

REPORT OF THE WSCUC VISITING TEAM

SEEKING ACCREDITATION VISIT 1

To

Amity University Uttar Pradesh (AUUP)

January 12 – 14, 2016

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

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## **SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT**

### ***A. Description of Institution and Visit***

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.”

The university 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, and health and allied sciences. It currently enrolls approximately 35,000 students and employs 2,245 teaching staff and over 3,000 non-teaching personnel. The main campus of Amity University is located at Sector – 125, Noida, District Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, India.

In September 2013, Amity University applied for Eligibility for WSCUC accreditation. On November 10, 2014, a panel of the WSCUC Eligibility Review Committee (ERC) conducted its evaluation of Amity’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. (Amity operates a large number of campuses around the world [“the Amity system”], but Eligibility is restricted to these three campuses and not for the Amity system.) Amity 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 was scheduled for spring 2016 and took place on January 12-14, 2016. The team reviewed the main campus in Noida and Greater Noida, and off-campus sites in Lucknow and Dubai—see appendices E and F for off-campus site reviews. It also reviewed the distance education program offered by Amity—see appendix G.

### ***B. The Institution's Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 Report***

- **Alignment with the Letter of Intent**

Amity's *Letter of Intent to Apply for Accreditation* consisted of five sections: 1) addressing previous areas of concern; 2) preparing for the SAV1; 3) outcomes of the review process; 4) changes in leadership, ownership or governance; and 5) attachments (financial documents and stipulations). The team found the SAV1 report to be consistent with the *Letter of Intent* in that most of the sections are identical to the information included in the SAV1 report, while it found in the report no discussion, analyses, or reflections of the following intended outcomes for the SAV1 identified in the *Letter of Intent*:

- i. Alignment of graduate attributes and learning outcomes at all levels.
- ii. Streamline the processes developed to assess the effectiveness of the programs offered by the university, student support services and other learning support services.
- iii. Effectiveness of the planning procedures for fostering continuous improvement.
- iv. Establish and amend university regulations/policy and guidelines to improve quality of education and academic activities of the university.
- v. Enhance stakeholders' satisfaction.
- vi. Formulate & establish regulations/policy guidelines for effective governance system for additional requirements/identified areas.
- vii. Ensure the effectiveness of the university's research activities.

Although the *Letter of Intent* and SAVI report lacked details, the visiting team was able to obtain more than adequate information onsite to learn about the impressive progress the university had made.

- **Quality and Rigor of the Review and Report**

Amity's SAVI 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. During the visit, the team thus focused on the assessment of progress made around the central issues of governance, integrated planning, program review, and more evidence of being a learning community.

Onsite, the team found institutional involvement in the accreditation process and review to be extensive—a large number of faculty members were also included in discussion of issues and recommendations. The governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, students, and alumni whom the team met demonstrated a sincere commitment to the mission and goals of the university. Representatives of the campus leadership and community met and communicated with the visiting team with much rigor and enthusiasm. Each meeting was attended by a large number of staff and faculty members (typically 50 – 70 people) representing the respective areas, and was

organized in such a way that a formal presentation dominated the meeting, which made it difficult for the team to have candid conversations with those present. (The team learned that this is how institutions in India conduct most of their business.) Recognizing the cultural differences, with adjustments, the team was able to hold meaningful and informative meetings. Those who met with the team were all enthusiastic and ready to provide any information the team requested.

The team commends Amity University community for its engagement in the accreditation process and the amount of time and efforts it has invested in the process. The team would also like to express its appreciation to the university community for the openness with which they responded to questions and the provision of additional materials as requested as well as for their effort in making the site visit extremely hospitable with warmth and generosity. (CFR 1.8)

### ***C. Response to Issues Raised in the Eligibility Review Committee (ERC) Letter***

In general, Amity's SAV1 report did not demonstrate that the university had made sufficient progress in responding to or addressing the issues raised by the ERC. It must be noted, however, although the SAV1 report did not offer sufficient information, the university did provide the team with more than adequate information onsite regarding all the changes that had taken place responding to the issues raised in the ERC letter.

As aforementioned, the SAV1 report was organized with a writing style neither narrative nor reflective, but rather descriptive and data-oriented. As also noted above, the team learned that this was due to the cultural differences. It would have been helpful to have the report cross-reference major recommendations of the 2013 diagnostic visit and those Eligibility Criteria that were not completely met. The following are the major recommendations of the ERC, and how the institution responded in its SAV1 report and during the onsite review.

Eligibility Criterion 3: Greater transparency on tuition costs and available scholarships (CFR 1.6) — The university did address the issues in the SAV1 report, such as greater transparency on program costs, but it did not provide sufficient data on how or whether students availed themselves of these resources. As noted, disaggregated data on many, if not most of these issues, were needed to determine if progress was being made. During the onsite review, however, the team was provided with such data as requested and saw more specific progress on this particular recommendation and found it more than sufficient (discussed in SECTION II).

Eligibility Criterion 7: Needed compliance with WSCUC “Independent Board Policy” (CFR 3.9) — Specific information on alignment between the university’s governing structure and the *WSCUC Policy on Independent Boards* was not apparent in the SAV1 report. The team observed more specific progress, however, during the onsite visit where alignment of efforts and accomplishments were demonstrated (discussed in SECTION II).

Eligibility Criterion 8: Preparation of financial data provided in concert with the United States GAAP and GAAS standards in accounting and audit of financial records (CFR 3.4) —The team did not find any evidence in the SAV1 report that the university had made the change. Yet, during the onsite review, the team found that the financial statements did conform to Indian GAAP, which does not provide adequate reporting for restricted funds (discussed in SECTION II).

Eligibility Criterion 9: Development of a more comprehensive and integrated strategic plan (CFR 4.6) — As far as the SAV1 report was concerned, no concrete data or other sufficient detail, i.e., in the proposed “Plan of Action,” was presented beyond identifying topics for future strategic review and analysis. Onsite, however, the team was provided with more than sufficient information to learn about the impressive progress the institution had made with its strategic plan (discussed in SECTION II).

Eligibility Criterion 11: Development and implementation of formal program review process using WSCUC resources (CFRs 2.7, 4.1) — The university is in the early stages of developing program review and assessment. The SAV1 report did not provide formal plans by program and degree level. For the most part, the self-study was initiated based on responses to student surveys and assessment of faculty effectiveness, not linked to specific outcomes by course, by program, or linked/mapped to institutional learning outcomes. During the site visit, however, the team learned that the university had made remarkable progress and found the plans implemented commendable (discussed in SECTION II).

Eligibility Criterion 12: Description of how WSCUC’s general education (GE) outcomes are implemented and assessed in degree programs (CFR 2.2a) — As far as the SAV1 report was concerned, there was no clear statement of the philosophy as an underpinning to development of general education in undergraduate programs. There were no support materials on this issue, but there was a statement that this information would be available to the team during the visit. Onsite, the team was provided with what was promised in the report (discussed in SECTION II).

Eligibility Criterion 13: Increase the number of faculty with doctorates (CFRs 3.1, 3.2) — The SAV1 report provided data on the increase in the number of faculty with doctorates, and the number who are completing their education to acquire that degree. Because support materials provided for this CFR did not show specific program/degree assignments aligned with faculty qualifications, it was not possible to determine if “gaps” in those qualifications were being addressed in the programs where additional resources were most needed. The information obtained onsite, however, helped the team understand that the university did make good progress in closing the gaps (discussed in SECTION II).

Eligibility Criterion 14: Disaggregated data on retention and time to graduation (CFR 2.10) — The university presented retention and graduation rates from 2010 through 2014, but

there was no detail by degree level or program of study. Onsite, however, the team was provided with the data as requested (discussed in SECTION II).

Eligibility Criterion 16: Development of more formal program of information literacy for students (CFR 2.2a) — The university has developed the “University Level Graduate Attributes” which detail programming and training efforts, e.g., workshops, dedicated to the digital literacy competency.

Overall, although the SAVI report did not offer sufficient information, the university provided the team with more than adequate information onsite regarding all the changes that had taken place responding to the issues raised in the ERC letter. The following sections describe, based on the information the team obtained onsite, how the institution demonstrated the progress in responding to or addressing the issues raised by the ERC.

## **SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE WITH WSCUC’S STANDARDS**

Based on the information received prior to the visit and significant interactions and materials received during the site visit, the visiting team found that Amity University is in substantial compliance with the four WSCUC Standards. The team had concerns prior to the visit, as the institution’s SAVI report did not contain the narrative and self-reflection that was expected. During and after the visit, however, the team was unanimous in its view that Amity had sufficiently answered the most significant of its inquiries regarding compliance with Standards.

## *Standard 1*

### *Institutional Purposes*

Amity University has a clear sense of mission and its place in higher education in India. In addition, the university has clear recognition of US regional accreditation and thus a focused sense of its place in higher education around the world. The visiting team found that Amity has tailored its mission, purpose, curricula and courses to be in clear alignment with Standard 1.

The institution has formally approved statements of mission, purpose, and values. The visiting team experienced firm values—a sense of family—when visiting with students, faculty, staff, alumni, industry representations, and administration. The founder of the university instilled these values from the beginning. It was evident to the visiting team that the institution’s educational mission and values drive all planning, decision making, and day-to-day operations of the university. A good example of how institutional values influence the educational culture of the university was observed in the faculty-mentoring program. Each Amity student is assigned a mentor—beyond the classroom and major. The visiting team was impressed with this practice as well as the training provided to faculty for understanding when professional counselors should be engaged. The team was also impressed with the involvement of faculty, staff, and administrators with parents. (India does not have laws like FERPA found in the US that restrict such interactions.) The team commends the university for aligning its purpose and vision with curricular and co-curricular programs. Amity’s student-centered vision was evident in various aspects of student life including a “ragging-free” (“ragging” is equivalent to “hazing” in the US) campus with excellent support services. (CFRs 1.1, 1.2, 3.5)

The team reviewed the university’s strategic plan for 2014 – 2016 (which includes descriptions of Amity’s mission, vision, goals, and values); the six institutional learning outcomes (ILOs) and various program learning outcomes (PLOs) as they are stated on the Amity

intranet called “Amizone”; the program review policy and several sample program review reports; and attrition and graduations rates. Placement data presented during the team visit demonstrated significant interaction with alumni and industry within the institution’s committee structure where members are thoughtful and engaged. The team suggests that the university clarifies the role of the strategic plan in guiding decision making in the future. (CFRs 1.1, 1.2)

The visiting team found that Amity University has developed and promulgated ILOs and PLOs at a very high level for a university at its developmental state—i.e., 10 years. These outcomes are integrated into program planning and design and quality control. They are displayed in program descriptions on the university website and the Amizone portal. (CFR 1.2)

### ***Integrity and Transparency***

The university has developed and implemented all of the policies and procedures essential to the integrity of the institution in its dealings with students, faculty, and staff. These include academic freedom, appropriate conduct, clear policies and procedures banning ragging and capitation (defined in the context of Indian law as a collection of payment by educational bodies or consultants/agents not advertised in the prospectus of the institution, usually in exchange for admission), formal complaints, accommodations, diversity, and emergency procedures. (CFRs 1.3, 1.4, 1.6)

The team appreciates the university’s efforts to collect and disaggregate data based on different aspects of diversity. It is the team’s understanding that collection of diversity data is not typical for Indian universities. As the university grows and becomes more global, the team recommends that the university demonstrate greater sensitivity toward the issue of diversity of students, faculty and staff, including racial, ethnic, and economic diversity, while still maintaining excellence. (CFR 1.4)

The institution's website and Amizone provide requisite postings for completion rates and gainful employment data. Conversations with students revealed that their interactions with administration and faculty have been frank and transparent. Amizone and the university's quality assurance processes provide effective access to the complaint system used by students. The dean of students, academic affairs & support services and the director of the hostel ("campus housing") have an open-door policy with respect to students; student responses were very positive. One student's quote was noteworthy: "If you name it, you will have it!" (CFRs 1.6, 1.7)

Amity University adheres to sound business practices. The institution's finances are audited each fiscal year by an independent certified public accounting firm. The team reviewed the last three years of financial statements. It is important to note that the land and facilities are property of the Foundation and do not show in the university's financial statements—see the *Standard 3* section for additional details and recommendations. (CFRs 1.7, 3.4)

Amity University is to be commended in making changes in its governing board ("Court") in order to comply with the WSCUC policy regulating governing boards. The team had a thoughtful and productive meeting with the Court. The Court's membership had been expanded to include additional independent members. The "Visitor" (chair of the Court) is a nationally known and respected scientist, and all the Court members are extremely accomplished men. While the team was impressed with the distinguished backgrounds of Court members, it also recognized the lack of diversity in terms of gender and age. The team recommends that the Court 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. (CFRs 1.4, 3.9)

Amity University was established by an act approved by the Uttar Pradesh (UP) state government. While the visiting team found that the university is free of pressure from external entities or organizations, it is important to note the matrix of relationships that exist. Amity has a strong relationship with the Ritnand Balved Education Foundation. The Foundation was established by the university founder. The chancellor is a member of the family and is a member of the Foundation. Equally important, the chancellor is appointed by the UP state government. (CFR 1.5)

The university demonstrates integrity and transparency in all key areas: information to students, faculty, alumni, and industry partners; policies and procedures, including those relating to academic freedom and formal complaints; operational and fiscal practices; and communications with WSCUC. The team found Amity to be truthful in its representation of policies and programs to students and the public. This was also affirmed in interactions with alumni. Due to the relative young age of the university, alumni represented were typically less than 10 years beyond graduation. Amity University has been forthcoming in all of its communications with the Commission and the team. The visiting team was impressed with the responsiveness of the institution in providing materials leading up to and during the visit. (CFRs 1.6, 1.7, 1.8)

Overall, the team found Amity University to be in substantial compliance with Standard 1—i.e., sufficient for Initial Accreditation.

## ***Standard 2***

### ***Teaching and Learning***

Amity University provides degree programs at the levels of the bachelor's degree for undergraduate study (UG), dual degree options for the UG transitioning to postgraduate (PG)

study (“graduate study” in the US), and PG programs at both master’s and doctoral levels with dual degree options as well. These degree programs, sanctioned by the University Grant Commission (UGC) of the government of India, Section 22, parallel with expectations of degree levels for institutions of higher education in the US in terms of academic credits required and academic rigor. Expectations and guidelines, by degree level and award of credit, are consistent with those of WSCUC, and were affirmed at the time of the onsite review. (CFR 2.1)

Programs cover a wide range of options in subjects that are industry-related and consistent with the university mission “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...” Under the direction of the vice chancellor, the university has implemented a common course numbering system, codifying course numbers by degree and program subject level, reducing the duplication of information from 23,461 courses to just over 8,000. She has also introduced a “Model Framework of Programmes” with an overview of each degree level and program subject that includes student learning outcomes (SLOs) for the departments (“institutes”), programs, and courses. This document is an excellent resource for communicating learning outcomes (LOs), curricular structure, and pathways to program completion for each degree program offered. The visiting team commends the university for developing: 1) a common course numbering system, codifying course numbers by degree and program subject level, reducing duplication of detail within the university and providing for a more effective and efficient process for representing educational programs; and 2) a model framework for providing an overview of each degree level and program subject of study offered by the university. (CFR 2.1)

Quality of the information notwithstanding, the university could contribute to a more transparent understanding of program options by including a translation, or crosswalk, of terms

used in higher education that are different in India from those used in the US. For example, Amity University uses the term “bachelor” for the program leads to an academic degree as that term is understood in the USA. “Bachelor” may be at varying length depending on the programme. In discussion with academic affairs, it was confirmed that the university has two-year Bachelor degrees in the field of education where the entry qualification is undergraduate instead of 10+2. In the Model Framework for Programme, there are also references to programs identified as “Bachelor – Two Year,” that also represents complete degree requirement of a program for which the entry qualification undergraduate instead of 10+2. The more standard use of the term “bachelor” for US institutions is one represented in the federal compliance form “Credit Hour and Program Length,” requiring 120 semester credits or an equivalency—see appendix A. Separating programs that are diploma- or certificate-level from those of degrees would provide a clearer understanding of educational offerings from an international perspective. The university has only one master’s degree programme which is of one-year duration, i.e., LLM, where the entry qualification is the integrated bachelor’s degree of five years (e.g., BA LLB, BCom LLB, BBA LLB, etc.) or 3 years of LLB after undergraduate education. In discussions with the vice chancellor and academic affairs, it was confirmed that no bachelor-level degree is awarded constituting fewer than 150 semester credits, nor a master’s degree awarded with fewer than 60 semester credits. Substituting the term “coursework” for the term “degree” would distinguish the level at which instruction was provided and work completed, especially when that coursework does not lead to award of a degree. This adjustment would contribute to a greater transparency of understanding and alignment with terminology used in the US. The university also uses the term “domain” instead of “program” or “discipline,” and “institute” in place of the more standard term of “department,” as used by most US institutions of higher education. (CFR 2.1)

Educational programs are available through distance learning and follow the same processes for admission, assessment for SLOs, and award of academic credit as are in place for onsite students—see appendix G. (CFR 2.1)

Program subjects (“domains”) are available in multiple disciplines of higher education, as detailed in the *Stream and Course Catalog* and the *Model Framework of Programmes*, presented in the university’s SAVI report, and on the university website. Academic degrees range from the “Three Year Bachelor Degree” requiring completion of 150 semester credits, to the “Three Year Bachelor Degree with Honors” for 176 semester credits. Bachelor’s degrees are available as four year, four and a half year, and five year options, dependent on the domain. The master’s degree requires a minimum of 60 semester credits, with two year and three-year options that exist for graduate degrees, with credit requirements determined by the domain. Many of these options result in “Integrated” or “Dual Degree” recognition. All degrees and degree options include semester credit ranges as recognized by the UGC and within the WSCUC parameters. (CFRs 2.1, 2.2)

The university has developed and implemented a process of program review and assessment that includes creation of handbooks and manuals clearly articulating program review and assessment strategies applying best practices, to include process-directed timelines, flowcharts, explanation of quality control guidelines, incorporation of *Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators* (IEEI), review and assessment tools, and decision points that constitute a formalized plan for implementation. (CFRs 2.1, 2.11)

Admission requirements are clearly communicated for each degree level on the university website. Eligibility for admission to undergraduate programs for any discipline requires the applicant to have completed 12 years of formal schooling—i.e., British-system process, to

qualify with a TOEFL<sup>1</sup> score of 213 in computer-based test, 550 in paper-based test, or to have a band score of 6.5 in IELTS.<sup>2</sup> Evidence of required academic performance must be provided of certified transcripts in the English language listing all the courses with grades or marks earned. Eligibility for admission to postgraduate—master’s or doctoral—programs in any discipline requires completion of 12 years of formal education at the school level followed by a bachelor’s degree of at least three years. Students meeting the eligibility criteria are considered for admission on the basis of availability of space in the selected program. (CFRs 2.2, 2.2a, 2.2b)

Admitted students participate in an extensive orientation program, which includes detail on the university mission, vision, and objectives and all policies that have student applicability. Students also receive program and degree information that addresses the Model Framework of Programmes for their program of enrollment, to include learning outcomes at the levels of the institute and the program, and operational outcomes. With registration in each program course, the student receives the course learning outcomes and the course syllabus that addresses expectations for the process of evaluation and resources required. (CFRs 2.2, 2.2a, 2.2b)

Faculty are employed on a full-time basis and are supplemented by both adjuncts and visiting faculty, who have appropriate qualifications at the degree level and by discipline, and also contribute significant practical and work-related experience. The number of terminal degree qualified faculty has increased ten-fold, from 77 in 2011 to 703 in 2015. (CFR 2.1)

The university provides clear and transparent requirements for admission and for levels of achievement for graduation. Admission requirements at each degree level are clearly communicated; for purposes of graduation, there is a clear pathway of courses required by program and degree, as detailed in the documents of the *Stream and Course Catalog* and the

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<sup>1</sup> TOEFL – Test of English as a Foreign Language [US-based English test]

<sup>2</sup> IELTS – International English Language Testing System [UK-based English test]

*Model Framework of Programmes.* The latter also describes the graduate attributes for the program of enrollment and SLOs for the program, institute, domain, and university. Mapping of outcomes at each level establishes a clear pathway of skill and attribute accomplishment. Academic policies, established and validated through the review hierarchy for quality assurance processes, are also at the level of best practices. (CFR 2.2a)

GE courses are completed differently in the Indian system, but in response to recommendations at the time of securing Eligibility (see Eligibility Criterion 12), the university had developed GE coursework for undergraduate programs, established SLOs for these courses, and maps core competencies through to the institutional level. In response to the recommendation to develop a more formal program of information literacy for students (see Eligibility Criterion 16), the university has identified information literacy as a core competency. It is identified as a university-level graduate attribute, evidenced with GE LOs, and mapped through undergraduate programs of study. (CFR 2.2a)

Graduate degree requirements are consistent with the degree levels offered, are clearly stated, include proposed learning outcomes at the appropriate level, and are assessed with attributes, competencies, and skills assessed through program review and assessment. (CFR 2.2b)

The very complex and effective hierarchy of administration within the university has contributed to total engagement of the university in aligning efforts to support the stated mission, goals, and vision of the university. As established with the organizational chart for the decision-making structure, a clear construct is identified. Recommendations on outcomes are moved by the committee from the program through the institute, the domain, and the university, to the Institutional Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC) for consideration and action. (CFR 2.3)

Paralleling the Outcome Committee pathway, Research and Statistical Committee data moves from the committee of the domain, through the institute, then also to the IQAC. The benefit of this hierarchy and flow for decision-making evidences is a fully integrated process for ensuring decisions that are proposed “bottom up” verifying faculty engagement and initiative for the process of development and assessment of outcomes, supplemented by informed data from Research, Planning, and Statistical Services (RPSS)—the university’s institutional research (IR). This ensures that quality assessment decisions are informed by both faculty recommendations and IR data. (CFR 2.4)

Proposed and supported efforts for decision and/or action on review and assessment move upward from IQAC to the Academic Council, defined as providing oversight of academic efforts, continues upward to the Executive Council that is the principle executive body for the university, and from there to the Court, the policy-making component of the university and the governing board. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4)

The university presented to the visiting team comprehensive and detailed information representing a highly sophisticated and developed implementation of program review and assessment practices, supported by processes of quality assurance, integration of data and support of IR, validation of outcomes at all levels of both academic and co-curricular efforts, and communicates these accomplishments to a wide range of constituents and external stakeholders. (CFR 2.3)

Each unit within the hierarchy of decision-makers for the university participated in presentations for the visiting team, providing copies of power point information shared, to include listings of participants by name and professional role. All of these efforts contributed to the total understanding and appreciation of the efforts in which the university is engaged in demonstrating effectiveness for decisions proposed and endorsed to a point of policy. (CFR 2.4)

Development and implementation of a process of program review and assessment is communicated clearly and effectively through all segments of the university community and to all applicable stakeholders. This is accomplished through the creation of handbooks and manuals clearly articulating the program review and assessment processes applying best practices that include process-directed timelines, flowcharts, explanation of quality control guidelines, integration of IEEI, review and assessment tools, and decision points that constitute a formalized plan for implementation. This information is then shared in *Committee Reports* throughout the campuses, and with regular updates to industry leaders and representatives, to students, to parents, and to the broad external communities. (CFRs 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.11)

Standards of performance are established and implemented through program review and assessment, with guidelines, objectives, and rationale. This consistently applied process defines learning outcomes at all levels of the institution, using both direct and indirect methods of data for assessment. The processes, data, and outcomes are propagated by the Program Review Committee, the Area Advisory Board, then communicated through the Board of Studies and forwarded to the Academic Council. If the Academic Council approves and supports the proposal, it moves to the Executive Council, and if supported at that level, to the Court—the governing board charged with policy implementation. Changes suggested through the informed process of data collection and assessment are communicated and considered at all appropriate levels of the university with supported changes in curricula, outcomes, or in instructional delivery memorialized by each applicable degree level and program through faculty committees. Evidence of the process and changes made becomes a part of the record with documentation maintained and available through each domain dean. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4)

With confirmation of Eligibility, the ERC requested the university to address Eligibility Criterion 11, focusing on development and implementation of a formal program review process.

Amity University effectively demonstrated a highly sophisticated and comprehensive formal process for review and assessment, as evidenced at the time of the visit. In addition to documentation of evidence in all of the school's domains and institutes, the visiting team received group presentations that spoke effectively to the total integration of the assessment/review processes throughout the university, to include communication with external stakeholders. Multiple examples were also provided of changes effected by these processes, and confirmation of "closing the loop" from recommendations to effected actions. (CFR 2.11)

Documents prepared to explain and support statements made in the university's SAVI report included published materials such as the *Stream and Course Catalog* and the *Model Programme Framework*, which provide a comprehensive overview of each domain and institute, by degree and program. These documents, standardized for use by the university, were supported by domain records that detailed committee meeting minutes of activity supporting the review and assessment processes, and evidence of changes made as a result of the implemented process. The RPSS (the university's IR), in a presentation for the onsite review, gave detailed statistics representing all aspects of student success and accomplishment with metrics of retention, graduation, and placement, to include participation and assessment of services in both academic and co-curricular efforts for students in all programs and degrees of enrollment. (CFRs 2.3, 2.6, 2.7)

Instructional faculty within each domain and institute are well versed in the process of review and assessment, using applicable rubrics and mapping. Examples of the outcomes assessment plan were provided for each component within the academic community. There is also documentation of the workshops and professional development sessions by which faculty were trained in the use of rubrics and assessment tools, and in implementation and analysis of assessment efforts. (CFR 2.4)

The example of the assessment plan implemented by the Faculty of Management Studies, identifying projected learning outcomes and assessment strategies for each domain and institute, was reviewed by the visiting team, with each major study area providing comparable examples. These extensively-developed plans corresponded with similar information provided in the *Model Framework of Programmes*, but also included detail identifying the program learning outcome, the direct or indirect evidence upon which it was based, the assessment tools employed, and the resulting performance. Rubrics were developed for each subject, for each degree, and for basic applicable attributes or skills, such as employability and entrepreneurship. Additional components for review included surveys for students and for alumni, assessed and disaggregated, completing the comprehensive scheme of involving and informing each constituent in the process. (CFRs 2.4, 2.5, 2.6)

In approaching preparation and writing of the SAV1 report, the university strategically elected to assign each WSCUC Standard to the component of the university that had primary responsibility for that framework of information required. Following the initial drafting, the document was reviewed by all decision-making committees and heads of the institute (HOIs) to ensure information was accurate and complete. All parties with related responsibilities were charged with developing and providing support documentation, ensuring a comprehensive approach and ownership by all entities of the university community. From the holistic perspective with the onsite review, there is appreciation for the comprehensive nature by which the SAV1 report was developed and supported, and with the highest level of confidence in stated results, based in part, on the complex and exhaustive processes of validation from all key university components. (CFR 2.7)

Information is gathered on all aspects of student enrollment, to include retention and graduation data, aggregated and disaggregated, and communicated throughout the university

under the auspices of the university's IR. Data collected, assessed and analyzed is communicated back through all academic segments of the university, to faculty, students, parents, and external stakeholders with detail on all aspects of both academic and co-curricular efforts in place. Data is collected through use of Amizone—the university's institutional dashboard, recognized as a best practice quality assurance resource. (CFRs 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7)

The team commends the university for establishing a firm foundation for program review and assessment practices at this early stage in its operation for program review and assessment efforts. The university has implemented a very sophisticated process for review and assessment, which integrates broad institutional data and incorporates current policies and practices. (CFRs 2.7, 4.1, 4.2)

Students are kept fully apprised of expectations of their degree and subject with use of a *Master Session Plan* detailing expected learning outcomes with progress through the program. Components of this plan include the course objectives, course syllabi, topics to be addressed, and the assessment plan by which outcomes will be monitored. (CFR 2.5)

For each domain and institute, Amity has assembled an impressive and appropriate body of external stakeholders from industry, business, and management, who review proposed learning outcomes, assess evidence of implementation of the review and assessment process, and contribute to quality assessment. Evidence of the success of this fully integrated process is the enviable almost one hundred percent placement for successfully graduated students. (CFRs 2.3, 2.5)

### ***Scholarship and Creative Activity***

Faculty are held accountable for meeting expectations within their own area of instruction, with assessments to include student surveys, alumni surveys, and with documentation of perceptions of their performance reported to their domain administration.

Faculty are also expected to be actively engaged in research, and in seminars, workshops, conferences, and lecture series, with records maintained for participation and involvement.

(CFRs 2.8, 2.9)

Assessment of faculty professional development includes expectations of intellectual engagement within “Scholarship of Teaching”; investigation and research in “Scholarship of Discovery”; integration and application of their work into disciplines beyond those in which they teach with “Scholarship of Integration”; and “Scholarship of Application” that addresses the analysis of application of their discipline into practical problems and seeking solutions.

Supplementing these expectations is documentation of their engagement in professional activities. (CFRs 2.8, 2.9)

Faculty are also rated and ranked for promotion on the basis of their performance in: 1) teaching, learning and evaluation; 2) co-curricular and professional development; 3) research publications and academic contributions; and 4) personal attributes for behavioral skills and values. (CFR 2.9)

The university responded very effectively to Eligibility Criterion 14, requesting disaggregated data on retention and time to graduation. Amity University now tracks all aspects of student progress through the program of enrollment, from the time of admission through each stage of the program to graduation, placement if applicable, and once they graduate, as alums. Data accumulated and assessed by IR is shared with all HOIs, by domain, institute, and through the hierarchical committees and council structures that comprise the university. Data is aggregated and disaggregated by degree level, program subject, gender, and co-curricular efforts. (CFRs 2.2, 2.10)

To ensure students are making timely academic progress, special care and attention are directed to students who may encounter academic difficulty. These students are tracked,

counseled, and monitored through the processes that constitute academic probation and disqualification or reinstatement. Staff in student support services counsel and advise these students and maintain an ongoing contact with school deans and instructional faculty as well as parents. (CFRs 2.2, 2.10, 2.11)

Support services include a mentor program, where each student is assigned a faculty mentor, oftentimes from outside the domain of study. There are numerous clubs, organizations, and sports activities in which students are engaged. Documentation is maintained of participation in all efforts, student support, and co-curricular efforts with learning and action plans developed for purposes of assessing the effectiveness of the efforts in place. (CFRs 2.11, 2.12)

To ensure complete transparency of efforts and accomplishment, the university describes the “Student Service Unit” purposes and objectives, admission requirements and procedures, programs and courses, degrees offered and the degree requirements, and academic credentials of faculty and administrators, on the university website. (CFR 2.12)

### ***Student Learning and Success***

Resources available to students include hostels with a capacity of 10,000 students, medical facilities, transport facilities that include buses and smaller capacity vehicles with access to four different traffic routes, the Department of Student Welfare, Counseling, and Security and Discipline, financial assistance in the form of scholarships, and an extensive calendar of social activities and events to engage both students on and off campus. The university also has a guard dog patrol to assist with issues of security. (CFR 2.13)

Consistent with its mission, the university also promotes the entrepreneurial culture among students so that they start their own venture or grow their family businesses. This is accomplished through the assistance of Amity Centre for Entrepreneurship Development that

supports events such as “Entrepreneurship Awareness Camps,” guest lectures by successful entrepreneurs, workshops on “Idea Generation,” and business plan development. Assessment of participation of students and parents is captured for each event and activity, with students surveyed on a regular basis for satisfaction or recommendations for improvement. (CFR 2.13)

The university has a well-articulated program and process for students wishing to transfer—see appendix D. Categories of transfer include transfer from one discipline to another, from one degree level to another, from one institute to another, from a fulltime enrolled student onsite to a distance learning program, and between campuses of Amity University, as well as for students participating in exchange programs. Under the auspices of the Equivalence Committee, processes and requirements detail the equivalence of one degree or subject to another, establish eligibility, map courses completed and assess grade point average, units and comparability of outcomes of work completed and available for transfer credit. This committee also serves to identify bridge courses as may be required to enter the new program of enrollment.

Documentation is maintained of all student engaged in transfer options, as well as student success in the new program or institution. (CFR 2.14)

Overall, the team found Amity University to be in substantial compliance with Standard 2—i.e., sufficient for Initial Accreditation.

### ***Standard 3***

#### ***Faculty and Staff***

The institution employs sufficient faculty to staff to deliver its academic programs and provide the necessary supporting services. The current faculty and student ratio is 1:15 for undergraduate programs, and 1:20 for master’s level programs. The percent of faculty holding terminal degrees, or pursuing terminal degrees, has increased significantly during the past several

years, from 37% in 2010 to 68% in 2015 (at the main campus in Noida). While the university did not provide comparative information for other similar schools in a comparison group format, the current level does appear comparatively low, but will continue to increase in the coming years, as the institution now hires only PhD holders or PhD candidates unless no such qualified candidates can be found. (CFRs 3.1, 3.2)

The faculty members employed by the university are from many states within India; however, approximately two thirds come from either the National Capital Region (NCR) or Rajasthan. Amity has defined diversity mostly in terms of geographical origin. The gender mix of the institution's faculty members appears good overall, but may need review by discipline ("domain"). Currently, 58% of the faculty members at the Noida campus are female. Amity's data indicates that only 5% of its core faculty are members of "Other Backward Classes (OBC)," "Scheduled Castes (SC)," and "Scheduled Tribes (ST)," while the percent of India's population for these groups exceeded 40% at the last census in 2006. The team recommends that the university demonstrate greater sensitivity toward the issue of diversity, including racial, ethnic and economic diversity, including OBCs, SCs, and STs, while maintaining excellence. (CFRs 1.4, 3.1)

Amity's staff at the Noida campus has slightly higher percentage of OBCs, SCs, and STs than its faculty, approximately 8%, and is much more heavily male than female—67%. The Lucknow campus shows greater diversity, approximately 30% of its staff are from OBC, SC, and ST (CFR 3.1).

The institution employs 3,085 non-teaching staff on the three campuses. The greatest numbers of these staff members are located at the main campus in Noida. Qualified staff members, at the senior level, are employed in sufficient numbers to lead the institution. Many of

the more senior level staff members are retired military members, bringing significant management experience to the organization. (CFRs 3.1, 3.6)

The HR website, found on the intranet site, provided the following attrition data:

Turnover	% 2011	% 2012	% 2013	% 2014	% 2015
Faculty	12.49	9.30	12.20	9.08	8.76
Staff	9.23	8.98	8.66	5.92	4.74

In the case of both faculty and staff, the attrition rate has been decreasing. The institution presented this data to the visiting team and indicated that the two principal reasons for faculty turnover were: 1) family reasons, usually female faculty moving due to marriage, and 2) competition for young faculty members in the higher education community. The university reported that the declining turnover rate is primarily a result of increased compensation for young talent, and the turnover data supports the assertion. The turnover data for staff is low, and has been improving over time. (CFR 3.1)

Faculty and staff recruiting, hiring, workload, compensation and evaluation are aligned with the purposes of the university's mission. Faculty hiring is primarily done through the advertisements within Indian publications, the Amity website, and LinkedIn. All open positions are advertised on the public website, with the ability of an applicant to apply online. The second major recruiting tool used, for both faculty and staff, is LinkedIn, which has worked well for the institution. (CFR 3.2)

The institution provides all new hires an employee publication on their first day of employment that contains most of the important information needed in "on-boarding" an employee. Each faculty member is provided a host faculty member in order to help their transition to Amity University life. Orientation programs for all staff and faculty are delivered throughout the year. (CFR 3.2)

Faculty workload is clearly specified, and for all classes of faculty except full professors and heads of departments, is 16 to 18 classroom hours per week; however, when looking at actual workload data, the average is less due to release time for research and administrative functions. Faculty members are evaluated each year in a prescribed format that is described in the handbook entitled *Performance Based Appraisal System (PBAS)*. The PBAS is comprised of five parts: 1) self-appraisal; 2) student input through student appraisals; 3) peer review; 4) department head review; and 5) evaluation committee review. Annual salary increments are largely given as a result of the ratings received by each faculty member. In addition, staff members have annual evaluations that have three parts, each of which is given a numerical score. This score then translates into the amount of salary increments that are provided the individual (CFR 3.2).

The university provides a robust internal professional development program that is led by a unit called the “Amity Academic Staff College (AASC).” Over 50 professional development opportunities were delivered in the calendar year of 2015. Topics were varied but generally were in topics for the improvement of teaching and learning, or specific discipline subjects taught by faculty from the various academic units. Provision is also made for attendance and conferences and seminars both in India and abroad. In addition to the foregoing opportunities, Amity brings in speakers from the outside to provide the latest developments in fields of study. During the academic year of 2014 – 15, 52 speakers from 19 different countries made presentations to faculty groups. Many speakers of these speakers were from either the UK (n=17), or the US (n=7). Faculty members are encouraged to submit papers to conferences, and if accepted for presentation the faculty members are provided travel funds to attend. (CFR 3.3)

Training for staff is provided in several forms—e.g., internal training provided by the HR department for non-specialized skills, and specialized skill training provided by individual

departments. During 2015 approximately 13 internal training sessions were held, and individual departments often held training sessions between academic sessions for academic support personnel. In addition, staff may apply for skill training outside the university, and during calendar year 2015 approximately 85 individuals attended training outside the university. (CFR 3.3)

### ***Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources***

The university appears to be well resourced, both in terms of operational and capital budgets. All buildings in the 85-acre Noida campus are new within the past 10 years, and a new 700,000 square foot facility is being constructed in Dubai for the Dubai program. The university's financial statements conform to Indian GAAP; however, Indian GAAP does not appear to have a good provision for restricted fund accounting. The university should consider developing new additional statements that either conform to the International Financial Accounting Standards (IFAS) or to US GAAP, which provide a more standardized presentation of all funds, including restricted funds. During the past three years, 2014 and 2015 produced a positive net income. Only in 2013 did the institution sustain a small loss. In each of those years, however, a positive cash flow was realized, as depreciation for moveable equipment is recognized in the financial statements and Earnings Before Interest, Taxation, and Depreciation, and Amortization (EBITDA). The institution's financial statements are audited by a chartered accounting firm. (CFR 3.4)

The university has a well-developed planning and budgeting system that ensures financial resources are supplied to support the mission of the institution. Planning begins at the departmental ("institute") level and moves up through the program ("domain") level to the university level. The University Planning Committee, chaired by the vice chancellor reviews the plans, and then submits them to the Finance Committee to determine their financial viability.

The results are then reviewed and acted upon by the Executive Council, prior to submitting to the governing board for final acceptance. (CFR 3.4)

The Foundation has built and continues to own all of the buildings used by the university. Therefore, no property or buildings are shown on the institutional statements. No use agreement exists, and the visiting team believes that Amity University should consider developing a long-term agreement to use the buildings, to ensure sustainability. The Foundation has supplied approximately \$160,000,000 and \$139,000,000, respectively, during the past two years for new land and building construction. (CFR 3.4)

The visiting team also observed that the university has no fundraising organization and has relied exclusively upon the Foundation to provide funds for capital expansion. The team observed, in its meeting with alumni, that they were passionate about Amity, and therefore the team believes that the expansion of fund raising efforts would provide additional funds to meet its mission objectives. In addition, the team believes that an expansion of its fundraising efforts, beyond the Foundation, Amity could diversify its revenues with the goal of creating a more sustainable future. The chancellor expressed strong interest and commitment to the inclusion of development and alumni programs in a private conversation with the visiting team chair. (CFR 3.4)

Amity University has a modern campus that is large and technologically advanced. Most of its IT resources are state-of-the-art. Its various campuses are connected via high-speed fiber. Each of its buildings has both wired and Wi-Fi access to its systems. The campus relies heavily upon this system, and the visiting team suggests that periodic surveys be conducted to evaluate student and faculty satisfaction. The Amizone portal, used by all campus constituents, is a powerful learning management and administrative system. All members of the community must

use the system, and it tracks everything from student attendance to complaint resolution. The university should be commended for the development of this effective system. (CFR 3.5)

Each faculty member is supplied with a lap top computer for use, and they are replaced every two years. Staff members are well supported in this area also, and reported to the team that they had sufficient computing resources at their disposal. Initial training on the use of IT tools is supplied to faculty and staff upon their arrival at the institution. (CFR 3.5)

The library facility is large and modern. A faculty committee, with members from each program area, helps ensure library resources are appropriate for the programs the university delivers. The library houses approximately 200,000 volumes and nearly 18,000 online periodicals. However, over 50% of the volumes are textbooks, often with multiple copies. The visiting team observed that the library holdings are smaller than comparable sized institutions with similar programs in the WSCUC region. Therefore, the visiting team 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)

### ***Organizational Structures and Decision Making Processes***

The institution is characterized by aggressive, energetic, and visionary leadership. The primary evidence of this is the incredible growth, in terms of numbers of students, programs, and campuses within a 10-year period. The visionary leadership of the chancellor and vice chancellor has brought about the outstanding advancement of the university. The team commends the university for setting the goal of transforming higher education in the university and the country, and it commends the founder of the university for establishing a vision for multiple universities in India and other countries for the sole purpose of providing education to youth. Furthermore, the team commends the founder of the university and the Foundation for

having provided strong and consistent financial support in the form of facilities, scholarships, and other areas at an excellent level. The pro vice chancellors and department heads all provide expert leadership throughout the institution. (CFRs 3.6, 4.7)

The university has clearly established decision-making structures, graphically displayed on the university organizational chart, and defined in the descriptions of committees and job descriptions of management. The roles of the governing board (“Court”) and the chancellor are less well defined, and at times confusing, given the 2005 State Ordinance establishing the university. For example, the vice chancellor reports to the chancellor, by statute, but is evaluated by the Court, and when a new vice chancellor appointment is needed, the Court makes a recommendation to the chancellor. The vice chancellor fulfills the typical roles filled both by a chief executive officer (CEO) and a chief academic officer (CAO). She is the chair of most important committees and is often the final decision maker for many decisions. Similar committees are found at the department, domain, and university levels, with decisions passed from lower level committees to the next level for review, decision, and forwarding to the next level. Eventually most decisions arrive at the Executive Council, which is scheduled to meet only two times each year. Each committee has clearly defined roles, but the number of committees, due to similar committees found at each level, provides a complex system in which to maneuver. Given this, however, the university has been able to make decisions in a timely manner, and the visiting team did not hear complaints about the system’s complexity or level of effort required to arrive at decisions. In any event, the decision making processes of the university appear to be complicated by both the number of committees involved in each decision and the few number of meetings held by key committees each year. The visiting team recommends that the university streamline its decision-making committees and increase the number of meetings for the remaining key committees. (CFR 3.7)

The university employs both a full-time CEO and a full-time chief financial officer (CFO). Both the CEO and CFO have the necessary qualifications for their positions, as evidenced by the resumes and curriculum vitae provided the visiting team. The duties of the CEO also include those normally ascribed to the CAO. This is the result of the enabling legislation from the State of Uttar Pradesh that describes the role of the vice chancellor as leading the academic endeavors of the university. The number of direct reports to the vice chancellor appears to be very high: all domain deans and all other key administrators report to her. As the university continues to grow in size, complexity, and the number of campuses, the pressures on the CEO to deal with major institutional issues and purely academic issues will become an ever-greater issue to address. The visiting team recommends that Amity re-evaluate the issue of the vice chancellor serving as the CEO, the CAO, and the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) in order to ensure that sufficient resources are devoted to both institutional and academic demands. The visiting team strongly suggests that the university consider creating an ALO position that would report to the vice chancellor. While the 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 US) in the future. (CFR 3.8)

The university now has a newly constituted 17-member governing board (“Court”) that more closely conforms to the independent WSCUC board governance policy. The first meeting of the newly constituted Court did not take place until January 2016, and demonstrates the intent to operate a separate, and independent board, that conforms to the WSCUC policy. The Court, at its January meeting, voted to establish the following committees: 1) finance, planning, and budgeting; 2) financial audit; and 3) academic affairs. At the time of the visit, none of the committees had yet met. The visiting team noted that the fourth required committee,

“nominating,” had not been established. The “Visitor,” appointed by the Foundation, is the chair of the Court. Of its 17 members, five members are either employees of the university or members of the Foundation, meaning that 12 members can be considered independent. (CFR 3.8)

The Court is comprised of an impressive group of members, many of which are former high-ranking members of the state and national government, or former vice chancellors of well-known Indian universities. As also noted in the *Standard 1* section above, the composition of the Court is entirely male, and for the most part senior members (both in age and stature) of Indian society. (CFRs 1.4, 3.9)

The Court is not a self-perpetuating board, rather its composition comes from: 1) nominees by the state government of Uttar Pradesh, the chancellor, and one additional representative; 2) the Visitor, appointed by the Foundation, and four Visitor-appointed members; 3) two *ex officio* members, who are employees of the university, the vice chancellor, and one pro vice chancellor; 4) five members who are appointed by various councils of the university; and 5) three members of the Foundation. This style of member appointment obviates the need for a nominating committee. Even though the current Court has a majority of independent members, no statute or by-law prevents this from changing. Therefore, the visiting team recommends that the method of appointment be reconsidered to allow for both more strategic appointments, and recommends the creation of a nominating committee of the board to ensure that these issues are addressed and that the majority of members remain independent. (CFRs 1.4, 3.9)

Faculty members play a significant role in the establishment and evaluation of the curriculum, and play significant roles in most of the senior committees of the university. While no formal faculty governance system exists within the university structure, it is clear that the faculty guide the curriculum of the institution. New programs must originate within the various

academic departments and be approved by the Academic Council, which has a substantial faculty membership. Faculty members are chairs of key institutional committees and the input of faculty is significant. (CFR 3.10)

Overall, the team found Amity University to be in substantial compliance with Standard 3—i.e., sufficient for Initial Accreditation.

#### *Standard 4*

Of the four broad, holistic Standards of Accreditation, Standard 4 represents the WSCUC expectation that an institution of higher education be organized to assure a commitment of quality assurance, institutional learning, and improvement. Standard 4 embodies the values articulated in the Core Commitments dedicated to: student learning and success, quality and improvement, and institutional integrity, sustainability and accountability. An institution's response to Standard 4 is to a degree a summative, capstone reflection of the capacity and effectiveness of the university to sustain its vision and aspirations while ensuring the highest levels of quality, student achievement and institutional learning. In this context, during the onsite visit, Amity University demonstrated with solid evidence its commitment to assure quality and improvement while also having embedded into its educational structure and programming a convincing and authentic culture of intelligent design. This design, grounded in core institutional and WSCUC values, illustrated to the team a proven track record of effective implementation and monitoring of quality assurance (QA) processes as well as accountability and evidence for securing results. Becoming familiar with Amity's commitment to learning and improvement during the site visit was critical in that their reflections on the subject were less clear as stated in the SAV1 report.

### *Quality Assurance Processes*

Amity has established a deliberate set of QA processes in both the academic and non-academic areas. This structure is effective and functional. Academic QA processes within the structure include but are not limited to gathering data and monitoring of: 1) academic planning and implementation; 2) new curriculum and program review; 3) course delivery and continuous internal assessment at course level; 4) admission and registration; 5) daily attendance monitoring; 6) class representative system; 7) examinations; and 8) guided self-study courses for at risk students. Non-academic QA processes include such support services as: 1) the mentor-mentee program; 2) student grievances; 3) internationalization; 4) library and IT support; 5) hostel facilities; 6) student welfare and support; and 7) placements. Feedback and satisfaction surveys generate frequent data for assessing these processes. The university provided ample documentation of those processes examined and reviewed by particular bodies, often reviewed by two or more committees as described below (see *Decision Making Structure* discussion). For example, curriculum review is examined by the Course Review Committee, the Program Review Committee, the Area Advisory Board, and the Board of Studies. Following the engagement of those groups, the curricular review (with minutes and analysis from the various committees) is referred to a higher-level decision making group—e.g., the IQAC, University Standing Committee, Academic Council and Executive Council. Multiply the number of QA processes by the levels of examination, including additional review by higher level bodies, in the aggregate these inputs and outputs provided convincing evidence that Amity was deeply committed to its system of quality assurance and accountability. (CFR 4.1)

As noted throughout the team report, the processes and attendant structures such as committees and councils are numerous and complex in relationship to each other; yet, it was clear to the team that they are organized in a clear and logical manner for ultimate decision-

making and action. The culture does not tolerate lack of accountability. To a person interviewed (and the team spoke to or otherwise engaged with 75 – 100 individuals), conversations were serious in nature, focused on the aims of the review (student success and institutional quality), and consistently analytical and thoughtful. This was evident in the multiple examples provided during the site visit by key leaders of each QA body. Examples included power point presentations, policy and guidelines, committee action reports and minutes, documents showing alignment with effectiveness indicators and other metrics for assessing achievement. The visit was punctuated by interpretative commentary by leadership and stakeholders across the university in response to the team questions; discussion was less about the specifics of structures and processes described in the SAV1 report. This capacity—to reflect and dialog—was real-time evidence of an organization genuinely committed to learning. (CFR 4.3)

As noted, the system of QA processes is captured in the chart *Decision Making Structure*, provided to the team onsite. This depiction brought significant clarity to the team’s understanding of how consequential decision-making bodies were organized around the core functions of: academic, non-academic, research and administration (planning, finance, policy); and importantly, how they were inter-related for checks and balances. The connection between and among decision-making groups, moving up through the levels of the institution, demonstrated how the sum of the system parts produced an integrated and finely-honed thinking and reflecting structure for improvement. Analysis of the program review and curricular and program approval processes is provided in the *Standard 2* section above. (CFRs 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.11, 4.2)

The upward flow of academic processes as shown on the chart occurs in two simultaneous pathways: 1) institution, domain (“program”), and University Outcome Assessment reviews move up to the university-level IQAC, then onto to the Academic Council, the Executive

Council, and the Court (the governing board); while 2) course and program review work including that of the Area Advisory Board moves up to the Board of Studies, then onto review by the IQAC, Academic Council, the Executive Council, and the Court. While the pathways include several layers of review, analysis of data, and formation of improvements plans, the team observed an efficient and well-utilized system of accountability for decision-making and ultimate approval at administrative and board levels. (CFRs 4.3, 4.6)

Prior to the visit, the team was somewhat confounded by the complexity of the system as described in the institutional report. Following productive exchanges with Amity faculty, administrators, and staff during the visit, the flow of information and analysis, use of data, approval and authority levels of the various committees and councils, and written documentation of action and improvement convinced the team that Amity's decision-making structure as designed and implemented did yield results and improvements. The QA system clearly works, and in the judgment of the team, can be considered best practice with suggested modifications for stream-lining as noted in the *Standard 2* section above.

Updated strategic plans given the team during the visit were comprised of three documents named the *Strategic Planning, Accountability, and Milestones: 2015– 2016*; *University IQAC and Planning Committee: Strategic Planning: 2012 – 17*; and the briefer, process-focused *Strategic Plan with Detail on Roles/Responsibilities*. The *Strategic Plan with Detail* establishes the system of committees, councils, and processes as Amity's foundation of quality assurance and institutional learning. The team concluded that this claim is credible and sustainable.

(CFR 4.6)

The university has a comprehensive and highly effective system of structures and processes where data is collected, organized and reviewed by a well-qualified staff. The RPSS

(the university's IR office) provides outstanding data collection and dissemination for enhancing institutional quality and effectiveness. The RPSS provides data and information that supports institutional planning, policy formation, evidence of quality assurance process outcomes, and reports and analysis for decision-making. Data is gathered, organized and disseminated through the Amizone dashboard where analysis of those data and insights gained from such analysis are available to the Amity community in a dynamic, evidence-based environment. RPSS is the primary source of all data, supporting university-wide offices and committees in gathering, monitoring, and interpreting information, data and results for assessing results and furthering improvement. (CFR 4.2)

Amizone was considered by the team as a highly effective tool and best practice for data collection and dissemination. It is a central data warehouse where data is collected and stored in a managed database, supporting QA queries and generating reports used to support decision-making. Student, alumni, and parent satisfaction surveys, industry feedback, and learning outcome analysis are examples of how IR (including Amizone) supports the QA system at the university. Amizone has eight years of data available online that will be utilized for the next five-year cycle of strategic planning. Categories of data range across multiple functions and processes: enrollment; fees; programs and course materials; smart cards and biometric management; exams; placements and internships; communications and networking; faculty feedback system; visitor management and the like. Faculty are routinely trained and encouraged in the use of data use, reporting that they are sufficiently supported by the IR staff. (CFRs 4.2, 4.4)

The role of the RPSS was seen by the team as a critical resource for the assessment, analysis and reporting for informed decision-making and improvement regarding student learning outcomes and achievement. In addition to the evidence provided by institutional

research, the team also examined evidence provided onsite of QA analysis conducted on improvement areas, e.g., “weak students,” attendance trends, student promotion, secured patents, placement opportunities, alumni and parent feedback, and assorted samples of institutional assessment. (CFR 4.2)

The team acknowledges the important work of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) department, not identified on the *Decision Making Structure* chart, nonetheless a critical support assessment unit of the vice chancellor’s office working alongside the IR function and the many QA focused groups. QAE staff provided excellent service and necessary support to the visiting team during the site visit.

### ***Institutional Learning and Improvement***

Without doubt and confirmed during the site visit, Amity has a strong organizational structure where leadership at all levels, including faculty, staff, and administration, is committed to and actively engaged with institutional and educational improvement. The leadership structure, represented as a pyramid in the SAV1 report (page 184), illustrates in ascending order both administrative and academic, staff, and students leaders, building from the bottom up: class representatives, faculty, IQAC and QA support, program coordinators and leaders, heads of institutes and departments, deans and deputy deans, the pro vice chancellor, vice chancellor, chancellor, and the Visitor. The team found all these levels in existence and fully functional, and it appeared that it would be unacceptable in the Amity culture for any person in academic or non-academic leadership positions to be anything but fully engaged in quality assurance and improvement discussions by nature of their accountabilities and assignments to core committees and councils. (CFR 4.3)

Improvement plans, generated at the working level of QA groups and endorsed at upper level executive levels, as well as decisions made to advance desired results, are consistently

based upon data, evidence and evaluation. Rubrics guide the assessment of learning outcomes and codify, along with other academic assessment measures, how faculty are actively engaged in ongoing conversation and analysis about teaching and learning effectiveness. The *Standard 2* section provides generous evidence of these processes, and additional commentary is provided below. (CFR 4.3)

The QA processes described above connect to planning structures, which in turn are aligned with the mission and aims of the university. The “tie that binds” throughout assessment activities is the singular commitment and focus on the founder’s vision for Amity (building a nation and society through integrated, transcultural education and to be a global front runner, nurturing modernity with tradition) and Amity’s mission (to provide education at all levels in all of disciplines of modern times and in futuristic and emerging frontier areas of knowledge, to develop the personality of students by making them not only excellent professionals but also good individuals, with understanding and regard for human values). (CFRs 4.3, 4.6)

The *Standard 2* section provides a comprehensive summary with evidence of the processes by which faculty take responsibility for the results of student learning and success, namely, the program review process and domain-specific assessment of learning outcomes. In the context of Standard 4, the team discovered during the visit countless examples of how faculty demonstrate timely assessment and action in cases where educational effectiveness is not to institutional standards or when their engagement with co-curricular programs evaluates the student learning experience. (CFR 4.4)

Three examples provide evidence of taking responsibility for improvement of student learning and success: faculty role in the “close the loop” model found in the engineering and technology domain; the faculty role in the internal audit for the fine arts domain, specifically the

mentor-mentee program; and the faculty role in the student academic affairs department with respect to the learning environment.

In 2013, an initiative was begun in the institutes of the engineering and technology (ASET), information technology (AIIT), and telecom technology and management (AITTM)—called a management review meeting (MRM), reporting to the IQAC—to review institutional objectives, assess performance and metrics, and as a collective assess the environment at that time with respect to academic delivery, student development and benchmarking with international institutes. The team examined the minutes of these discussions including decisions and actions made. Several conclusions were reached by the MRM that seemed significant: 1) the curriculum needs to be more flexible and in closer alignment with international standards and practices; 2) current grading policies need re-evaluation in terms of consistent criteria for industry placements; 3) employer, parent and faculty feedback on the student learning experience need to be more standardized for providing useful data to faculty for improvement; and 4) perceived classroom and faculty work spaces need to be assessed for presenting barriers to effective teaching and learning environments. The team saw evidence of “closing the loop” practices in the concluding minutes, emails, and directives from the vice chancellor, Academic Council, and Executive Council taking action and/or assigning resources to these efforts for implementation. While process and outcome was very detailed in nature, with over 50 participants (faculty and administration) contributing to the initiative, the capacity of this complex organizational structure to engage in issues effecting teaching and learning were clearly present. (CFRs 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7)

In 2013-14, the QAE department conducted an annual internal audit that also included developing the audit checklist for 2014-15. True to the inclusive culture of Amity, this endeavor included over 40 staff, faculty and administrators in the roles of internal auditors. With

impeccable precision, the process used by the group followed a line of “points for checking” including such items as: 1) roles and responsibilities of IQAC; 2) IQAC activities considered appropriate for the academic calendar; 3) effectiveness of monitoring the planning processes of the HOIs (heads of institutes); 4) monitoring of classes held/not held (see further, related documentation below); 5) accuracy of SLO articulation with respect to every program, alignment with Bloom’s taxonomy and course pedagogy, etc.; 6) and another 50 areas for audit review. Most of these audit category-candidates were related directly to educational effectiveness but also included data on learning climate and external industry feedback. The specific evidence examined (the audit) produced for the school of fine arts provided observations, recommendations, and “corrective actions.” The team was especially struck by improvements made to the mentee-mentor system (also noted in *Standard 1* above) as evidenced by a workshop series for mentor development inspired by the audit. Lead faculty and HOIs were involved throughout the process. (CFRs 4.4, 4.5, 4.6)

A final example of evidence was sourced from the student academic affairs and support services department. The impressive work of this unit represents best practice in its collaboration with faculty and associated academic committees and structures. Not quite clear to the team based on the SAV1 report description, the work of this group covers a wide swath of co-curricular activities critical to student success. Its agenda includes no less than: student progression and support; orientation and academic regulations; Amity scholarship award; class monitoring and academic calendar monitoring; guided self-study course management (GSSGs are a point of pride for the university demonstrating proactive support to academically challenged students); military training camps; visiting faculty appointments; approval of library expenditures; student and other complaints; annual academic resource and fiscal planning; and all activities related to student discipline. The team was presented multiple documents that

illustrated how data (from Amizone and elsewhere) was routinely assessed by this staff, including timely follow-up communication with faculty and/or administrative colleagues for immediate action or longer-term improvement. The language of LOs resulting in a “can-do” personality permeated throughout the working culture of this team. A story was told the visiting team about a student who was thought to have stolen a LCD projector. With precision and swiftness, the individual was given due process and consideration; however, he was expelled from the university for the offense. (CFRs 4.3, 4.4, 4.5)

As noted in *Standard 2* above, the domains and institutes across the institution routinely involve external stakeholders from industry, business, management, and the community. A careful review by the team of committee and council membership including rosters of the program and curricular review show broad participation in the evaluation and assessment of educational programs. Amity’s vision and strategic direction appears well known and respected as indicated in public media, news accounts, and the perspectives of Court members, each of whom represents rich experience and knowledge of reputation and brand. A specific piece of evidence of stakeholder involvement is found as Appendix G-27 in the SAVI report named “Guidelines for External Evaluators for Program Assessment.” This document defines the role, responsibilities, and obligations for reporting their analysis of the: assessment process, including its fairness, accuracy, and efficiency; academic quality of the cohort examined; quality of teaching, as judged by the students’ assessment; recommendations to the examination department for improvements to the teaching or assessment processes; and observations about recommendations from previous years and whether appropriate follow up has been implemented. (CFRs 4.5, 4.6)

The team report attempts to provide an accessible description and array of evidence regarding the nature of Amity’s engagement with its multiple constituencies. During the site

visit, it became clear the these groups were genuinely engaged and invested in planning and reflection with more examination of data and evidence than experienced in many US colleges and universities boards and councils. It should be noted that these groups conduct frequent and appropriate environmental scans and SWOT analysis with respect to fulfilling global aspirations of the vision and mission, demonstrating an inclination to align assessment with strategy and future planning objectives. While the number of constituent groups is high, the understanding of members of metrics and outcomes for achieving institutional and educational effectiveness was noteworthy. (CFR 4.6)

Initially perceived by the team as overly complicated, the strategic planning process revealed itself while onsite. Academic and strategic planning are seen as one institutional endeavor that explained the critical role of bottom-up QA activities moving ultimately to the Executive and Court approving levels after “full court press” with academic, domain and university bodies. Those bodies as noted elsewhere review foundational core competencies and student learning outcomes defined by program faculty and their leaders. Academic and strategic planning is supported comprehensively by the *Decision Making Structure* described above, and the culture of accountability is viable and functional yielding multiple points of entry for institutional reflection on how effective alignment to key institutional purposes are, or are not, performing at expected levels for achievement. Notwithstanding, the team encourages the university to make its strategic plan more explicit and accessible, especially to external groups and bodies, so that intentions regarding Amity’s place in global and regional higher education are more transparent and accessible to stakeholders, decision makers and future advocates for this admirable institution. (CFRs 4.3, 4.6)

The vision of Amity University as stated by the university founder and chancellor, and embraced by the vice chancellor and entire learning community is compelling and inspirational.

During its review of the SAV1 report, the team was eager to learn more about how the university would plan for achieving these aims. Engaging with leadership during the visit revealed a thriving culture of inquiry and learning where development of a more tangible and robust strategic plan around Amity's place in higher education is emerging. Commitment and drive are clear; the challenge will be to continue to monitor and assess the degree of effort and resources currently dedicated to process and structure versus new initiatives, effort and resources anticipated to support future build-out, innovation and new ventures beyond India.

In an excerpted paper titled "Future Plans, Chapter 18" (page 540 – 542) of an unknown document, the team was enlightened by its stance: that Amity has become a "force to be reckoned with in the Indian educational sector, and its endeavor is to become a world-class institution." A strategic position is described, aligned with core purposes and vision, and importantly, includes a long term planning framework. This framework—capturing key elements of a strategic for the future—appears in different forms in other process documents. The team recommends that Amity produce one clear articulation of its future strategy, with or without the elements identified in this document (ranking and accreditation; processes and systems; internationalization; intellectual capital and enhancement; student progression; academics and teaching-learning; field-centric learning; research, innovation and consultancy). Using its expertise for precise and structured process, the team believes Amity could strengthen its capability to fulfill its future vision through more refined and consistent use and application of planning language. This discipline will contribute to greater institutional clarity, understanding about the meaning of institutional direction, and increased conversations about the most critical priorities for setting goals, allocating resources, and achieving ambitious learning results. (CFR 4.7)

In sum, with analysis and evidence provided above, the team found Amity University to be in substantial compliance with Standard 4—i.e., sufficient for Initial Accreditation. This conclusion was reached due to the quality of the conversation about learning and improvement, and the university’s emerging place in the higher education landscape; and, importantly, due to the numerous additional documents and evidence provided to the team onsite. The university has made a convincing case aligned with its core purposes that it is an effective learning community dedicated to improvement.

### **SECTION III. PREPARATION FOR ACCREDITATION UNDER THE 2013 HANDBOOK OF ACCREDITATION**

*The 2013 Handbook of Accreditation* focuses attention on new areas of emphasis that require institutions to address in the next review the following components: (1) *Degree Programs: Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of Degrees*; (2) *Educational Quality: Core Competencies, and Standards of Performance at Graduation*; and (3) *Sustainability: Preparing for the Changing Higher Education Environment* and additional topics. WSCUC asks institutions to write essays in their self-studies that describe and analyze the institution’s position on these each aspect in the context of mission, institutional planning, and improvements (identified in the SAV1 process for strengthening educational effectiveness and sustainability).

In its SAV1 report (page 161), Amity University noted that it would prepare itself by:

- Conducting periodic reviews of institutional plans and program review, and annual strategic planning before the commencement of academic session of each academic year;
- Identifying in its environmental scans the significant demographics and the elements attributing to competitive edge, and align programs to meet these needs; and

- Strengthening and assessing the effectiveness of the university's quality assurance system and structure.

While these reflections call out some of the actions helpful in preparing for the next review, the focus is more operational than strategic. The team believes the university would greatly benefit from sending a team of key administrative and faculty leaders (many of whom are currently well engaged with WSCUC expectations) to the annual WSCUC Academic Resources Conference (ARC) including attendance in the many workshops and tutorials dedicated to preparing for accreditation reviews, assessment practices, program review, substantial change, the ecology of higher education and the like. Amity colleagues will enjoy and learn from interactions and exchanges with colleagues in the WSCUC region, facilitating the university's culture to be further enhanced by the values of educational effectiveness and student learning in the broader higher education community.

The visiting team suggests that as the university organizes and prepares for the next review, careful study and discussion take place around each of the Components described in the *2013 Handbook* (pages 28 – 34). These WSCUC essays explain the concept behind each Component and offers “prompts” (questions for further study). The information provided can help the institution frame its future preparation in deeper and more reflective ways than called for in the SAV1 review (emphasis on description of compliance with the Standards).

The *Standard 2* section of this report reflects the team's understanding of Amity nomenclature and definitions of degrees, for example. Suggestions are made regarding the need to align nomenclature consistent with US definitions of the meaning of the degree. Amity colleagues would benefit from attending focused WSCUC seminars around selected topics such as the *Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of Degrees* and *Core Competencies*. Since the university has indicated that it espouses competency-based education, future reflective essays need to

demonstrate understanding of WSCUC expectations for this concept and others relevant to stated institutional goals. It will be important to show evidence that appropriate modifications and revisions to academic offerings have been made and that they offer more clarity to external reviewers than was the case in the January 2016 SAV1.

Finally and in the view of the team, *Preparing for the Higher Education Environment* poses a critical albeit challenging requirement for Amity. The vision of the university is compelling and forward-looking. The aspiration to become a “front-runner” in the global educational landscape is ambitious yet achievable. The team in its engagement with the Amity community saw noteworthy intellectual capacity and determination to engage in significant, strategic issues: to use the depth of its data and knowledge of student achievement for making a real impact in the educational community in India, and beyond. In preparing for the next review, it would be essential for the university to clearly articulate how its vision and strategic direction will be sustained, and in response to this Component, align those future plans with the university’s intended outcome of being a major player in global higher education.

#### **SECTION IV. INVENTORY OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS**

Institutions seeking accreditation are required in their SAV1 report to complete the *Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators* (IEEI), and the federal compliance checklists. These documents and the *Guide for Determining Minimal or Substantial Compliance* are reviewed by the team as evidence of educational effectiveness. These documents, together with the institutional report and findings of the onsite visit, contribute to the team’s evaluation of the institution’s level of compliance with the Standards of Accreditation and CFRs.

The IEEI requests brief narrative information for each degree program, for general education (if applicable), and for the institution as a whole. The IEEI is expected to provide a

comprehensive overview of the institution's assessment processes. An institution committed to student achievement and educational effectiveness should have in place a system for collecting and using evidence to set standards of student performance and to improve learning. The indicators asked for in this exhibit need to reflect how an institution approaches quality assurance and improvement systematically.

The team reviewed Amity's IEEI to understand how comprehensively and successfully the institution addresses both the quality of its students' learning and the quality of the learning and assessment infrastructure. In this regard, the team found the submitted IEEI to be sufficient, comprehensive and aligned with most evidence captured during the site visit. It provides an overview of how the university demonstrates its robust system of data gathering and analysis including functional student learning outcomes assessment and program review. The IEEI, while initially perceived as complex and multilayered, did in fact indicate the university's commitment to quality assurance and improvement of educational results over time, a key value in Standards 2 and 4.

The team verified during the visit that the data presented in the IEEI satisfied requirements for demonstrating that programs offered by the institution undergo systematic domain (program) and university-level review including analyses of student achievement of the program's learning outcomes. Consistent with Amity's descriptive style of writing, the IEEI is a compendium of process details and does not interpret how the noted process tools (rubrics, assessment plans, and placement and performance data) specifically link to the overall system of determining successful student achievement. This fact does not pose a barrier to the SAV stage of review, however, the team wishes to note that in preparing for future self-reviews it is suggested that the IEEI transform into an interpretative document that illustrates a pathway into Amity's system of quality assurance. For example, referencing the data presented in the IEEI in

the reflections on each Standard (required in the SAV1 report) would have been enhanced by a cross walk between reflections and IEEI list. In sum, Amity University has satisfied the IEEI requirement.

## **SECTION V. FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The visiting team found that Amity University is in substantial compliance with the four Standards—i.e., sufficient for Initial Accreditation. It appreciates the institution’s thoroughness of the preparation for the SAV1 review. The team learned much from the institution and its well-prepared materials, especially those provided onsite. The team also learned from and appreciated the thoroughness of preparation from the two off-campus sites it reviewed in addition to conducting the SAV1 at the main campus in Noida and Greater Noida.

The following are several key findings that are the underpinnings of the team’s commendations and recommendations.

### **Key Findings**

The visiting team found Amity University:

- To be highly responsive to the recommendations of the ERC and engaged in the accreditation process.
- To be an innovative, engaged, and forward-looking university community.
- To be a community that has shared values focused on student, faculty, and staff success and academic quality across a wide variety of programs.
- To be an effective learning community dedicated to improvement.
- To be a university highly engaged with industry leaders and alumni.

- To have highly developed learning objectives and procedures equivalent to some of the best found in WSCUC.

In light of these findings, the visiting team cites the following commendations.

### **Commendations**

- 1) The visiting team commends the Amity University community for its engagement in the accreditation process and the amount of time and effort it has invested in the process. The team would also like to express its appreciation to the university community for the openness with which they responded to questions and the provision of additional materials as requested as well as for their efforts in making the site visit extremely hospitable with warmth and generosity. (CFR 1.8)
- 2) The team commends the university for setting the goal of transforming higher education in the university and the country, and it commends the Founder President for establishing a vision for multiple universities in India and other countries for the sole purpose of providing education to youth. Further, the team commends the Founder President and Foundation for having provided strong and consistent financial support in the form of facilities, scholarships and other areas at an excellent level. (CFRs 3.4, 4.7)
- 3) The team commends the university for aligning its purpose and vision with curricular and co-curricular programs. Amity's student-centered vision is evident in various aspects of student life on a "ragging-free" campus with excellent support services, such as hostel programs. (CFRs 1.1, 1.2, 3.5)
- 4) The team commends the chancellor for providing strong leadership and vision and the vice chancellor for strong leadership that has resulted in major changes in the university. The breadth of her role and reach is more extensive than one would see in a

US university of this size. (CFR 3.6)

- 5) The university demonstrates through its leadership at all levels, including administration, faculty and staff, a deep commitment to quality assurance and improvement in both academic and non-academic areas. It is evident that the university is seriously engaged in creating a culture of evidence and improvement responsive to aims of the university and its strategic direction in becoming a world-class institution of higher education (CFRs 3.6, 4.1, 4.3).
- 6) The university is commended for developing: 1) a common course numbering system, codifying course numbers by degree and program subject level, reducing duplication of detail within the university and providing for a more effective and efficient process for representing educational programs; and 2) a model framework for providing an overview of each degree level and program subject of study offered by the university. This document is an excellent resource for the learning and operational outcomes, curricular structure and pathways to program completion for each degree program offered. (CFR 2.1)
- 7) The university has established a comprehensive system of structures and processes where data is collected, organized and reviewed by a well-qualified and dedicated staff. The university's institutional research office (Research Planning and Statistical Services, or RPSS) provides outstanding data collection and dissemination for enhancing institutional quality and decision-making effectiveness, complemented by the efforts of Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE). Amizone—the university's institutional dashboard—is to be commended as a best practice QA resource. The university has implemented a very sophisticated process for review and assessment, which integrates

broad institutional data and incorporates current policies and practices. (CFRs 2.7, 4.1, 4.2)

- 8) The university is commended for incorporating significant key contributors from business and industry in the form of advisory groups and adjunct faculty to align curricula and program delivery with work place needs. The combination of theory and practical application complement the university mission and goals. (CFR 4.6)
- 9) The team commends the university for development and implementation of a process of program review and assessment that is exceptional; it includes creation of handbooks and manual clearly articulating program review and assessment applying best practices, to include process-directed timelines, flowcharts, explanation of quality control guidelines, *Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI)*, review and assessment tools, and decision points that constitute a formalized plan for implementation. (CFRs 2.1, 2.11, 4.2)
- 10) The decision-making structure in this organization is clear. The hierarchy of responsibility moves upward from the Institutional Quality Assurance Committee (IQAC), to the Academic Council, to the Executive Council, and ultimately to the governing board (“Court”). Data provided by RPSS provides relevant and accurate information upon which decisions are based. The team commends the university’s organization and alignment of educational improvements with the strategic goals and objectives in its assessment of student learning and achievement. (CFRs 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5)

The team makes the following recommendations.

## **Recommendations**

- 1) While the team commends the governing board (“Court”) for expanding the leadership to include individuals outside the evaluation, it recommends that the Court 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 team recommends the creation of a nominating committee of the board. (CFRs 1.4, 3.9).
- 2) The team 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) As the university continues to grow both in size, complexity, and the number of campuses, the pressures on the CEO to deal with major institutional issues and purely academic issues will become an ever-greater issue to address. The visiting team 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 visiting team 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 US) in the future. (CFR 3.8)

- 4) 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 visiting team recommends that the university streamline its decision-making committees and increase the number of meetings for the remaining key committees. (CFR 3.7)
- 5) 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. The visiting team 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) With Amity's compelling mission and vision, the team 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. (CFRs 4.3, 4.7)

## APPENDICES

### A. Credit Hour Review Report

<b>Material Reviewed</b>	<b>Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)</b>
Policy on credit hour	Is this policy easily accessible? YES
	If so, where is the policy located? The statement of policy is located in the Model Framework of Programmes document, in the Model Framework and Programme Catalog and in a master Manual of Policy Statements, Regulations and Guidelines.
	Comments: The Amity policy statement on award of academic credit is comprehensive, is consistent with statement of policy of the India governmental agency, and is confirmed through the IQAC, Academic Council & the Executive Council and adopted by the Court.. This statement is also consistent with the WSCUC Policy statement on Award of Academic Credit.
	The policy includes recognition of the number of hours constituting award of credit of semester value as a minimum of 15 hours. Lecture/Tutorial coursework requires a minimum of 15 hours for one unit of credit; 30 hours for Lab [equivalent]; 45 hours for practicum/externship [equivalent] each supplemented by outside preparation assigned and verified.
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)? YES
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? YES
	Comments: Amity follows a very strict protocol for establishing, for implementing, and for reviewing the policy as established. With curriculum developed by faculty at the levels of domain and institute, consistent with India governmental requirements, there is a hierarchy for review. From the department (“institute”) level, award of credit-related decisions and recommendations affirmed by the Board of Studies (BoS) and go to Academic Council and Executive Council. Once affirmed, issues such as credit value for a course or program are entered into the Amity Catalog, the Model Framework of Programmes of Curricula, and the syllabi at a course level.
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	The Academic Council, and dean of this entity, established and make available detail on the schedule of courses on a term by term basis. This information is available to all levels of the university community through the university software system of Amizone.
	Comments: This is a comprehensive, quality-controlled process that makes all information available in a timely way.
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? Syllabi were reviewed for eight courses of general education, and for selected six syllabi by degree level and program subject. Most relevant was the review of the Model Framework of Programmes for the university that captures information on all degree levels and program subjects of programs offered. This is supplemented by course syllabi detail by degree level and program subjects with each domain dean.
	What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? Courses are offered both for Residential delivery and on-delivery, but there is no distinction between the syllabi by instructional delivery.
	What degree level(s)? BA/BS MA Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Sampling included coursework from the Domains of Psychology, Business and Education.

	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? YES
	Comments: Included in the Model Framework of Programmes document, supplemented by syllabi, is the expectation of outside work to support credit awarded. This expectation is reinforced by detail maintained by the domain dean and supported by examples of student work.
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? Four syllabi were reviewed.
	What kinds of courses? Thesis, Dissertation, Master Project
	What degree level(s)? BA/BS MA Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Business, Psychology, Education
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? YES
	Comments: All syllabi reviewed showed the clear detail of whether instruction and work required of the student was within the category of Lecture or Tutorial, Lab, or Practicum.
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	How many programs were reviewed? Four programs were reviewed.
	What degree level(s)? BA/BS MA Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Business, Psychology and Education
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? YES
	Comments: The university follows a very strictly-adhered to protocol for assuring practices for award of credit are consistent with stated policy. Confirmation of credit required, the categories in which credit is recognized, and credit awarded is consistently applied.

Review Completed By: Betty Sundberg, Ed.D.  
Date: January 15, 2016

**B. Marketing and Recruitment Review Report**

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

<b>Material Reviewed</b>	<b>Questions and Comments: Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this table as appropriate.</b>
**Federal regulations	<p>Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments:                       While Amity University is not required to follow the federal guidelines, as it does not receive federal financial aid in any form, it does not incent its admissions counselors for recruiting students, nor does it pay anyone for referring students to the organization. In fact, in all of the buildings the team visited, there were signs displaying the fact that the university does not accept capitation or donations for admissions.</p>
Degree completion and cost	<p>Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments:                       The website illustrates the time to degree for students, and it also provides the percent of students, by program, that complete within the prescribed time.                      The costs of all programs are illustrated on the website and in written form.</p>
Careers and employment	<p>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</p> <p>Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>
	<p>Comments:                       Placement data is contained on the website for all programs. Overall approximately 80% of all students are employed, attending graduate school, or are starting their own business after graduation. Amity has a very successful placement program.</p>

\*§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: Robert Allison and Tomoko Takahashi  
 Date: January 14, 2016

### C. Student Complaint Review Report

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? Where?
	<p>Comments:</p> <p>The university has different complaint procedures; the complaint procedure for the Hostels (Resident Halls &amp; Food Service) is handled through the resident hall system. This includes the more serious types of complaints, as well as the maintenance issues of the hall. These are very well publicized to those students living in the residence halls.</p> <p>A formal complaint policy for the institution also exists, that is available widely through the Amizone portal. All students much use the portal, and this portal contains a complaint form for students built in that is directed to the correct location. The reviewing department then has two days to answer the complaint, or it is move forward to the next level. This continues, through to the vice chancellor, and ultimately to the chancellor.</p>
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:
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Yes, the system is so automated that grievances and complaints cannot be dismissed.</p>
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:
	Yes, this is done through the Amizone portal (see above).
	Comments:

\*§602-16(1)(1)(ix)

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

Review Completed By: Robert Allison

Date: January 14, 2016

### ***D. Transfer Policy Review Report***

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

<b>Material Reviewed</b>	<b>Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)</b>
Transfer Credit Policy(s)	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit? YES
	If so, is the policy publically available? YES If so, where? The policy is available through the university catalog and student handbook
	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? YES
	Comments: Policies related to how credit is recognized toward course and program completion is strictly monitored and assessed according to consistent guidelines of the India governmental agency. Statements of policy for each practice are deliberated and confirmed by the Institutional Quality Assurance Committee (IQAC) and approved by the Academic Council and affirmed by the Executive Council. This practice ensures a consistency of application. Statement of Transfer Credit Policy was reviewed and is consistent with the expectation of the WSCUC policy.  The university maintains exhaustive records of credit awarded for transfer of credit, both for students transferring with the university by subject area or physical site, as well as students transferring from outside the institution.  This statement of policy, and implementation of this policy, is consistent with WSCUC standards.

\*§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: Betty Sundberg, Ed.D.

Date: January 15, 2016

### ***E. Off-Campus Site Report [Lucknow]***

Institution: Amity University – India Lucknow campus site  
Type of Visit: Seeking Accreditation 1 [Primary Site – Noida]  
Name of reviewer/s: Betty Sundberg, Ed.D.  
Date/s of review: January [10 evening] and 11 [onsite], 2016

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report for all visits in which off-campus sites were reviewed<sup>3</sup>. One form should be used for each site visited. Teams are not required to include a narrative about this matter in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings and Recommendations section of the team report.

#### 1. Site Name and Address

Amity Lucknow is a constituent unit of Amity University, Uttar Pradesh, NOIDA. It is generally referred to as Amity University Uttar Pradesh (AUUP), Lucknow Campus. The campus was initially located at Viraj Khand area of Lucknow and shifted in stages during year 2009-10 to the new campus at Gomti Nagar Extension (Near Malhour Railway Station), Lucknow.

#### 2. Background Information (number of programs offered at this site; degree levels; FTE of faculty and enrollment; brief history at this site; designation as a branch campus standalone location, or satellite location by WSCUC)

All programs offered by Amity University are also available at the Lucknow site. This includes programs of instruction by level and program subject.

AMITY UNIVERSITY offers various programs at bachelor's, master's and doctoral level. The university offers programs in engineering, biosciences, architecture, telecom, arts, humanities, social sciences, journalism and communication, management, education, hospitality, law, insurance, health and allied sciences.

The reviewer requested updated materials prior to the visit to include details on instructional faculty, disaggregated by degree level and program of study. That information was provided with an update and was used as a basis for discussion at the time of the onsite.

There are 382 instructional faculty at this school site, and 377 non-teaching staff. The university also appoints visiting faculty members from industry and academia to teach specialized courses to value addition in a course as per the requirement. Enrollment is 4,973 students.

In addition to the permanent faculty, leading professionals from the industry interact regularly with the students in the classroom as well as on their workplaces through guest lectures and industry visits respectively.

Additional materials were requested for review the evening prior to the January 11 campus visit.

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<sup>3</sup> See Protocol for Review of Off-Campus Sites to determine whether and how many sites will be visited.

3. Nature of the Review (material examined and persons/committees interviewed)

The visit schedule for the Lucknow Campus site was as follows:

January 11, 2016

- 8:45 Transport to campus
- 9 – 9:15 Traditional welcome, meeting with pro vice chancellor and team
- 9:15 – 9:45 Presentation about campus and compliance with WSCUC Standards  
Primary administrative team, moderated by Prof. Manoj Joshi
- 9:50 – 10:35 Meeting with Program Review, Curriculum Committee and Academic Planning  
and Implementation Team, moderated by Dr. Anil K. Dwivedi
- 10:40 – 11:25 Meeting with Outcome Assessment Committee and Research and Planning  
Committee, moderated by Dr. H. K. Dwivedi
- 11:30 – 12:15 Meeting with Student Academic Affairs, Support Services, members of  
Examination Committee and Examination Department: Maj General G. S  
Narange and Brig. V. K. Pande
- 12:20 – 1:05 Open meeting with students in auditorium
- 1:10 – 1:40 Lunch
- 1:45 Departure

Meetings on campus included individual meetings and presentations with the following deans:

**Name Designation Institution / Department**

1. Mr. Vijay Pratap Sahi, Director, CRC & Acting Head, Amity Business School (ABS), Acting  
Head, Amity School for Communication Enhancement and Transformation
2. Prof. (Dr.) R. P. Singh, Director, ASRAM Amity School of Rural & Agribusiness Management
3. Prof. Sanjay Mohan Johri, Director, Amity School of Communication
4. Prof. (Dr.) Kum Kum Ray, Director, Amity School of Languages
5. Prof. (Dr.) Manju Agarwal, Professor & Director, Amity Institute of Behavioural & Allied Sci
6. Prof. Mahesh Kumar Sharma, Director, Amity Law School
7. Dr. Beermati Singh, Director, Amity Institute of Education
8. Mr. Janardan Singh, Director, Amity Institute of Pharmacy
9. Prof. S.T.H. Abidi, Director, Amity School of Engineering & Technology
10. Dr. Rajesh K. Tiwari Dy, Director, Amity Institute of Biotechnology
11. Prof. Pooja Verma, Professor, Amity School of Fashion Technology
12. Prof. Pooja Verma Professor Amity School of Fine Arts
13. Brig Umesh K Chopra, Director, AIIT, Amity Institute of Information Technology
14. Mr. Mohit Chandra, Director, Amity School of Hospitality
15. Prof. Krishna Kant Dixit, Director, Amity School of Architecture & Planning

Lines of Inquiry	Observations and Findings	Follow-up Required (Identify the issues)
<i>For a recently approved site.</i> Has the institution followed up on the recommendations from the substantive change committee that approved this new site?	Not Applicable. This off-site was in connection with the SAV1 to the Noida facility of Amity.	N/A
<i>Fit with Mission.</i> How does the institution conceive of this and other off-campus sites relative to its mission, operations, and	The facilities and administrative structure are appropriate with the	None

<p>administrative structure? How is the site planned and operationalized? (CFRs 1.2, 3.1, 3.5, 4.1)</p>	<p>mission, vision, and purposes of the primary Amity University site in Noida. Facilities are spacious, well-appointed, and eminently satisfactory.</p>	
<p><i>Connection to the Institution.</i> How visible and deep is the presence of the institution at the off-campus site? In what ways does the institution integrate off-campus students into the life and culture of the institution? (CFRs 1.2, 2.10)</p>	<p>This campus site is very well aligned with the primary site, and parallels the operation at Noida.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><i>Quality of the Learning Site.</i> How does the physical environment foster learning and faculty-student contact? What kind of oversight ensures that the off-campus site is well managed? (CFRs 1.8, 2.1, 2.5, 3.1, 3.5)</p>	<p>It was readily apparent that the vision in developing and implementing this facility was well-conceived. Student housing is provided in hostels. Resource facilities in the form of lounges, a spacious and well-appointed library with individual carrels for study and a quiet, well-maintained environment very conducive to student access and use. A primary hall to showcase student work in architecture and visual arts projects was presented. A sports field, campus store, campus cafeteria, and student service center were all readily available and in visible use by students.</p> <p>A brief tour of the facilities was provided, and it is exceptionally clean and pleasant.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><i>Student Support Services.</i> What is the site's capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services and other appropriate student services? Or how are these otherwise provided? What do data show about the effectiveness of these services? (CFRs 2.11-2.13, 3.6, 3.7)</p>	<p>Student Support services provided a presentation with the review. Details were provided in the infrastructure support (hostels, cafeteria facilities, medical facilities, transportation options, library, IT, and the calendar</p>	<p>All information and support was excellent. The university benefits from a disaggregated assessment of student use of these options by degree level and subject area, to assist in developing both</p>

	of monthly events), scholarship services [to include use and access to those services] counseling services, placement support and activity [including student details of assistance], and the process by which students can secure redress for issues about which they are concerned.	proposed outcomes and assessment for co-curricular student support efforts.
<i>Faculty.</i> Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? In what ways does the institution ensure that off-campus faculty is involved in the academic oversight of the programs at this site? How do these faculty members participate in curriculum development and assessment of student learning? (CFRs 2.4, 3.1-3.4, 4.6)	<p>There were approximately 80 faculty and administrators present and participating in the presentations to detail campus operations. Through a very complex organizational structure, parallel to that of the Noida main facility.</p> <p>Faculty are engaged and accountable for program delivery, development, and implementation of program review and assessment. This was evident, in application of rubrics toward the goal of assessment and review. This site has a well-developed foundation of review and assessment; they benefit from involvement in workshops and advanced professional development to align with best practices in higher education.</p>	
<i>Curriculum and Delivery.</i> Who designs the programs and courses at this site? How are they approved and evaluated? Are the programs and courses comparable in content, outcomes and quality to those on the main campus? (CFRs 2.1-2.3, 4.6)	This is totally unclear. Much of the curriculum, both by degree level and program subject, appears to be directed by government regulations. The relationship with government entities appears to be strong, and support	

	<p>for a vast myriad of program subjects with several permutations.</p> <p>There is no question the programs and courses are consistent and that they mirror programs and degree levels on the Noida site, but that does not suggest they are necessarily aligned with WSCUC expectations, and best practices in US higher education.</p>	
<p><i>Retention and Graduation.</i> What data on retention and graduation are collected on students enrolled at this off-campus site? What do these data show? What disparities are evident? Are rates comparable to programs at the main campus? If any concerns exist, how are these being addressed? (CFRs 2.6, 2.10)</p>	<p>Retention and graduation data is presented and available, appearing consistent with the collection of data used for the Noida site, but it is not disaggregated by degree level and program subject, which would make it more meaningful.</p>	<p>Amity University has a software system [Amizone] in which it takes great pride for the collection of data.</p> <p>Data is collected, and presented over time, but again there is no analysis, which would provide for fruitful assessment purposes.</p>
<p><i>Student Learning.</i> How does the institution assess student learning at off-campus sites? Is this process comparable to that used on the main campus? What are the results of student learning assessment? How do these compare with learning results from the main campus? (CFRs 2.6, 4.6, 4.7)</p>	<p>Assessment of student learning is exceptionally well developed. Outcomes are developed at all levels—ILOs, PLOs, CLOs—and there are a variety of very sophisticated rubrics and “tools,” along with identification of both “direct” and “indirect” data being gathered.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><i>Quality Assurance Processes:</i> How are the institution’s quality assurance processes designed or modified to cover off-campus sites? What evidence is provided that off-campus programs and courses are educationally effective? (CFRs 4.4-4.8)</p>	<p>The process of quality assurance, in terms of charts, graphs, and names of committees engaged/involved is consistent between the Lucknow site and the Noida location.</p>	<p>Review and recommendations made as a part of the WSCUC-team onsite for Noida will apply equally to Lucknow.</p>

## ***F. Off-Campus Site Report [Dubai]***

Institution: Amity University – India Dubai campus site

Type of Visit: Seeking Accreditation 1 [Primary Site – Noida]

Name of reviewer/s: Robert Allison, Ed.D.

Date/s of review: November 9, 2015

1. Site Name and Address : Amity University, Dubai, UAE
2. Background Information (number of programs offered at this site; degree levels; FTE of faculty and enrollment; brief history at this site; designation as a branch campus standalone location, or satellite location by WSCUC)  
The site was opened in 2011, and had 100 students at the beginning. The operation began with 5 faculty and a dean. By Fall of 2014, the student population has grown to approximately 2,000 and now has approximately 39 faculty and 57 non-teaching staff. The site offers bachelors, masters, and plans are being made for initiating a PhD program. Currently, the site offers 28 programs in total. This campus is much more international in flavor than is the home campus at Noida. Faculty members come from many countries, and the student body also is more international.
3. Nature of the Review (material examined and persons/committees interviewed). The review of the site took place on November 9, 2015. The following faculty and staff were interviewed: Pro Vice Chancellor Narayanan Ramachandran, Professor Piyush Maheswar, Professor Rajneesh Mishya, Lecturer Raunag Dubey, and Vice Chancellor Balvinder Shukla, who was visiting from the Noida Campus. Several classes were observed, and an overall briefing regarding the programs offered at the campus was provided.

<b>Lines of Inquiry</b>	<b>Observations and Findings</b>	<b>Follow-up Required (identify the issues)</b>
<i>For a recently approved site.</i> Has the institution followed up on the recommendations from the substantive change committee that approved this new site?	N/A.	
<i>Fit with Mission.</i> How does the institution conceive of this and other off-campus sites relative to its mission, operations, and administrative structure? How is the site planned and operationalized? (CFRs 1.2, 3.1, 3.5, 4.1)	Many of the faculty have taught at the Noida campus prior to moving to the UAE. Posters regarding core commitments, learning outcomes and mission statements were pervasive.	
<i>Connection to the Institution.</i> How visible and deep is the presence of the institution at the off-campus site? In what ways does the institution integrate off-campus students into the life and culture of the institution? (CFRs 1.2, 2.10)	Most of the faculty are full-time with a continuing commitment to the organization.	
<i>Quality of the Learning Site.</i> How does the physical environment foster learning and faculty-student contact? What kind of oversight ensures that the off-campus site is well managed? (CFRs 1.8, 2.1, 2.5, 3.1, 3.5)	The space was excellent. A brand new 700,000 SF building will be ready in mid 2016 for occupancy, as the Dubai goal is to significantly increase enrollment.	
<i>Student Support Services.</i> What is the site's capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services and other appropriate student services? Or how are these otherwise provided? What do data show about the effectiveness of these services? (CFRs 2.11-2.13, 3.6, 3.7)	The site is well staffed for admissions and counseling. Technology is readily available to faculty and staff. Library services mostly online, as only a small	

	library was extent at the site. Little data to indicate effectiveness of services.	
<i>Faculty.</i> Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? In what ways does the institution ensure that off-campus faculty is involved in the academic oversight of the programs at this site? How do these faculty members participate in curriculum development and assessment of student learning? (CFRs 2.4, 3.1-3.4, 4.6)	The faculty at the center is mostly full-time. Curriculum is largely the same as that offered at the Noida campus, with faculty from Dubai having input into programs at the main campus. Assessment is carried on in a similar fashion as the Noida campus.	
<i>Curriculum and Delivery.</i> Who designs the programs and courses at this site? How are they approved and evaluated? Are the programs and courses comparable in content, outcomes and quality to those on the main campus? (CFRs 2.1-2.3, 4.6)	The curriculum is designed at the Noida campus, but contextualized for Dubai. Programs are approved by main campus committees, with representatives from the Dubai campus.	
<i>Retention and Graduation.</i> What data on retention and graduation are collected on students enrolled at this off-campus site? What do these data show? What disparities are evident? Are rates comparable to programs at the main campus? If any concerns exist, how are these being addressed? (CFRs 2.6, 2.10)	Retention and graduation data are collected from site and integrated into Amizone. Student success is similar to main campus.	
<i>Student Learning.</i> How does the institution assess student learning at off-campus sites? Is this process comparable to that used on the main campus? What are the results of student learning assessment? How do these compare with learning results from the main campus? (CFRs 2.6, 4.6, 4.7)	Student learning is assessed in the same manner as on main campus. See <i>Standard 2</i> in team report.	
<i>Quality Assurance Processes:</i> How are the institution's quality assurance processes designed or modified to cover off-campus sites? What evidence is provided that off-campus programs and courses are educationally effective? (CFRs 4.4-4.8)	All courses are moderated by home campus. Amizone and examinations are used to evaluate learning objectives. Changes are made in delivery if learning is not taking place satisfactorily.	

## ***G. Distance Education Review Report***

Institution:

Type of Visit: SAVI for Amity University

Name of reviewer/s: Betty Sundberg, Ed.D.

Date/s of review: January 11 – 14, 2016

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report for all comprehensive visits to institutions that offer distance education programs<sup>4</sup> and for other visits as applicable. Teams can use the institutional report to begin their investigation, then, use the visit to confirm claims and further surface possible concerns. Teams are not required to include a narrative about this in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings and Recommendations section of the team report. (If the institution offers only online courses, the team may use this form for reference but need not submit it as the team report is expected to cover distance education in depth in the body of the report.)

### 1. Programs and courses reviewed (please list)

#### Master/Bachelor Degree Programmes

1.	Master of Business Administration	2 years
2.	Master of Computer Applications	3 years
3.	Master of Science – IT	2 years
4.	Bachelor of Business Administration	3 years
5.	Bachelor of Computer Applications	3 years
6.	Bachelor Journalism and Mass Communication	3 years
7.	Bachelor Tourism Administration	3 years
8.	Bachelor of Commerce	3 years

#### PG Diploma/Diploma Programmes

Multiple PG Diploma Programs of one-year duration

### 2. Background Information (number of programs offered by distance education; degree levels; FTE enrollment in distance education courses/programs; history of offering distance education; percentage growth in distance education offerings and enrollment; platform, formats, and/or delivery method)

Programs detailed above are offered through the distance-learning modality

FTE: Students enrolled with the distance learning access course instruction, curricula, and student support services from off-campus. Total number of Current Active Students in 19, 657

#### History of offering DL

Amity School of Distance Learning (ASoDL) was later renamed as Amity Directorate of Distance and Online Education (ADDOE), one of the departments of Amity University. Amity, and the distance learning department, was established under the aegis of Ritnand Balved Education Foundation (RBEF) on January 1, 2000, with the aim of providing quality education in the Distance Learning mode to those who did not have traditional learning access. The guiding philosophy of the university department has been “Reaching the Unreached.” Beginning with a 3-Year Post graduate Diploma in Management and a 1-Year diploma program, the department now offers a variety of programs in Management, IT, Commerce, Travel and Tourism, and Mass Communication of the PG, UG level, in addition to PG Diplomas in corresponding domains.

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<sup>4</sup> See Protocol for Review of Distance Education to determine whether programs are subject to this process. In general only programs that are more than 50% online require review and reporting.

The distance-learning modality program started in the year 2000, duly recognized by Distance Education Bureau.

Growth and Enrollment

Admission Trends 2012-2015:	Distance Learning (DL)	Online DL
January 2012	749	148
January 2013	1103	344
January 2014	501	456
January 2015	927	747
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>3280</b>	<b>1695</b>

Platform: Online and Conventional: Customized Learning Management System (LMS)  
Developed in-house to the university, takes care of program delivery.

Formats: E-Learning and Off Line

Delivery Methods: Study Materials: Soft Copy and Hard Copies  
Assignments: Online  
Examinations: Online  
Results: Online followed by physical transcripts on standard format common to students of AMITY UNIVERSITY.

3. Nature of the review (material examined and persons/committees interviewed)

- a. Examination of LMS
- b. Examination of Materials
- c. Interviews of Director and ADDOE personnel

**Observations and Findings**

Lines of Inquiry (refer to relevant CFRs to assure comprehensive consideration)	Observations and Findings	Follow-up Required (identify the issues)
<i>Fit with Mission.</i> How does the institution conceive of distance learning relative to its mission, operations, and administrative structure? How are distance education offerings planned, funded, and operationalized?	There is no difference between the Mission, Goals, Vision, or projected SLOs between the Amity Onsite programs and administration or the Distance Learning segment of the institution. Planning the implementation for both onsite and online are assessed, implemented and monitored through the same hierarchical administration establishing quality assurance to all operations.	None
<i>Connection to the Institution.</i> How are distance education students integrated into the life and culture of the institution?	There is total integration and availability of all student service support efforts available to Onsite students.	None
<i>Quality of the DE Infrastructure.</i> Are the learning platform and academic infrastructure of the site conducive to learning and	Quality of the operation is excellent, and it is subject to the same level of monitoring as all	None

<p>interaction between faculty and students and among students? Is the technology adequately supported? Are there back-ups?</p>	<p>other operations of the university. Technology is current and adequately supported.</p>	
<p><i>Student Support Services:</i> What is the institution's capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services, academic support and other services appropriate to distance modality? What do data show about the effectiveness of the services?</p>	<p>All student support services available to Onsite students are available to those receiving services online. Data is provided through the Student services division of the university confirming access to services with an assessment confirming adequacy.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><i>Faculty.</i> Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? Do they teach only online courses? In what ways does the institution ensure that distance learning faculty are oriented, supported, and integrated appropriately into the academic life of the institution? How are faculty involved in curriculum development and assessment of student learning? How are faculty trained and supported to teach in this modality?</p>	<p>Extensive information is available on the number and quality of instruction faculty, detailed through the publication <u>Amity Directorate of Distance &amp; Online Education</u>. A faculty listing is maintained of all Internal faculty, by name, department, academic qualifications, and faculty external to the university, with the same detailing and verification of qualifications. Extensive evaluation detail is also provided in the <u>Directorate</u> (see below) with an explanation of the process of evaluating Projects, Examinations. Extensive information is provided on faculty professional development opportunities and participation.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><i>Curriculum and Delivery.</i> Who designs the distance education programs and courses? How are they approved and evaluated? Are the programs and courses comparable in content, outcomes and quality to on-ground offerings? (Submit credit hour report.)</p>	<p>Curricula is developed and designed by the same body of Directors and instructional faculty, by domain and institute, as curricula for Onsite delivery. LOs at the level of Institution, Program, and Courses parallels Onsite curricula and evaluation. Curricula development, delivery, and evaluation strategies are transparent between Residential and Online.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><i>Retention and Graduation.</i> What data on retention and graduation are collected on students taking online courses and programs? What do these data show? What disparities are evident? Are rates comparable to on-ground programs and to other institutions' online offerings? If any concerns exist, how are these being addressed?</p>	<p>Retention and Graduation data is tracked for all DSL students, in the same manner as for Residential, with analysis through the same operation of Institutional Research. Results</p>	

	for students enrolled in DSL is comparable to progress and success as for Residential students. Data is provided relative to Admission, to Retention, and to Graduation, disaggregated by domain and institute.	
<i>Student Learning.</i> How does the institution assess student learning for online programs and courses? Is this process comparable to that used in on-ground courses? What are the results of student learning assessment? How do these compare with learning results of on-ground students, if applicable, or with other online offerings?	Student success as monitored by Retention, Graduation, and evidence of SLOs for students receiving instruction through DSL is comparable to students receiving instruction and assessment through Residential programs.	None
<i>Contracts with Vendors.</i> Are there any arrangements with outside vendors concerning the infrastructure, delivery, development, or instruction of courses? If so, do these comport with the policy on <i>Contracts with Unaccredited Organizations</i> ?	All technology is developed and delivered internal to Amity University. The university maintains control of all operations for all services available and provided.	None
<i>Quality Assurance Processes:</i> How are the institution's quality assurance processes designed or modified to cover distance education? What evidence is provided that distance education programs and courses are educationally effective?	The same quality assurance processes developed for Onsite. Residential operation of the university exists for the distance learning operation. All safeguards and progression through University Committees and Councils have applicability equal for both delivery modalities, with equivalent and comparable results.	None