useful information. Training for the staff responsible for

IR on Banner's reporting functionality would yield significant benefits and improve institutional insights related to decision making, planning and opportunities for improvement [CFR 4.2].

Strategic Planning

FST's strategic plan is in development. FST's stated intent is that it will be completed in December 2016. During the team discussions with various constituencies we heard conflicting thoughts about the student body FST is trying to reach. For example: several people noted that FST was the only Franciscan institution in the English speaking world and that FST ought to establish online programs allowing students who couldn't travel to daily classes to enroll in FST. We also heard that the pedagogy of Franciscan education delivery required face to face contact and, as such, online courses could not work.

The team sensed some disconnect among various constituencies. In order to effectively position FST and market its unique programs, the strategic plan should clarify what student populations FST intends to serve and how. As part of this process the strategic plan should set metrics for enrollment levels and corresponding financial targets that are sufficient for financial stability [CFR 4.5, 4.6, 4.7].

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

FST understands that it is challenged by the changing landscape of higher education, particularly as it applies to organized religion. FST also understands that it must make adjustments to its operations to become financially stable and secure its long term sustainability.

The school has made significant strides toward financial stability and ensuring a positive student learning environment with its affiliation with USD and corresponding move to Oceanside. The new campus in Mission San Luis Rey is beautiful, well equipped, and ideally

suited to reflect and carry forward the Franciscan heritage and tradition. The affiliation with USD provides for IT infrastructure and support, financial aid processing, student billing, Student Information System access, online course instructional support, library and student counselling.

During their visit to USD on October 10th, the team Chair and Assistant Chair met with USD's Provost, who confirmed that USD provides IT infrastructure and support to FST and characterized this service as a small proportion of USD's IT resources, and therefore easily absorbed. The Provost also affirmed that USD values its affiliation with FST, which is in line with USD's own commitment to Catholic identity and outreach. He particularly mentioned opportunities for joint programming, such as through USD's Center for Catholic Thought and Culture, which is chaired by an adjunct faculty member from FST. The newly appointed Chair of USD's Theology and Religious Studies Department is expected to further cultivate professional development and community outreach potential with FST.

During the team visit, the team also learned that:

- The President Emerita of USD sits on the FST Board of Regents and is personally very committed to the Franciscan tradition and FST's mission.
- USD services available to FST include:
 - o IT infrastructure and support including Banner, Blackboard and access to instructional designers in Academic Technology and Professional and Continuing Education
 - o Collegial interaction (CFO to CFO, Deans' Council, Librarians, faculty)
 - o Business office, Student billing, payment plan, financial aid
 - o Financial literacy workshop for financial aid recipients
 - o Library:
 - FST student access to USD library ("no barriers")
 - Daily requests and pickups (FST Librarian brings within 24 hours)
 - FST Librarian can place USD acquisition suggestions

- Employment Fair
- Counseling & Disability Services:
 - Business Referrals by FST Dean of Students

In the course of several conversations the team heard and encouraged exploration of several suggestions for deepening the USD relationship, such as professional development for faculty; an in-service professional development day for Trustees and Regents on USD services available to FST including Instructional Design and online or hybrid course development; promoting opportunities for FST students to take career-enhancing elective or continuing education courses at USD, such as financial management, non-profit management or healthcare administration; and developing joint revenue-generating continuing education or leadership offerings.

These services are provided for a reasonable fee, utilizing the same current technology as USD [CFR 3.5]. As a result, FST's infrastructure costs are actually lower than before their move to Oceanside, the technology is more current and service levels more comprehensive [CFR 3.5, 3.1].

Since relocating, FST appointed a new Chief Financial Officer (CFO) who has made significant strides in the areas of budget development and oversight, and expense control [CFR 3.8, 3.4]. In addition, FST continues to receive unqualified audit opinions from their annual audits [CFR 3.4].

More recently, FST appointed a new President. Presidential succession can often be a time of upheaval and uncertainty within any institution. From all appearances the Presidential succession transition, and the related Vice President Academic Affairs (VPAA) succession transition have gone smoothly [CFR 3.9, 3.8]. The team did note that the VPAA's portfolio of

responsibilities was broader than expected, including oversight of academics, faculty, institutional research, marketing, communications, registrar, and admissions [CFR 3.1, 3.7, 3.8]. A broad portfolio is not always an issue, however, the team noticed a lack of clarity regarding some of the leadership and decision-making structures and processes [CFR 3.6, 3.7]. Part of this is undoubtedly due to the recent role transitions; however, clarity of roles and responsibilities and proactive, transparent internal communication practices are advisable to alleviate stresses and confusion amongst staff and faculty [CFR 3.1, 3.2].

FST has low enrollment and draws students from a relatively local market. Recent recruiting results have been weaker relative to the goals established. For fall 2016, FST based its budget on what all believed to be an attainable non-stretch target for total enrollment of 35 FTE students. Until two to three weeks before the semester start the team believed they were on target. At the beginning of the semester, total enrollment was 28 FTE's. FST appears to realize that missing the enrollment goal by 20% requires a better means of expanding and managing the enrollment pipeline and is examining ways of doing that [CFR 3.4].

FST has been in its current location for three years. It is still determining how to best reach its target market. FST has analyzed "how applicants heard" recruitment data and knows that most students come to them either from word of mouth or from visiting the website. FST is currently revamping the website to enhance its appeal to new students while incorporating various website optimization strategies. During the past year the school has spent \$30,000 for the development of a new website and allocated \$28,000 in the budget for Marketing. Discussions are underway to help facilitate a broader marketing outreach effort [CFR 3.4].

In the meantime, the admissions team has identified more cost effective recruiting techniques. They have eliminated national travel and focus more locally; specifically, prioritizing parish visits by demographics, pastoral support and orientation toward social justice issues.

FST's marketing and recruitment efforts do not reflect a coordinated institutional effort, rather they are tactical in nature and appear to be implemented on an ad-hoc basis without a coherent overall strategy. A cohesive marketing message and coordinated recruitment effort may well help facilitate FST's efforts to increase enrollment and help drive to financial and institutional stability. FST should consider developing a detailed marketing and enrollment plan and ensure the organizational structure and capacities are in place to coordinate the marketing, recruiting and admissions efforts to effectively execute the plan [CFR 3.1, 3.7].

Development efforts are currently focused on major gifts giving, which, given limited resources seems appropriate. Additionally, alumni relationships can help with fundraising and enrollment. While many FST alumni may not be in a position to make significant contributions, their community relationships may yield supportive donors. FST does not currently have an effective outreach program to alumni.

Each non-Friar member of FST's Board of Regents does contribute financially. However, total funds received could be improved upon. FST should take steps to develop relationships with people of means that believe in the mission and can serve on its Board to enable a higher level of financial support.

Another underutilized resource for financial support may be the Province of Santa Barbara. FST is owned by the Province of Santa Barbara, thus both entities are working to fulfill the Franciscan mission and are supportive of each other. During the team's meetings with various constituencies the team heard that joint efforts on an educational level could well turn into institutional development opportunities and facilitate effective fundraising for both organizations. FST may wish to consider establishing programs with the Province for joint educational outreach [CFR 3.4].

Defining the target market, implementing a coordinated marketing enrollment plan, refining development opportunities and pursuing other academic delivery models while also developing alternative revenue streams will help address the forecast deficits and accelerate the time it takes to reach a more financially sustainable level of operations.

Component 8: Optional essay on institutional specific themes

As a school of theology that traces its origins to Old Mission Santa Barbara in the 1850s, FST is heir to the 800-year history of the Franciscan tradition. The Institutional Report took the opportunity to highlight four inter-related themes unique to FST as they pursue the goal of transforming heart and mind as a way to change the world:

- 1) Tradition
- 2) Circles of Relationship
- 3) Immersion Experiences
- 4) Affiliation with USD

The focus on Franciscan tradition and transmission (1) is evident in course offerings, in the expertise of the faculty, in the “Franciscan Vision” public lectures, and in FST’s relationships beyond the academy. These Circles of Relationships (2) include interactions with the Old Mission San Luis Rey, an active retreat house, the local parish, Ministry Seminars, provincial ministries, and the Dioceses of San Diego, Orange and San Bernardino. To further strengthen these Circles of Relationships and deepen students’ learning, FST conducts Immersion Experiences (3). These have included immersion in poverty and homelessness in the inner city of San Francisco; work in parish and NGO structures; and extended immersions in the White Mountains of Arizona Apache Reservation. Immersions are funded through student contributions and a grant to support diversity and broaden understanding of ministry in a multi-cultural context. [CFR 1.4] Students and faculty also have access to the resources of USD and future

exchange opportunities (4). The team was impressed by the coherence of FST's mission and initiatives, a reflection of a common Franciscan vision and commitment to stay relevant and vibrant in the broader society.

During the visit, the team had the opportunity to learn more about the Franciscan tradition and the sponsoring order's vision, as captured in the Province of Santa Barbara's strategic goals, which include extending the Franciscan charism. The team understood that FST's strategic plan will formalize goals that can be measured and enhance FST's fiscal sustainability while retaining conceptual alignment with Franciscan tradition and direction [CFR 1.5.]

Component 9: Reflection and plans for improvement

The team was impressed by the preparedness and transparency of FST for the visit, particularly given the disruptions of both the settling in period and the presidential transition. A realistic sense of hope for the future was a consistent theme throughout the interviews. Equally consistent was the awareness of the areas for improvement. The summary statements within the report and those of the various groups interviewed impressed the team. The findings, interpretations, and plans for improvement were appropriate to the degree that they could be without a clear strategic plan.

An important concern for the team and the administration was the absence of a strategic planning document. While this is understandable given the rapid changes over the past few years, it is also a limitation to the team's assessment of the conclusions and results of the self-study and institutional report. The team was careful to affirm those areas that were appropriate conclusions within this report. The list below includes areas for improvement noted by the team and in each case supported through interviews with the administration and/or faculty.

- In the light of the enrollment challenges, FST must develop a marketing and enrollment plan. Interviews with administrators revealed awareness of the gap, but not a path to close the gap. The team agreed that the lack of anyone with a professional background in enrollment management was a liability given the shortfall in enrollment.
- Internal and external communications were consistently highlighted in the interviews with staff and faculty. Externally this could be addressed in the marketing and enrollment plan. Internally, the administrative team has regular meetings, but needs to create additional channels for communication.
- The overall financial health of the institution has improved dramatically since leaving the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. However, the continued challenge as seen in the deficit budget, raises the issue of development. This is not unusual in a period of presidential transition, but it is a vulnerability that must be addressed. The team was told that former president, Father Joseph Chinici, would remain involved in fund raising and donor relations as a transitional strategy while President Higgins develops a plan for advancement. The team agreed that this was appropriate, but again the limitations of staff and lack of a strategic development plan are a considerable challenge for the institution.
- Finally, the team is confident that each of these areas is well within the reach of the new administration. The Regents were confident that resources necessary for sustainability are available and that the momentum is building now that the move and presidential transition are in place. Assuming that the strategic plan and marketing & enrollment plan are in place in the next two years, the team supports the positive assessment.

SECTION III – OTHER TOPICS

(There are no additional areas to report)

SECTION IV – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was a privilege to participate in the WSCUC reaffirmation of accreditation visit. Each team member affirmed FST for their deep commitment to the Franciscan traditions and charism. The move to the campus at Old Mission San Luis Rey gave new life to the institution and as the team observed to the vision for the importance of the only English-speaking seminary dedicated to the Franciscan theological tradition. The team concurs that FST is poised to achieve a sustainable position assuming that the current level of support for healthy change continues embracing both the findings and conclusions within the report and the recommendations of the visiting team.

The WSCUC Team Commends:

1. FST for successfully moving and integrating the Franciscan culture and mission into the community on the new campus of the Old Mission San Luis Rey [CFR 3.5, 4.7].
2. The Board, Regents, Faculty, and Administration of FST for the presidential and vice presidential succession and support for the new administrative leadership team [CFR 3.9, 3.10].
3. FST in the appointment of a new CFO and the progress made in solidifying sound financial management [CFR 3.4, 3.8].
4. FST on their preparedness and transparency for the WSCUC Accreditation Visit [CFR 1.1, 1.6, 1.8].
5. FST & USD for their commitment to the institutional partnership [CFR 4.5, 4.7].

6. FST for fostering an environment that is welcoming to women, where lay men and women and Friars study side by side and learn from one another [CFR 1.4].

The WSCUC Team Recommends that FST:

1. Complete the Strategic Plan clarifying what student populations FST intends to serve and set metrics for sustainable enrollment levels and financial targets [CFR 4.5, 4.6, 4.7].
2. Identify and implement steps to ensure financial sustainability with specific attention to enrollment management, development, and contributions from the Province and the Board of Regents [CFR 3.4].
3. Develop a detailed Marketing and Enrollment plan and structurally ensure adequate capacity and coordination in Marketing, Recruiting and Admission for effective implementation of the enrollment plan [CFR 3.1, 3.7].
4. Further explore alternative forms of delivery of the degree programs to serve the current student needs and extend to potential global markets [CFR 2.10, 4.6, 4.7].
5. Continue to develop the areas of collaboration with USD [CFR 3.5, 4.4, 4.7].

APPENDICES

1 - CREDIT HOUR AND PROGRAM LENGTH REVIEW FORM

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Policy on credit hour	Is this policy easily accessible? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Where is the policy located? Academic policies page 5-6
	Comments:
Process(es)/ periodic review of credit hour	Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	How many syllabi were reviewed? 1
	What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? Hybrid with 3 online presentations the rest on ground
	What degree level(s)? Masters
	What discipline(s)? Theology
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:
Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated) <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	How many syllabi were reviewed?
	What kinds of courses?
	What degree level(s)?
	What discipline(s)?
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	How many programs were reviewed? 2
	What kinds of programs were reviewed? MTS and MDiv
	What degree level(s)? Masters
	What discipline(s)? Theology
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:

Review Completed By: Mike Cairns
Date: October 13, 2016

2 - MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulation*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's recruiting and admissions practices.

Material Reviewed	Questions and Comments: Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this table as appropriate.
**Federal regulations	Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:
Degree completion and cost	Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:
Careers and employment	Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:

*§602.16(a)(1)(vii)

**Section 487 (a)(20) of the Higher Education Act (HEA) prohibits Title IV eligible institutions from providing incentive compensation to employees or third party entities for their success in securing student enrollments. Incentive compensation includes commissions, bonus payments, merit salary adjustments, and promotion decisions based solely on success in enrolling students. These regulations do not apply to the recruitment of international students residing in foreign countries who are not eligible to receive Federal financial aid.

Review Completed By: Mike Cairns
Date: October 13, 2016

3 - STUDENT COMPLAINTS REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulation*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's student complaints policies, procedures, and records.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Policy on student complaints	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, is the policy or procedure easily accessible? Is so, where? Easily accessible in the Student Handbook, found on the FST website
	Comments:
Process(es)/ procedure	Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, please describe briefly: FST encourages students to address complaints informally and personally where appropriate; provisions are made for taking complaints to the Academic Dean, President, and the Board of Trustees. Appropriate procedures for Title IX complaints exist.
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Records	Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where?
	Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, please describe briefly:
	Comments: See above; according to interviews conducted at FST, there have been no formal student complaints to date.

*§602-16(1)(1)(ix)

See also WASC Senior College and University Commission's Complaints and Third Party Comment Policy.

Review Completed By: Julia Carrano

Date: October 13, 2016

4 – TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulations*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s recruiting and admissions practices accordingly.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Transfer Credit Policy(s)	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, is the policy publically available? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where? FST website
	Does the policy(s) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:

*§602.24(e): Transfer of credit policies. The accrediting agency must confirm, as part of its review for renewal of accreditation, that the institution has transfer of credit policies that--

- (1) Are publicly disclosed in accordance with 668.43(a)(11); and
- (2) Include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education.

See also WASC Senior College and University Commission’s Transfer of Credit Policy.

Review Completed By: Julia Carrano

Date: October 13, 2016