

REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM

For Reaffirmation of Accreditation

To

Northcentral University

October 6-9, 2020

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

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SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

Description of the Institution and Visit

Founded in 1996, Northcentral University (NCU) is a private, non-profit, fully online institution affiliated with the National University System (NUS). NCU is headquartered in La Jolla, California, with several of its operational departments under National Education Partners (NEP) an online program manager (OPM), a separate entity, located in Scottsdale, Arizona. NCU is overseen by an independent, fiduciary Board of Trustees that operates according to its bylaws.

NCU offers three bachelor's, 25 master's, and 20 doctoral degrees in business and technology management, education, nursing and health administration, criminal justice, psychology, and marriage, and family therapy to approximately 11,000 learners located around the world. By January 2021, the John F. Kennedy College of Law, including the JD, the BA, and Paralegal Certificate Programs, will have transitioned to Northcentral University and retain its name as the JFK School of Law at NCU. The 500 faculty and staff of NCU are distributed geographically throughout the United States.

Accreditation History

NCU was originally a for-profit institution accredited through the Higher Learning Commission, as the institution was located in Arizona. NCU transferred its headquarters to San Diego, California, and received initial accreditation as a for-profit institution from WSCUC in 2015. As part of the 2015 action, the Commission noted that NCU should:

1. Continue the practice of obtaining the most current technological tools, especially those related to the support of timely interventions supporting student retention
2. Continue its journey toward greater academic rigor and ensure that students are both informed about and aided in achieving higher standards than those that may have been in place at the time of their enrollment.

Beginning in 2017, under WSCUC, NCU began submitting substantive change proposals for new programs. In 2017, 13 new program proposals were submitted, and in 2018 NCU proposed four new programs. Most of the substantive change approval letters included requests that in future proposals NCU includes: Step-by-step details about assessment plans, more fully developed curriculum maps, information about the nature and rigor of signature assignments, and specific plans for ensuring a graduate culture in an online modality.

In 2018, NCU submitted a structural change proposal related to its legal status, moving from for-profit to non-profit status, and its plans to become an affiliate of the National University System (NUS). The Commission approved the request in November 2018 with the requirement of a post implementation visit within six months. As part of the visit, the institution was required to address progress on the following recommendations:

1. Assure an appropriate level of autonomy of the institution and independence of the board (CFR 1.5, 3.9).
2. Develop appropriate expectations for scholarship and research among students and faculty consistent with the graduate nature of the institution (CFR 2.8).
3. Create and implement the processes for the faculty to take collective responsibility for the curriculum (CFR 2.4).
4. Make sure the faculty exercises effective academic leadership (CFR 3.10).

In 2019, NCU began operating as a non-profit university as an independent institution affiliated with the National University System (NUS).

Team's Review Process

The team's review process was conducted in two phases: first, an Offsite Review (OSR) meeting on March 9-10, 2020 in Alameda, California and second Accreditation Visit (AV) conducted via Zoom from October 6-9, 2020. Documents reviewed before the OSR included the institutional self-study and

supporting appendices, website, catalog, course syllabi, faculty handbook, Commission action letters, 2015 team report for the seeking accreditation visit, and team report from the 2018 Structural Change visit. Additional information, evidence, and data were requested as a result of the OSR and through the conclusion of the virtual AV.

During the OSR, the team identified four overarching lines of inquiry for the AV, which focused on data culture and strategies, organizational change and structure, academic effectiveness and educational experience, and financial sustainability.

As part of the AV, the team conducted interviews via Zoom. For those unable to participate in a meeting or interview, a confidential email account was made available to all students, faculty, and staff, and the assistant chair monitored the account during the visit. A total of eleven individuals provided comments or suggestions via the confidential email account, which the team reviewed.

Institution's Reaccreditation Report

NCU's institutional report provided the team with ample information and evidence necessary to conduct a thorough review. The institutional report clearly and accurately addressed most of the required components and previous Commission recommendations, and approximately 360 reference materials and attachments supported the claims made in the report.

The NCU community began the initial stages of preparation for reaffirming the accreditation process in the fall of 2017. At that time, NCU's academic leadership established a reaffirmation of accreditation plan that outlined the methods and structure for conducting the self-study, a process for conducting internal self-assessment, and goals with timelines for completing the Institutional Report. As part of the self-study process, NCU utilized a three-phase approach for developing the institutional self-study, including an internal assessment, self-study writing, and finalization.

The internal assessment process allowed the institution to measure compliance with WSCUC standards and federal requirements. The NCU leadership team endorsed the plan, and all departments

had representatives participate in this process. Academic and departmental leaders distributed the Review under WSCUC Standards and Compliance with Federal Requirements Worksheet. The team members completed their individual assessment of NCU's compliance with the Criteria For Review (CFR) and federal requirements, and their responses were kept anonymous. After the exercise, the Director of Accreditation aggregated the scores and notes into a single assessment document that served as the self-study's foundation.

During the self-study writing process, the thematic self-study writing teams provided the narratives and supporting evidences related to each topic. The self-study process provided NCU's community the opportunity to "tell their story" and show how the faculty and staff collectively support student success.

After the development of the self-study narratives in January 2019, the content provided by each team was collected and placed into a single document. The document underwent multiple iterations of review and comment from the NCU community, including deans, the faculty senate, faculty, and staff members before its final approval by NCU's Board of Trustees.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS

Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions

The team reviewed the Commission's recommendations from July 2015 (approval of Initial Accreditation) and November 2018 (approval of structural change) and NCU's responses as reflected in the institutional report and the interviews the team conducted. Overall, the team concluded that NCU has satisfactorily addressed the recommendations of the Commission. NCU's progress in addressing the Commission's recommendations is described in the relevant Standard (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.8, 3.5, 3.9, and 3.10).

Component 2: Compliance: Review under WSCUC Standards and compliance with federal requirements;
Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (Standard 2)

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

Institutional Purposes

NCU has a clearly articulated mission, vision, and values statements published on its website and in the institutional catalog. These statements are appropriate given the organizational context and program offerings. In so doing, they guide the organization's shared commitment to providing a learning experience that supports students. Under these statements, the institution believes that education should be widely accessible to adult learners while accommodating their professional and personal commitments. NCU contributes to the public good by preparing graduates to serve their communities. (CFR 1.1)

The institution publishes learning outcomes standards. Student learning outcomes are crafted at the institutional (ILO), program (PLO), and course (CLO) levels. At each level, objectives are well defined and consistently utilized across all programs. Institutional learning outcomes are aligned with the WSCUC core competencies and are differentiated by degree-level. (CFR 1.2)

NCU is clearly committed to academic freedom for faculty, staff, and students based on discussions during the interview sessions. The university academic freedom statement for faculty is published within the Faculty Handbook. The Faculty Handbook language also includes academic freedom language for students. The team suggests that NCU be more intentional by publishing the academic freedom statement within appropriate publications for students and staff. (CFR 1.3)

As noted within the institutional report, NCU is committed to diversity as a core organizational value. NCU's leadership, faculty, and staff share in WSCUC's commitment to diversity and readily embrace WSCUC's Equity and Inclusion Policy. The university has recently created diversity committee that focuses on diversity hiring practices, research opportunities for students and faculty, and provides

guidance on academic policy and procedural matters. The organization has provided funding for faculty and staff to attend conferences related to diversity. (CFR 1.4) NCU's student body is 0.92% American Indian or Alaska Native; 2.54% Asian; 34.98% Black or African American; 9.48% Hispanic/Latino; 0.83% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander; 3.71% Two or More Races; 31.84% White; and 15.70% did not self-report race or ethnicity. NCU's faculty and staff demographics are as follows with 0.96% American Indian or Alaska Native; 3.66% Asian; 13.38% Black or African American; 4.62% Hispanic/Latino; 0.00% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander; 3.03% Two or More Races; and 74.36% White.

Integrity and Transparency

Since January of 2019, NCU operates as a private, non-profit university without governmental or religious affiliation. NCU operates independently as an academic institution affiliated with the National University System (NUS), affording NCU appropriate autonomy consistent with the WSCUC guidance articulated in the Institutions within Systems Governance Guide. Consistent with its mission and purpose, the organization's primary focus is to provide educational programs to students. (CFR 1.5)

The institution truthfully represents its academic goals, programs, services, and costs to students and to the broader public. Specific details about academic programs and costs are published on the university's website and within its catalog. Ahead of any publication, all information is reviewed for accuracy by the University's General Counsel. The university publishes data that shows student outcomes related to completion, retention, and student default rates. (CFR 1.6)

The Board of Trustees and the administration of NCU take their responsibility to university constituents seriously, ensuring that the university operates with integrity and transparency by remaining in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws.

The university's academic, financial, and operational performance is evaluated quarterly by the Board of Trustees at standing meetings. An independent auditing firm conducts an annual audit of the university's financial statements in accordance with auditing standards accepted in the United States

and standards applicable to financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards. Based on the results of these audits, the university received unqualified (“clean”) audits for each of the previous five years.

The university tracks and resolves student complaints. This process provides a feedback loop for the resolution of these complaints and identifies opportunities for NCU to improve. The Office of the Registrar maintains records of student complaints (and their eventual resolution) for a six-year period, examples of student complaints were provided by NCU. NCU clearly communicates academic expectations, policies, and procedures and appears to apply them consistently. (CFR 1.7)

Since seeking initial accreditation under WSCUC in 2015, NCU has continued to have open and honest communications with the Commission, teams, and WSCUC staff. This team, and previous site teams have found the institution, its faculty, and the staff to demonstrate a high degree of integrity and a high-level of transparency in their communications. In addition, during the interviews faculty and staff appear to be well-informed about WSCUC policies, standards, and requirements. (CFR 1.8)

The team’s finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence in its report, documentation and during the site visit to demonstrate compliance with Standard 1. However, final determination of compliance rests with the Commission.

Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions

Teaching and Learning

NCU’s report, supporting materials, and interviews during the site visit demonstrates that the institution has thoughtfully considered how it supports teaching and learning to achieve its educational objectives. The team carefully reviewed samples of NCU’s course syllabi, captured comments from faculty and student interviews, reviewed faculty policies and other documents.

The institution’s ILOs—aligned with the WSCUC core competencies and differentiate learning expectations at the bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degree levels. A revised Bloom’s taxonomy is

used to craft outcomes according to the appropriate state of program mastery and degree level. The institution effectively communicated in its report the meaning, quality, and integrity of its degrees.

(CFRs 2.2, 2.2a, 2.2b)

NCU's programs employ a one-to-one teaching format, also referred to as the *Teaching through Engagement*® model that provides opportunities for deep and individualized interaction between a student and a faculty member. Ongoing faculty feedback throughout the course challenges students and actively involves them in the learning process. (CFR 2.5) During the site visit, a demonstration of NCUOne, NCU's learning management system, provided the team with a review of an active course that showed student contributions and the many ways that faculty can provide feedback, including assignment annotations, video feedback, and via discussion forums. Interviews with faculty members also revealed that it is not uncommon for them to reach out to students via phone call or schedule one-on-ones via Zoom.

Full-time faculty typically teach about 40 active students at any given time, while part time (adjunct) faculty teach between 15 and 20. Faculty typically work 0.66 – 1.0 hours per week, per student. A workload calculator helps to define full-time workloads that consider additional responsibilities such as the development and evaluation of curricula and university service; likewise, part-time faculty are given less instructional time if they serve on committees. The team suggests that the Faculty Senate continues its evaluation of the Faculty workload model in light of recent instructional methodology changes. Graduate programs have at least one full-time faculty member. (CFRs 2.1, 2.2b)

Student learning outcomes are clearly stated at the institutional and program level in the course catalogue and course level outcomes are effectively communicated in course syllabi. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4)

Ensuring program quality and integrity begins with a faculty-led process for program design as defined in the institution's policy (203-1), *Program Development and Implementation*. Ongoing quality review is conducted in the institution's robust annual assessment and systematic program review process. (CFRs

2.4, 2.6, 2.7) The recently revised assessment process is discussed in greater detail in Component 4 of this report.

Scholarship and Creative Activity

As articulated in the faculty handbook, NCU requires faculty to maintain their professional competencies through scholarship and other relevant activities such as attendance at conferences, seminars, and workshops. Professional development, scholarship, and research activities, specified at the school and program level, are supported by professional development funds and research support and funding awards. As NCU is now a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt institution, NCU will have more opportunities to build an infrastructure that will allow it to pursue grants for student and faculty research and scholarship. (CFR 2.8)

Student Learning and Success

. Detailed retention and completion rate data are collected, shared, and discussed among faculty and staff. Data is disaggregated according to multiple demographic and programmatic measures, including graduation rates for underrepresented minorities, consistent with the institution's mission of expanding access to educational opportunities. NCU supports student success through financial services, the Academic Success Center, The Commons, the Center for Teaching and Learning, and library services. While data and information are available that help inform student support efforts, the team recommends that a more data-driven and systematic approach be taken when creating and allocating these resources. (CFR 2.10). One such example the institution hopes to explore is a data-driven study of the effects of participation in *The Commons* and retention. With over 60 active communities (e.g., school-based, social, student support units, special interest groups), The Commons provides a forum for students to hold discussions and build community with one another. While there are many positive comments about The Commons, research on its relationship to student retention and engagement could help further develop and effectively utilize the platform.

An assessment process has been defined and implemented for co-curricular programs; one example is the Academic Success Center's annual review. (CFR 2.11, 2.13) Information about degree requirements, transfer credit policies, the admissions process, course offerings, and costs are posted in the catalog and website and were reviewed by the team. (CFR 2.12, 2.14).

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence in its report, documentation, and site visit to demonstrate compliance with Standard 2. However, the final determination of compliance rests with the Commission.

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

Faculty and Staff

NCU offers competitive salaries and benefits to faculty and staff who are appropriately credentialed, evaluated, and are given opportunities for professional development. Reported faculty and staff demographics are consistent with those of NCU student body. All faculty have earned doctorates and must demonstrate they have the relevant qualifications or licensure to teach and supervise research in their specific areas. Many faculty members are still engaged in the industry in which they teach. In the one-on-one teaching through engagement model, full-time faculty carry approximately a 40- 60 student load plus scholarship and service. The faculty load calculation is currently under review by the Faculty Senate to ensure its alignment with the teaching through the engagement model.

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) offers a robust set of courses, modules, and job aids to ensure faculty possess the necessary skill sets to support student learning and positive outcomes. NCU also invests in the professional development of faculty and staff. For example, in FY's 17-19, nearly \$600,000 was invested in development opportunities for faculty, administrators, and staff. To promote and recognize research, scholarship, and related endeavors, professional development and research funding awards are available to all full-time and where relevant to part-time faculty. Notably, NCU

conducts an annual face-to-face Faculty Symposium over two-and-a-half days in which faculty members meet with their colleagues and school leadership for development opportunities, promoting the graduate culture, and input into planning.

All full-time and part-time faculty are evaluated annually against a specific set of institutional performance standards including teaching quality, scholarship, service, diversity, as well as program specific criteria as appropriate or required by specialized accreditors. There are also opportunities for formative reviews. (CFR 3.1-3.3)

Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources

NCU has documented a history of financial stability, including increased revenue and net income for the last four budget years. It has received five years of unqualified independent financial audits and has a Department of Education composite score of 1.6. The university is currently free of long-term debt, significant contingent liabilities, and commitments. To diversify its revenue sources, NCU capitalizes on an array of academic programs, corporate and military partnerships, and financing options to make programs accessible. Further, with its 501(c)(3) status, NCU is now eligible to receive grants and charitable donations. At the time of the visit, NCU had raised over \$105,000 in unrestricted donations. (CFR 3.4)

NCU is on Heightened Cash Monitoring 1, which the institutional leadership attributed to matters related to good will and intangible assets (discussed in Component 7). The university believes this will be resolved as a result of the FY 2020 audit.

NCU has an online program manager (OPM) partnership for non-academic related services through a Master Services Agreement (MSA) with National Education Partners (NEP) for these OPM services. Along with a fixed fee of \$1.7 million, NEP is compensated for the cost of actual delivery of services

As part of the NUS, NCU has leveraged system resources in marketing, vendor selection and purchasing power, and line of credit options. The Master Services Agreement and Service Level Agreement are reviewed monthly between the NEP leadership and the NCU president. Further, they are reviewed monthly and quarterly with functional leaders.

As an online institution, NCU can function as a nimble and lean organization. As such, it can flex and respond to the evolving higher education landscape. For example, in March 2019 NCU was able to provide approximately 600 displaced students from Argosy University with a safe landing to continue their educational endeavors. NCU's educational programs were minimally impacted by the pandemic since all its courses are online. Additionally, the process of integrating JFK law school into the NCU portfolio is well underway and going smoothly because of the availability of infrastructure and support mechanisms.

As an online institution and consistent with its Best in Class approach to technology, NCU remains committed to innovative, high-quality technology processes, systems, and security to enhance teaching and learning, improve services to students, and manage data to inform decision-making. The Academic Technology Subcommittee reviews and recommends technology improvements based on input from key stakeholders. The LMS, called NCUOne, eBooks and Redshelf, eReader, Campus Labs, IRB Manager, Commons platform are examples of information technology investments over the past five years. (CFR 3.5)

Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes

NCU is overseen by a 21 member Board of Trustees that also oversees the other NUS affiliates: National University, John F. Kennedy University, and City University of Seattle. Each affiliate has a separate board chair. When matters related to NCU arise, the "gavel is passed" to the NCU board chair for deliberation and action as needed. Board members articulated a highly collaborative and transparent relationship among members and with the NCU president. The team noted that although the structure

of governance is articulated clearly, additional precision may help guide how decisions are made, who makes the final decision on what matters, and how issues are escalated when there is no clear agreement. The NCU board is engaged in a comprehensive and sophisticated approach to succession planning and training programs in place to prepare for future leadership needs across the organization. The NCU Board Bylaws are designed to ensure that the board meets its fiduciary responsibilities and acts first and foremost in the institution's best interest. (CFR 3.9, and related policies).

NCU's executive team is led by a president who has served at the institution for over eight years. The provost and chief academic officer has been with NCU for nearly seven years. NCU also has a full-time chief financial officer. (CFR 3.8) The President's Cabinet, composed of provost, CFO, deans, and other key stakeholders, regularly reviews a set of key metrics including revenue, margin contribution, credit unit taught, and enrollment.

NCU's shared governance model is exemplified further by an independently elected, representative faculty senate (full-time and part-time faculty) and a system of committees and faculty governance. The model enables active and regular faculty engagement at all levels, including formal governance committees and groups (e.g., Curriculum Committee; Assessment Committee; Common Components Committee) (CFR 3.10). The faculty senate is responsible for ensuring the curriculum's quality and integrity and is actively engaged in its design, development, and assessment. The team noted that although the faculty governance members were able to describe the model and point to decisions made, they were less clear on decision-making levels and escalation protocols. For example, according to policy documentation in the 203-1 Program Development and Implementation Guide, new programs are subject to final approval at the board level. Members of the faculty senate indicated that final approval was at the President's Cabinet level. (CFR 3.7 and 3.9)

In sum, concerning governance, the team observed consistent themes of transparency, trust, respect, and individual and shared accountability among critical stakeholders at NCU, NEP, and NUS. In

terms of NEP, because NCU and NEP emerged from a single unit into two different operations, the teams observed the benefits of a shared understanding of NCU, longstanding trusting relationships, and ways of working together. What was less clear to the team is how the key elements of this culture, the decision-making protocols and escalation pathways, and the roles and functions of the respective entities will be understood and embraced as new employees and entities join the organization as NCU prepares for scale. Therefore, the team recommends that NCU review, revise as appropriate, communicate, and actively apply documented decision-making processes, levels of authority, and escalation protocols within NCU and across NCU, NUS (SMG), and NEP. (CFRs 1.7, 3.7, and 3.10)

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence in its report, documentation, and site visit to demonstrate compliance with Standard 3. However, the final determination of compliance rests with the Commission.

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

Quality Assurance Processes

NCU's Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (OPIE), with support from NEP, provides institutional research, assessment, and data analytic expertise through its collection, dissemination, and analysis. Playing a significant role in institutional effectiveness, OPIE provides data for academic and departmental reviews.

Additionally, experienced OPIE team members conduct special studies and analyses that assist the institution in remaining current and position NCU as a leader in graduate education assessment. For example, OPIE conducted multiple analyses regarding graduate program student success, which is not well researched or defined at a national level. (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4)

Institutional Learning and Improvement

Over the last several years, NCU has been and continues to be deeply engaged in self-reflection activities, preparing for and implementing the structural change in ownership in 2018. As such, the team saw evidence of the implementation of planned efforts that are evidence-based and adjustments and improvements based on internal and external data and information.

As part of this process, NCU had purposeful and significant involvement from multiple stakeholders – including faculty, deans, the director of assessment, students, the associate provost, and external advisory committees, regarding quality assurance, institutional learning, and improvement. During the interviews, several faculty cited examples where they had suggested curriculum changes – ranging from updating reference links to changing assignments, to revamping courses. They described the process for suggesting and making the changes, as well as confirming that the changes had been made. Another example about program review was described by a faculty member. This individual stated that the new process for program review was much more systematic and congruent with other duties which faculty typically complete. As a result, faculty have become more engaged in the program review process due to its practical application. Further, stakeholders show considerable interest in assessment, developing infrastructure, and organizing resources for efficient use, thus contributing to a positive culture for these areas. (CFRs 4.5, 4.6, 4.7)

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

Degree Meaning

NCU offers programs in business, counseling, education, health sciences, psychology, and technology. Each of these degree programs derive their meaning directly from the university's mission statement. In describing the overarching meaning of an NCU degree, the institution notes that individuals upon graduation should become valuable contributors to their communities and within their professions.

Outcomes from all NCU degrees are aligned with institutional learning outcomes. Each ILO is broad with additional specific degree level detailed included to provide clarity. Furthermore, the ILOs are aligned with WSCUC core competencies. Finally, it should be noted that ILOs connect with NCU's mission statement in that they guide programs to teach content that provides graduates with the skills needed to contribute to the public good.

Via a Gallup Survey, graduates of NCU report, in comparison to their peers, that a greater proportion of their time is utilized in providing public or community service. In addition, the majority of graduates also report that they have provided teaching, training, and mentoring to others.

Degree Quality and Integrity

NCU is committed to practices to provide for degrees that are appropriate quality and operate with integrity. As new degrees are developed, faculty have a critical role in the governance of curriculum design. In addition, the Institutional Assessment Handbook provides strong guidance for academic program leaders as they work to develop content and learning outcomes. Program and course learning outcomes give each program a significant structure for content development. New degrees are then proposed to the president's cabinet and the board as part of quality and integrity validation.

As programs move from newly developed to continuous operation, the program review process gives the institution a clear, appropriate means of assessing and refining the curriculum. In addition, each academic department has an external professional advisory committee, and some departments also have programmatic accreditors. Programmatic accreditors provide specific standards or guidance concerning learning outcomes and the expected level of educational attainment. Programmatic accreditation and professional advisory committees give each academic department ability to validate their curriculum via an external source.

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

As an institution, NCU reflects on and analyzes how effectively it accomplishes its mission and achieves its educational effectiveness goals. NCU has well-developed performance standards and processes to assess student learning outcomes and the achievement of core competencies. Especially notable is NCU's Institutional Learning Outcomes--aligned with the WSCUC core competencies--that differentiate learning expectations for programs at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree level. (CFRs 2.2a, 2.2b) To promote consistency across programs and departments, faculty members of the Assessment Committee and Curriculum Committee developed a revised Bloom's taxonomy list of verbs used to craft outcomes according to the appropriate state of program mastery and degree level. All programs are defined by Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) developed by faculty that are aligned to the ILOs and programmatic accreditors' standards and industry expectations. PLOs are communicated to students in the course catalog. Course syllabi contain Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) appropriate to the course level and expressed in measurable terms. (CFR 2.1, 2.3)

NCU has devised and recently implemented new processes to assess outcomes. In the fall of 2019, NCU held an Assessment Summit dedicated to assessing the effectiveness of its program review and yearly assessment processes. Schools completed the new Annual Assessment Review (AAR) process for the first time in January 2020. From conversations with staff and faculty during the accreditation visit, the team learned how NCU is working to put these new processes into practice across the university. These processes incorporate the review of data from the Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (OPIE). Faculty evaluate educational achievement of ILOs and PLOs from course assignments that allow students to demonstrate the skills specified. Data are collected, aggregated, and reported to each program by OPIE every quarter, uploading them to the program review and

assessment workspaces where they are evaluated by faculty and administrators. In addition, faculty review this data as part of the annual assessment and program review processes.

Upon completing the AAR process, a document is created and widely shared that includes the yearly assessment results and any program reviews (PR) that have also taken place. The team heard in interviews and in the institution's response to the lines of inquiry that the AAR/PR process results are used in planning, budgeting, and improvement of programs. (CFRs 4.1, 4.2) Faculty are trained on the new process in a "Culture of Assessment" course developed by the CTL, and additional support is routinely extended. For example, the CTL has also created just in time resources and "tips of the week" about specific topics related to assessment (e.g. the difference between a "4" and a "5" in assessing outcomes). In interviews with those involved in the AAR/PR process, faculty remarked that because of this new process "assessment is not an afterthought" and that engaging with it has helped them better understand their students. (CFR 4.3)

Some additional examples of broad stakeholder participation in the assessment process include collaborative efforts between the Assessment and Curriculum Committees. NCU provided several examples of how annual assessment and program review results are used in making improvements. These include the differentiation between the PhD and EdD degree programs in the School of Education, initiatives to enhance student success for at-risk students in the Master of Arts in Psychology and Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy programs, and curricular improvements in the School of Business to align critical courses to market demand for skills.

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

Assessment

NCU has a robust assessment system that encompasses academic and administrative functions. Assessment information housed in an assessment management software (CampusLabs), enables NCU to maintain outcomes/goals, review, report easily, and analyze information from all departments. Based on

interviews, it was clear that faculty are deeply engaged and leading academic assessment in their respective areas, synthesizing data and information. Furthermore, findings from assessments and program review are broadly shared.

This is particularly helpful for the Educational Effectiveness Inventory Indicators (IEEI), which included information for each academic program and differentiated by degree level. Content from the IEEI aligned with program review materials and supported articulating learning outcomes. (CFRs 2.11, 2.12)

Staffing and Resources

NCU is committed to student success through learning, retention, and graduation. With support from NEP, the OPIE provides the institutional decision-makers with data and information regarding student success through multiple tools, including its BIRST tool – business intelligence system of tools. The BIRST is a cloud-based information platform used to aggregate multi-source data for immediate and actionable decision-making through dashboards and visual analytics. (CFR 4.2, 4.3)

It is through the use of BIRST as well as faculty, staff, and administrators' deep commitment and interest in student success that creates a positive student success culture where data is used to inform decisions about which students to reach out to, when, by whom, and in what ways. The BIRST tool is utilized by faculty as well as student support staff. Collaboratively, faculty and staff work together to support student success. For example, using the BIRST tool faculty and staff can see which students need various types of assistance (e.g., missing assignments, not attending class, etc.). The faculty and staff proactively reach out to students accordingly to assist students. (CFRs 1.2, 1.6, 2.10)

NCU has a positive data culture and a significant amount of data that they can combine and turn into actionable information for decision-makers. For example, NCU has developed a sophisticated data sharing system with its BIRST tool, which many faculty, staff, and administrators referenced during

interviews as a key tool they use regularly. The team suggests that NCU work to internally formalize the data definitions and continue to mature its means of utilizing data.

Measuring Graduate Student Success

While nationally, graduate education does not receive as much attention as undergraduate education, NCU makes it a point to be a thought leader in this area. The team suggest that NCU continues its important work and seek new and more appropriate means of measuring summative graduate education student outcomes. One significant project completed by NCU related to two sizeable studies on graduate student success at the doctoral level, utilizing internal talent. One study focused on the quality of NCU dissertations (Dissertation Quality of Learning Assessment (DQLA)). This project was particularly exemplary for its robustness of participants (nearly 100) and a comprehensive systematic methodological approach for comparing NCU dissertations to those at other institutions.

The second study was an analysis to examine the differentiation between a doctorate in business administration compared to a Ph.D. in business administration. Again, NCU engaged multiple stakeholders and analyzed content (e.g., curriculum, requirements) to understand the difference between the programs. Recommendations for changes, each which includes pros and cons were included. Items such as create a different DBA capstone, new/different DBA research courses, doctoral orientation were among the 7 recommendations considered. Engagement of a study of this magnitude takes significant resources but yielded important outcomes: faculty and staff clearly can articulate differences between the programs, and areas of differentiation which be strengthened.

These studies and other studies of similar intensity and magnitude could serve as models for national standards and graduate education programs' outcomes. Deep analytical research projects such as these further demonstrate the commitment to high quality and standards of student learning at the graduate level – which is part of NCU's mission.

Unlike undergraduate metrics, no national standard exists for measuring graduate student success. As a result, comparability between institutions requires numerous caveats or significant work to align data extractions with another organization's methodology. NCU has leveraged limited publicly available information on graduate student success and compared the information to their existing rates.

Documentation for Increased Understanding and Future Efficiencies

Future reports on graduate student success would benefit from more clearly noting methodological differences between NCU and the comparison statistics. NCU may want to conduct analyses that compare student success within the institution (e.g., college to college, program to program). The 'within college' rather than 'between-college' approach can be helpful in tracking and assessing retention and graduation rates since NCU uses a methodology that is not easily compared to other institutions – especially since no national standards exist for graduate-level graduation rates. Finally, as NCU continues to develop its library of analyses, future efficiencies will be gained by creating a set of reporting standards and consistent format (e.g., date of report, department, purpose statement, interpretive bullets, etc.). Having this additional documentation will help the institution when repeating analyses and when new staff assume a new position or utilize prior reports.

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

NCU is commended for having a robust assessment process and using best practices, including a well-developed set of Institutional Learning Outcomes that differentiates learning expectations by degree-levels. As noted in Component 5, faculty and staff are not only deeply committed to an iterative assessment process; they are engaged throughout the assessment process such that opportunities for improvement are identifiable by multiple stakeholders. (CFRs 4.3, 4.5)

NCU has made significant and positive changes and improvements in the area of program review. As a result, the infrastructure allows for greater clarity of areas of strength and areas needing attention. While the changes are relatively new, NCU has incorporated and built on numerous best

practices such that they are setting themselves up for success in this area. A few examples include: (CFRs 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7)

- **University-wide assessment summit** – This includes an ongoing review of enhancements and aspects to change. The summit brings together a wide array of stakeholders, emphasizing how NCU's educational ecosystem works together for student success.
- **Professional advisory committees and student advisory councils** – These groups ensure programs are meeting student needs and current trends and demands.
- **OPIE as a main data source** – The OPIE serves as the main source of data collection, analysis and dissemination. While OPIE is not the only place for data, the NCU community knows that OPIE is a 'hub' where they can turn to knowledgeable experts who can either provide the data or direct them where to find it – as well as assist with interpretation.
- **Use of direct and indirect measures** – NCU's academic and administrative programs have a healthy and discipline-specific appropriateness for both direct and indirect measures. Thoughtful attention has been paid to strike this balance.
- **Nomenclature** – Use of more conventional nomenclature has likely improved communication in this area. Currently, Annual Assessment Review (AAR), refers to annual assessment reports; Program Review (PR) refers to five-year program reviews.

NCU's deep and widespread commitment to quality and student success has enabled the university to understand the current state of student learning and make improvements where appropriate. This infrastructure is particularly necessary for the growth of new and future programs. Continued efforts to support the existing, yet new, program review process will solidify the quality and improvement process foundation.

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

Northcentral University has received unqualified opinions on its recent audits and has shown a track record of surpluses, with the FY2020 fiscal year generating a surplus of \$1.4M. (CFR 3.4) One area of risk continues to be its Heightened Cash Monitoring Status (HCM1). Though the HCM1 designation does not have a material impact on its operational practices as its financial aid team, through NEP, can disburse and draw funds in compliance with the status, it puts the institution under greater regulatory scrutiny. Continuing to generate a Department of Education financial responsibility composite score above the 1.5 thresholds will be necessary to remove the HCM1 designation. However, with a recent score of 1.54 in FY2020, Northcentral University's financial performance has a minimal margin for error.

It should be noted that the institution has a robust budgeting and planning process through its partnership with NEP that allows for resource adjustments throughout the year. In addition, though the institution requires no immediate action, it is awaiting final approval from the Department of Education for its conversion to a non-profit institution. Generating a more significant operating surplus will directly improve the composite score and, over some time, lead to a more significant accumulation of assets, also benefiting the composite score.

Through its agreement with NEP and affiliation with NUS, Northcentral University has benefited from quality services and the scale from being part of a large non-profit system. This includes access to temporary liquidity through a line of credit. Ongoing evaluation of the NEP and NUS fees will likely ensure services levels are aligned and are competitive with other services providers.

The ongoing Program Review process incorporates multiple factors for assessing a program, including monitoring student outcomes, reviewing the curriculum, evaluating resource deficiencies, and budgetary trends. Continuing to use this process will allow NCU to identify how resources and investments can be shifted between programs. Evaluation of resource allocations will help address some concerns regarding faculty workload and prioritize investments. In reviewing recent new program

launches as identified in Table 3 of the Response to the Lines of Inquiry, some programs have achieved enrollment and revenue targets while many have been challenged to gain momentum.

NCU is able to align financial resources with institutional priorities through its inclusive budgetary process. Input is gathered from academic leaders on strategic initiatives and the corresponding budgetary funding. The 2020/2021 strategic initiatives are focused on diversity, enhancing culture, enhancing data capabilities and investing in technology. All of which are necessary for NCU's continued growth. For example, the Technology Improvement List covers projects supporting student-facing activities, technology infrastructure, and data analysis. To ensure alignment with academic priorities, technology decisions are vetted by the Academic Technology Sub Committee.

There are multiple layers for developing and evaluating educational effectiveness, such as the faculty symposium and budget allocations to faculty and course development. In addition, the investment in the Institutional Research function and faculty compensation research highlights NCU's use of data to drive quality and accountability.

NCU will need to further all of the noted enhancements to remain financially stable over the long-term as well as continue to respond to the changing higher education environment. Most notably, COVID-19 will have a far-reaching impact and shift the operating models of higher education institutions. Once the public health issues have been mitigated, it is difficult to predict the ultimate impact on student perceptions and preferences, but in any scenario, a greater emphasis on online education will likely be central to most strategic plans. As an online university, NCU is well-positioned. In addition, through its investments in student engagement platforms, such as the Commons, NCU is focused on providing a quality online experience. It should be noted that there will likely be increased investment and focus from other institutions and it may impact NCU's viability in the long run. NCU will want to focus on successful new program development and data-driven decision-making to differentiate

itself. Focus was demonstrated in these areas, however, continued tangible progress will be necessary to ensure it can evaluate and react quickly to shifts in the competitive landscape.

The team recommends that NCU continue to focus on financial sustainability and drive greater operating surplus through improved efficiency, enrollment growth, and expansion of alternative revenue streams.

Component 9: Reflection and plans for improvement

During the self-study process, NCU engaged a diverse array of key stakeholders, senior institutional leaders, faculty, and the members of the Steering Committee in a range of methods to examine itself in the context of the accreditation standards, as a not for profit institution, and with an eye to the evolving higher education landscape. They reflected on the results of its self-study, identified areas of strength, and determined opportunities for improvement. In its institutional report to WSCUC, NCU articulated opportunities for improvement and since completing the report, it has begun to address some of these issues.

NCU recognizes its unique opportunity to fully embrace and leverage its 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. First and foremost, it has begun to lay the groundwork to pursue research and scholarship grants by hiring grants staff and establishing a grants office framework. The president's office has taken formative steps to establish a fund-raising unit. These initiatives will be tied to key projects in the upcoming strategic plan.

As a fully online institution, NCU has built into its strategic plan goals that include investment and improvements in its learning management system and academic services. Further it is committed to monitoring technology innovations that support life-long learning, as well as a dispersed faculty and staff to further ensure a sense of connectedness to the institution.

SECTION III – Other Topic: John F. Kennedy Law School Integration

The addition of JFK law school was intentional on the part of NCU as it was seeking a program that aligned its mission statement with a focus on access and social justice. Specifically, JFK law school will provide online degree access to a broader array of potential students, including underrepresented groups, and has the potential of graduating lawyers who make a difference in their communities. The integration of JFK into NCU is fully underway and both parties reported a collegial culture that includes transparency, trust, respect, and accountability. Further, JFK law school was able to retain 89% of its students during this transition, noting that most who chose not to stay did so because they did not want to pursue a degree online. The dean is now part of the president's cabinet and the NCU and JFK University leadership concurred they are on track to meet the January 1, 2021, transition timeline.

To demonstrate its commitment to JFK law school, NCU lowered tuition, invested \$500,000, and is conducting a working retreat in November to approve the marketing plan, consider joint offerings as well as determine how the investment will be allocated. Further, NCU intends to invest in law and paralegal programs as well as to consider new programs such as a non-licensure program in law for those not intending to sit for the bar. JFK law school is in the process of determining which services it will use from NEP, however it has begun with advising and academic support services.

As part of its pedagogical model, JFK law school intends to adopt the teacher engagement model and D2L into instructional delivery. Its assessment model will be considered for potential application in other programs at NCU. JFK law school has access to the technology infrastructure of NCU, including the online library, Commons, and resources to support for graduate culture.

JFK law school's 5-Year Bar Pass Rate (spanning February 2015 – February 2020) is 39.7%. To improve bar pass rates, JFK law school has adopted a multifaceted plan. From a curricular standpoint, students are provided formative weekly assessment and individualized feedback across courses. An entire year of extended bar review was launched in Fall 2020 with one section focusing on theory, and a

second focused on application and exam skills. In addition, JFK law school has partnered with BARBRI, a bar exam prep program, and covers student costs as part of their tuition. In terms of student support, a legal writing coach and a second law librarian have been added. The academic and financial advisors will identify student risk factors and collaborate with faculty on outreach to at-risk students. The team recommends that NCU continue with the successful integration of the JFK Law School into the university and work to improve bar pass rates.

SECTION IV – COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The team commends NCU for:

1. Promoting and practicing a participatory, transparent, and collaborative institutional culture, at all levels that is focused on student success.
2. Creating best-practices in the areas of doctoral dissertation quality, asynchronous online learning, financial forecasting and enrollment management, and academic leadership accountability that could be used as models across the system and nationally.
3. Sustaining an inclusive educational and work environment, and for seeking new means of supporting diverse students and underserved populations.
4. Having a robust assessment process and using best practices including well-developed Institutional Learning Outcomes that differentiate learning expectations by degree levels.

The team recommends that NCU:

1. Strengthen financial sustainability and drive greater operating surplus through: (CFR 3.4)
 - a. improved expense efficiency
 - b. enrollment growth, and
 - c. expansion of alternative revenue streams.

2. Review, revise as appropriate, communicate, and actively apply documented decision-making processes, levels of authority, and escalation protocols within NCU and across NCU, NUS (SMG), and NEP. (CFRs 1.7, 3.7, and 3.10)
3. Apply a systematic and data-driven methodology to ensure the most impactful use of resources for student success. (CFRs 2.10 and 4.1)
4. Continue with the successful integration of the JFK Law School into NCU and attention to bar pass rates. (CFR 2.1)

Appendices - Federal Requirements

The report includes the following appendices:

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

1 - CREDIT HOUR AND PROGRAM LENGTH REVIEW FORM

Under the federal requirements referenced below, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's credit hour policy and processes as well as the lengths of its programs.

Credit Hour - §602.24(f)

The accrediting agency, as part of its review of an institution for renewal of accreditation, must conduct an effective review and evaluation of the reliability and accuracy of the institution's assignment of credit hours.

(1) The accrediting agency meets this requirement if-

(i) It reviews the institution's-

(A) Policies and procedures for determining the credit hours, as defined in 34 CFR 600.2, that the institution awards for courses and programs; and

(B) The application of the institution's policies and procedures to its programs and coursework; and

(ii) Makes a reasonable determination of whether the institution's assignment of credit hours conforms to commonly accepted practice in higher education.

(2) In reviewing and evaluating an institution's policies and procedures for determining credit hour assignments, an accrediting agency may use sampling or other methods in the evaluation.

Credit hour is defined by the Department of Education as follows:

A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than—

(1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or

(2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

See also WSCUC Senior College and University Commission's Credit Hour Policy.

Program Length - §602.16(a)(1)(viii)

Program length may be seen as one of several measures of quality and as a proxy measure for scope of the objectives of degrees or credentials offered. Traditionally offered degree programs are generally approximately 120 semester credit hours for a bachelor's degree, and 30 semester credit hours for a master's degree; there is greater variation at the doctoral level depending on the type of program. For programs offered in non-traditional formats, for which program length is not a relevant and/or reliable quality measure, reviewers should ensure that available information clearly defines desired program outcomes and graduation requirements, that institutions are ensuring that program outcomes are achieved, and that there is a reasonable correlation between the scope of these outcomes and requirements and those typically found in traditionally offered degrees or programs tied to program length.

1 - CREDIT HOUR AND PROGRAM LENGTH REVIEW FORM

Under the federal requirements referenced below, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's credit hour policy and processes as well as the lengths of its programs.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Policy on credit hour	<p>Is this policy easily accessible? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If so, where is the policy located? NCU policy regarding credit hours can be found in the NCU Catalog (Academic & University Policies, Semester Credit Hours) and in the Policy and Procedure Manual (211-6 Semester Credit). A job aid (Seat Time Calculator) has been developed that includes the metrics that are currently used to estimate student effort.</p> <p>Comments: Reviewed policy and seat time calculator. In addition to what provided here, reviewed several examples of a completed seat time calculator against the respective syllabus. All examples align with the policy. The use of the seat time calculator was also acknowledged and discussed with the instructional design staff at the institution.</p>
Process(es)/ periodic review of credit hour	<p>Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the design phase for new courses, faculty and the design team estimate hours. • Estimating student contact hours is also part of the course revision process. • At the completion of a new course or a revision to an existing course, all courses are reviewed and approved by the school dean or designee. During this approval process, the final course checklist includes the estimate of hours and is available for review by the school dean or designee. </p>
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	<p>Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A (see comment)</p> <p>Comments: NCU does not offer "on ground" courses</p>
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	<p>How many syllabi were reviewed? 14</p> <p>Type of courses reviewed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> online <input type="checkbox"/> hybrid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online <p>What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctoral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor (2), Master (6), Doctoral (6) <p>What discipline(s)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business: BBA-4020, MBA-5102, CJ-7101; • Education: EDU-6500, EDU-7150; • Health Sciences: MHA-5008, DHA-7007; • Social and Behavioral Sciences: PSY-2000, MFT-5103, PSY-6801, MFT-7102, PSY-7102; • Technology: TIM-6591, TIM-8540; <p>Are students doing the amount of work per the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>

	Comments:
<p>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></p>	How many syllabi were reviewed? 2
	What kinds of courses? 1 Internship, 1 Practicum
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master
	What discipline(s)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marriage and Family Therapy in the School of Social & Behavioral Sciences
	Are students doing the amount of work per the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MFT-6991 • MFT-6951
<p>Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)</p>	How many programs were reviewed? 16
	What kinds of programs were reviewed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A program from each degree level offered by the academic disciplines at NCU.
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctoral <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelors • Masters • Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business • Education • Health Sciences • Social and Behavioral Sciences • Technology
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of an acceptable length? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Bachelor programs are 120 credits, all Master are 30 credits or above, and Doctoral are 48 credits or above, depending on degree program. • Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ BBA: 120 credit hours ○ Master of Science in Organizational Leadership: 30 credit hours ○ Doctor of Criminal Justice: 54 credit hours ○ PhD in Business Administration: 60 credit hours • Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Master of Arts in Teaching: 33 credit hours ○ Education Specialist: 33 credit hours ○ Doctor of Education: 48 credit hours ○ PhD in Instructional Design: 60 credit hours • Health Sciences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Master of Science in Nursing: 36 credit hours

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Doctor of Health Administration: 60 credit hours• Social and Behavioral Sciences<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Bachelor of Arts in Psychology: 120 credit hours○ Master of Social Work: 36 - 60 credit hours○ Doctor of Marriage and Family Therapy: 60 credit hours○ PhD in Psychology: 60 credit hours• Technology<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Master of Science in Cyberecurity: 30 credit hours○ PhD in Data Science: 60 credit hours
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Reviewed by: Douglas Geier

Date: 12/14/20

MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT REVIEW FORM

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

Material Reviewed	Questions and Comments: Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this table as appropriate.
**Federal regulations	<p>Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCU follows requirements outlined in Section 487 (a)(20) of the Higher Education Act in addition to requirements of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) including the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA). NCU also utilizes the services of a compliance-monitoring partner that reviews all 3rd party advertiser websites and call center calls. Internally, NCU employs a team of Quality Assurance Specialists and our Learning and Development team train the enrollment advisors on adherence to compliance regulations.
	<p>Comments: The institution is compliant with this requirement.</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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCU posts the Recommended Time to Completion for each program on its respective program page on the public website within and within the NCU Catalog.
	<p>Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall cost of each program (based on current tuition rate) is shows in the NCU Catalog and the tuition page of the public website.
	<p>Comments: The institution is compliant with this requirement.</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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As applicable, NCU posts the potential careers for which a program's graduates may qualify on its respective program page on the public website.
	<p>Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> See employment rates as noted in The Gallup Alumni Survey found in the Student Experience section of the public website.
	<p>Comments: The institution is compliant with this requirement.</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: Mehul Patel

Date: 5/18/2020

STUDENT COMPLAINTS REVIEW FORM

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

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Policy on student complaints	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints? X YES r NO
	If so, Is the policy or procedure easily accessible? Where? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Formal procedures for student complaints are accessible in the Students' Rights & Responsibilities section of the NCU Catalog, which is publicly available.
	Comments:
Process(es)/ procedure	Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? X YES r NO If so, please describe briefly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The policy and procedure for addressing student complaints is outlined in the NCU Policy and Procedure Manual, section 208-17 Student Grievances · Procedures are also detailed in the "Student Grievances" section of Students' Rights & Responsibilities section the NCU Catalog.
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? X YES r NO
	Comments:
Records	Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? X YES r NO If so, where? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Formal complaints are housed by the Office of the Registrar, and maintained in a restricted access drive and/or student record, as appropriate.
	Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? X YES r NO If so, please describe briefly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The University tracks, resolves, and reviews student complaints on an on-going basis. ·
	Comments:

*§602-16(1)(1)(ix)

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

Review Completed By: J. Morales

Date: 10-8-2020

4. TRANSFER CREDIT REVIEW FORM

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

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections of this table as appropriate.)
Transfer Credit Policy(s)	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for reviewing and receiving transfer credit? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, is the policy publicly available? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, where? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the Transfer Credit policy in the Admissions Requirements section of the publicly available NCU Catalog. The policy includes information on transfer credit for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Undergraduate students; ○ Graduate students; and ○ Military Transfer Credit. • Program-specific requirements are captured in the transfer credit policy and expanded upon as needed under the specific degree/program information in the catalog.
	Does the policy(s) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the Transfer Credit policy in the Admissions Requirements section of the publicly available NCU Catalog. The policy includes information on transfer credit for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Undergraduate students; ○ Graduate students; and ○ Military Transfer Credit.
	Program-specific requirements are captured in the transfer credit policy and expanded upon as needed under the specific degree/program information in the catalog. Comments:

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

(1) Are publicly disclosed in accordance with 668.43(a)(11); and

(2) Include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education.

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

Reviewed by: Douglas Geier

Date: 10/14/20