



REPORT OF THE WSCUC VISITING TEAM

SEEKING ACCREDITATION VISIT 2

For Institutions Seeking Initial Accreditation

To

REACH INSTITUTE FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

March 15-17, 2017

TEAM ROSTER

Caren L. Sax, EdD (Chair)
Professor and Chair, Department of Administration, Rehabilitation, and Postsecondary Education
Director, Interwork Institute
San Diego State University

Diana Demetrulias, EdD (Assistant Chair)
Provost, Retired, Notre Dame de Namur University
Vice Provost and Professor Emerita, California State University, Stanislaus

Chip B. Goldstein, EdD
Associate Provost
California Institute of Integral Studies

Margaret Gaston
Founder and President
Gaston Educational Policy Associates

Geoff Chase, PhD
WSCUC Liaison, Vice President
WASC Senior College and University Commission

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. If the institution is granted candidacy or initial accreditation by the Commission, this report and the Commission action letter 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

Founded in 2006, The Reach Institute for School Leadership (“Reach”) is a private, nonprofit institution located in Oakland, California. It offers five complementary programs. Through its Teaching Academy, it offers a Master of Education in Teaching, an intern program leading to a preliminary teaching credential, and an induction program leading to a clear teaching credential. Through its Instructional Leadership Academy, it offers a Master of Education in Instructional Leadership and preliminary and clear administrative credential programs. All Reach credential programs have been accredited by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing since 2007. The institution received formal approval by the Bureau of Private Post-Secondary Education (BPPE) on December 3, 2015. The provisional approval was restricted to offering no more than two degree programs with a requirement to achieve full accreditation by WSCUC no later than December 2, 2020.

Reach’s mission is to improve K-12 education by providing “rigorous, relevant, and applied pathways and preparation for exceptional teaching and leadership” in students’ daily work in urban schools, located in some of the highest-need neighborhoods in the San Francisco Bay Area. Reach’s curricula are designed to meet “the needs of educators learning complex skills on-the-job in difficult circumstances.” It employs five integrated strategies for achieving its mission: personalized professional development, job-embedded coaching, integration of knowledge and practice, inquiry mindset, and reflective communities of practice.

Reach’s mission and vision are clearly developed and are supported by three institutional goals:

- Develop highly effective teachers and instructional leaders to serve the diverse needs of students in partner schools and districts;
- Create an innovative graduate school that embeds rigorous, relevant, applied learning in the school contexts of teachers and leaders; and
- Provide the educational community with a model for teacher and leadership development for ensuring equitable access and performance for all students.

The table below displays Reach’s enrollment numbers as reported by Reach in its institutional report.

Program Enrollments 2014-2015 through 2017-2018						
Academy	Program	Credential/ Degree	2014-2015 Enrollment	2015-2016 Enrollment	2016-2017 Enrollment	2017-2018 Enrollment
Teaching Academy	Intern Teacher Credential Program	Preliminary Teaching Credential	48	44	92	156
	Moving Inquiry into Teaching (MinT) Program	Master's in Education in Teaching Clear Teaching Credential	4	1	2	6
	Induction Program	Clear Teaching Credential	164	116	114	155
Instructional Leadership Academy (ILA)	Year 1	Preliminary Administrative Services Credential	15	32	30	45
	Year 2	Master's in Education in Instructional Leadership	7	8	10	15
	Year 3	Clear Administrative Services Credential	7	7	6	9

Reach’s administrative offices, library, and instructional spaces are located at its Oakland site; however, a great portion of students’ learning experiences is conducted at partner schools in the San Francisco Bay Area as students are dependent upon their experiences in the classroom and coaching from mentors in the field.

Reach is seeking initial accreditation in order to “increase the organization’s capacity to prepare and support teachers and teacher-leaders that are committed to creating and sustaining effective urban schools” (Reach Report, page 3). Application for WSCUC eligibility was submitted September 2013 and granted effective March 2014 through March 2018. Reach followed with an application for candidacy, submitted in May 2014, whereupon WSCUC determined that the institution proceed under the new

process. In March 2015, the first site visit (SAV1) was conducted. The WSCUC Commission granted candidacy for a period up to five years, with a subsequent Seeking Accreditation visit in 2017 to address only those areas under the Standards that had not yet been met at the substantial level. This second site visit (SAV2) was conducted March 15-17, 2017.

B. The Institution's Seeking Accreditation Visit Report 2: Quality and Rigor of the Review and Report

The team found that Reach methodically addressed each of the recommendations, clearly articulating the concerns and then detailing the institution's responses. The report reflected the institution's professionalism, dedication to the field of education, and commitment to its mission. The institutional report displayed a thoughtful writing style, transparency in information disclosure, and a genuine portrayal of the institution's desire for communication, review, and continued improvement. (CFR 1.8)

Each of the Standards and Criteria for Review (CFRs), restricted to those in which minimal compliance was identified in the SAV1 team's report, was addressed and organized to WSCUC's template for Seeking Accreditation 2. For each Standard, Reach was forthright in communicating perceived strengths, areas of challenge, and planned actions for continuous improvement. Reach provided evidence throughout the report that recommendations from the first accreditation visit, accompanied by institutional data, were used for identifying and implementing programmatic enrichments. A drawback identified in the SAV1 team report (the institution described processes only rather than a succinct summary of the assessments' analyses and resulting findings) has been improved in the second report which contained citations to data sources, identification and comparisons to peer institutions, and employment of national resources for informing curriculum and scholarship (e.g., Lumina Foundation, Boyer Definition of Scholarship).

Faculty and staff confirmed their substantial involvement in creating and evaluating the report, along with input gathered from students, alumni, and members of the Board of Directors. This collaboration occurred through individuals, small group efforts, and whole group faculty and program team meetings.

C. Response to Issues Raised in the WSCUC Commission Letter from Seeking Accreditation Visit 1

The Commission action letter (July 15, 2015) determined that Reach had met each of the four Standards at a minimal level and cited recommendations for Reach in preparation of its Seeking Accreditation 2 review under the WSCUC Standards of Accreditation. Reach clearly identified these recommendations and described institutional actions taken to address these issues. Following are these recommendations and a brief description and analysis of evidence illustrating how Reach has responded:

Standard 1 Commission Recommendations

Commission Recommendation: Continued development of learning outcomes through more complete mapping across programs. Reach has a fully articulated mapping of student learning outcomes at the institutional, program, and course levels. These are available on website in detail by program. Rubrics for the capstone action research projects have been developed, now with greater precision and with criteria at each level of competence (not meeting, approaching, meeting, and exceeding). (CFR 1.2, 1.4, 1.7, 1.8)

Commission Recommendation: Continued clarity of role of chief academic officer as an educational leader, as distinct from administrative roles. Reach has fulfilled this recommendation by creating the position of chief academic officer (CAO), delineating the CAO's separate duties and responsibilities from the chief executive officer, hiring a CAO, and capitalizing on this expansion opportunity to enact meaningful realignment of administrative and decision-making responsibilities held by program coordinators, other program faculty, and staff members. The CAO serves as the ALO. (CFR 3.8)

Standard 2 Commission Recommendations

Commission Recommendation: Give specific attention to development of policies related to institutional research (in terms of IRB) and make policies publicly available. Extensive work has been completed with regard to the Institutional Review Board, including policy, procedures, and forms. Procedures now align with the requirements of the federal policy for the protection of human subjects. The IRB policy has been formally revised, concurrent with drafting an Expedited Review Process, to comport with

federal requirements of Title 45 CFR Part 46, and with information gleaned from the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative/Human Subjects Research (CITI HSR) course. IRB information is published on the website and contained in the *Student Handbook*. (CFR 2.8)

Commission Recommendation: Enhance credit hour policy and credit hour designations. Reach has refined its credit hour policy and published its policy in the *Course Catalog*. (CFR 2.1)

Commission Recommendation: Enhance research design of the required capstone project. Faculty have made substantial enhancements for the capstone action research projects. This includes creating a theoretical framework based on a sophisticated model articulated by Anthony Bryke, and developing/refining rubrics as described in more detail in Standard 2 narrative. (CFR 2.1, 2.2b, 2.3, 2.6)

Commission Recommendation: Expand program review to include external reviewers and input from employers and alumni. Reach has improved its academic program review to include external reviewers as well as methods for securing evaluations of program effectiveness from staff in partner schools and alumni. It is recommended that Reach secure external reviewers from different institutions who may bring diverse perspectives regarding program quality for master's degrees. (CFR 2.7)

Standard 3 Commission Recommendations

Commission Recommendation: Give specific attention to development of faculty with an emphasis on conducting their own research. Reach has begun a process for clarifying scholarship expectations, modeling them on best practices at peer institutions and making them more comprehensive by basing them on Ernest Boyer's four models of scholarship (discovery, integration, application and teaching). It has formed an Academic Integrity and Research Committee. It has hired a faculty member with extensive and impressive scholarly accomplishments to solidify the research agenda. It has enhanced its online learning resources and affiliations with other libraries. In addition to these accomplishments, further

progress is foreseen with the planned 2017-18 formal roll-out of Reach’s newly adopted research and scholarship agenda premised on a five-point plan for implementation. This is a good start and should enable faculty to achieve further refinement of their research agenda, use Teacher Performance Assessment and Expectations (TPA/TPEs) as a component in furthering professional development, broadening activities to include adjunct faculty, and seeking ways of integrating professional development activities at Reach with those at partner schools. While the SAV2 team applauds the hosting of the first-ever Reach Alumni Publishing Support Session, it recommends expansion of this or a similar annual event highlighting the research and publications of current students and faculty. This will not only aid in individual professional development but provide a vehicle for promoting the institute to external audiences. (CFR 3.3, 3.5)

Commission Recommendation: Expand graduate culture, including faculty with earned doctorates. Reach admirably benchmarked graduate culture by surveying three graduate-intensive universities to identify best practices of graduate culture scholarship and service (collaboration via seminars, coaching, guest speakers on topics of research and practice, small class size, and faculty/student relationships). Learning outcomes are complete for all programs, and a redesigned website displays them along with learning artifacts, retention and graduation data, and student satisfaction data. (CFR 2.3, 2.4) A focus on faculty scholarship and research has been bolstered; there remains the need to address faculty workload and resource support so that a greater emphasis can be placed on faculty scholarship and research, which in turn will strengthen the graduate culture, enhance the visibility of Reach in professional communities, and assist Reach in realizing its goal of reforming K-12 schooling. (CFR 2.8, 2.9)

Related to the enhancement of a graduate, scholarly culture is Reach’s reexamination of the meaning, quality, and integrity of the degree and the development of strategies for articulating the degree in alignment with its mission as a degree-granting institution as it becomes a broader part of the higher education community. (CFR 1.6, 2.2, 2.2b, 2.6, 2.11) The various degree options are clearly described in

a manner that lends understanding to their distinctiveness, demonstrates their alignment with the institutional mission, and situates them in the broader higher education context.

The SAV2 team finds that Reach initiated multiple actions to sharpen degree articulation and alignment. Among these actions are a) the teacher residency model and in-service professional development enhanced to articulate further the quality and integrity of master's degrees, as differentiated from credentials; b) a newly-hired full-time faculty member assigned to shape the research and scholarship agenda; c) expectations strengthened for attendance and participation in class, for calendaring and reading, for posting online, and for work between class sessions; d) academic support improvement through enhanced faculty interventions and coaching, (faculty members have identified the need to provide additional support services and have some preliminary ideas for achieving this goal); e) rubrics developed and implemented for each section of the action research capstone; and f) a Reach Academic Integrity and Research Committee formed, supplementary to the IRB.

Standard 4 Commission Recommendations

Commission Recommendation: Achieve approval by Bureau for Private Post-Secondary Education. The institution received formal approval by the Bureau of Private Post-Secondary Education on December 3, 2015, with the proviso to achieve full accreditation by WSCUC no later than December 2, 2020.

Commission Recommendation: Expand quality assurance processes to include non-academic components of operations, including student services, technology and administrative effectiveness. Reach included a description of an expansion of their efforts to include stakeholder participation in assessment and alignment of their programs. They provided specific examples of how they gather feedback from employers and alumni using both qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry, and how their analysis of the feedback leads to action for academic, co-curricular, and administrative operations. Invitations for feedback resulted in many that did not reach the intended individual (i.e., bounced emails), pointing out

the need for better follow up strategies. While Reach has increased its efforts for assessing non-academic functions, more formal quality assurance processes continue to be recommended with regard to effectiveness and efficacy of non-academic administrative functions. (CFR 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)

Commission Recommendation: Expanding institutional research capacity as foundational for expanding its quality assurance processes, including assessment of programmatic and institutional activities and for incorporating and documenting completed cycles of inquiry into annual planning. Reach has delineated a comprehensive *Inventory of institutional Research Responsibilities*, with tasks and responsible parties clearly identified. A refined document, *Institutional Research and Program Quality Assessment Plan*, was provided to the team during the visit. This document identifies assessment domains including strategic planning, peer institutions, program reviews and planning, budget planning, enrollment management, student services, facilities planning, information technology and faculty/staff development.

In lieu of hiring a full-time institutional research (IR) officer (deferred to the higher priority of hiring a CAO), Reach implemented a new framework within the existing structure to address the recommendations from the SAV1 review. Two formal reviews occur at mid-year and end-of-year, led by the CAO, based on data collected by student services associates and analyzed by program coordinators. The CAO synthesizes data across programs and provides an institutional analysis, including changes occurring in the external environment such as the labor market and peer/competitor institutions. Findings are then reported to the Academic Affairs Committee and the Executive Team to inform institutional planning. This structure was introduced in fall 2016 and will be evaluated for its effectiveness. (CFR 4.2)

The CAO attended WSCUC workshops and plans to continue participating in these to help build internal capacity for institutional research. The SAV2 team sees the prospect of further enhancement of IR in three domains: a) *quality assurance* – further refining the decision making and planning processes used for assuring the quality of important co-curricular institutional functions, operations, services, technology, and organizational structures; b) *learning assessment* – illustrating (via diagrams, tables, and charts) how

all the pieces of learning assessment fit together to promote student learning, program outcomes, and institutional effectiveness; and c) *expanded IR functionality* – broadening the training for IR beyond the CAO by enabling other faculty and staff to attend WSCUC assessment workshops and planning for the eventual appointment of a dedicated IR officer. It is strongly recommended that Reach continue to examine the most effective research infrastructure that meets the demands of the institution in the long-term and allows it to strengthen its institutional research capacity and sophistication for assessment of institutional effectiveness.

Overall, there is evidence of greater reliance on data to improve curricula and student learning results, premised on both internal measures and comparative data with peer institutions. Three examples of policies illustrate improvements made to address Reach’s efforts in operationalizing a set of quality assurance policies and practices to address the concerns from the SAV1 report: a) *Academic Program Review Policy*, which was used to conduct its first program review of the Instructional Leadership Academy programs in spring 2015; b) *Credit Hour Review Policy*, implemented in fall 2015; and c) *Program Modification Policy and Practice*, including a *Decision Making Policy* and the *Reach Inquiry Design and Decision Making Practice*. These policies allow for a uniformed and ongoing approach to improvement and evaluation and enable Reach to consider institutional data on both student and program outcomes while at the same time examining external data from aspirational and peer institutions. Reach identified three peer institutions and compared six categories relevant to the growth and improvement of program offerings and content, learning outcomes, and overall philosophy and structure of the institutions. Reach staff analyzed the similarities and gaps and proposed next steps for integrating relevant changes and improvements. (CFR 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.6)

SECTION II. EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE WITH WSCUC'S STANDARDS AND IDENTIFIED CFRs FROM SEEKING ACCREDITATION VISIT 1

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purpose and Ensuring Educational Objectives

Institutional Purposes

Reach has clearly defined its purposes and identifies educational objectives aligned with those purposes. As described earlier, Reach's curricula are designed to meet "needs of educators learning complex skills on-the-job in difficult circumstances." It employs six integrated strategies for achieving its mission: personalized professional development, job-embedded coaching, integration of knowledge and practice, inquiry mindset, reflective communities of practice, and evidence-based evaluation. Impressive is this clear and explicit sense of Reach's essential values and character, its distinctive areas of practice in alignment with the overall purpose of the institute, its contribution to the K-12 urban schools, and its commitment to educational equity. Mission, vision, and institutional goals are available on Reach's website and *Student Handbook*, among other documents. (CFR 1.1, 1.2) Formally approved and well-developed catalog statements that define Reach's values and character continue to be strengths. From the site visit, it was clear that the faculty and administration have integrated the institution's mission and vision into everyday practice. (CFR 1.2) Reach recently and successfully redesigned its website to provide easier navigation and more accessible location of required information (e.g. mission, student learning outcomes, credit hour policy, retention and graduation rates, student complaints and grievance procedures, transfer policy). (CFR 1.1, 1.2)

With regard to diversity, Reach has continued its commitment to diversify its faculty and staff, although such gains are modest given its small size and limited hiring of new faculty and staff. In 2016-17, faculty was 40% Caucasian (n=4), 30% Two or more races (n=3), 20% Asian/Asian American/Indian (n=2), and 10% African American (n=1). Staff and executive leadership diversity (n=6) is approximately 50% Caucasian. Board (n=6) ethnicity has increased in diversity through the addition of three new members providing an overall ethnic representation of 57%. The institution has developed a Reach Diversity

Committee with stated goals to recruit and retain an ethnically diverse candidate base in both degree and credential programs. (CFR 1.4) Accordingly, the *Course Catalog* describes Reach's Non-Discrimination, Disability, and Equal Opportunity policies that have been augmented and centralized to ensure the highest level of access and support. As of fall 2016, one candidate in the intern program requested accommodations. (CFR 1.4)

The Reach faculty, staff, and representatives from partner schools demonstrated passionate commitment to the institution's mission and have embraced a culture that clearly shows education as their primary purpose. The site visit and documents provided by Reach confirm its autonomy from external entities that would deter the institution from conducting its work as described by mission, vision, and institutional goals. (CFR 1.5)

Integrity and Transparency

With regard to operational integrity and general responsiveness to complaints (e.g., addressing the issues identified by the Eligibility Review Committee), Reach displayed open communication in the review process and with adherence to the WSCUC policies. For example, the procedures state that student grievances are to be kept on record for six years. Reach also offers financial reports from independent auditors to the Board. (CFR 1.6, 1.7) Currently, Reach is revising its board policies to be consolidated into a formal Board handbook. (CFR 1.7) Further, Reach has refined its policy and procedures for its Institutional Review Board and research integrity practices. (CFR 1.7, 1.8)

Reach is to be commended for engaging with WSCUC through participation in WSCUC trainings and workshops (especially on assessment of student learning), keeping abreast of accreditation policies and higher education practices, and dedication to meeting WSCUC standards as a means for demonstrating institutional effectiveness and integrity. (CFR 1.8)

Standard 1 Findings

The team concurs with Reach’s self-assessment in which it identifies areas for continued improvement, most notably the continued attention to the diversity of faculty and staff. This goal is essential for institutions of higher education in their commitment to educational quality, diversity, and inclusion, and even more so for Reach given its core commitment to “provide the educational community with a model for teacher and leadership development that promotes equitable access and performance for all students.”

Overall, the team finds that the Reach Institute for School Leadership meets Standard 1 at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation. It is important to emphasize that only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards.

Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions

Teaching and Learning

In response to the Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 report (March 2015), Reach has made considerable progress on five key issues associated with aligning the master’s degree pathways with WSCUC standards, including building organizational capacity (CFR 2.1, 2.2b); increasing academic rigor in each master’s degree pathway, especially with regard to the research design of the required capstone projects (CFR 2.3, 2.6, 2.10); strengthening in-service professional development and faculty scholarship (CFR 2.3, 2.8, 2.9); expanding program review protocols to include an external reviewer and input from employees and alumni (CFR 2.7); increasing diversity of staff and students; and refining student support services. (CFR 1, 2.13, 1.2)

A clear description of course credit is included in the *Student Handbook* and available online. Under the heading, “Reach Institute for School Leadership Candidate Policies,” candidates receive one unit of credit for 45 hours of combined class time homework and applied practice. Instead of letter grades, candidates

are awarded one of four performance indicators, i.e., “Exceeded Expectations,” “Met Expectations,” “Did Not Meet Expectations,” or “In Progress” for each course. Candidates must receive a performance indicator of either “Met Expectations” or “Exceeded Expectations” in order to receive course credit. The master’s degree policy has been benchmarked against the credit hour policy of the other similarly situated institutions and now comports with the required number of hours of in-class time.

With regard to building organizational capacity, Reach faculty and staff interviews revealed a universally held belief in the institution’s capacity to improve the quality of instruction and student experience in both the Teaching Academy and the Instructional Leadership Academy. Despite working under the constraints of a limited budget and demanding workload, staff demonstrate a deep-seated philosophical allegiance to the Reach mission to “reinvent preparation for teachers and leaders” who are “committed to a more equitable world in which every student is supported by highly effective and dedicated teachers, who themselves are supported by highly effective and dedicated leaders.” This mission is embedded in the institution’s culture and supported by faculty, the majority of which have advanced degrees. The most recent addition to the faculty holds a Ph.D., bringing the total with earned doctorates to six. The number of full-time faculty and staff has risen to 16 and includes an executive director, chief academic officer, associate director, program coordinators, instructional faculty, and administrative support staff. However, given the small size of the institution, diversity among faculty continues to be a challenge. As the number of faculty expands, efforts already underway to build a highly experienced and diverse staff will continue to clarify areas of oversight, build fiscal management capacity, and strengthen reporting avenues to the Board. (CFR 2.1, 2.2b)

In addition to increasing institutional capacity through hiring practices and faculty assignment, significant progress has been made in the development of the Institutional Research Board (IRB), the policies of which now align with federal requirements for the protection of human subjects. The IRB committee is currently made up of four original members and two newly added external members, including the chief

academic officer, program coordinator of the master's program, the induction program coordinator, and an intern program faculty member. At the time of the review, four have taken the CITI Human Subjects Research course. Online registration of the IRB is scheduled for late spring of this year. (CFR 2.2b)

Significant modifications to the action research capstone course have been made in response to WSCUC recommendations to establish an advanced course of study for the two graduate degrees offered by increasing the academic rigor of the master's degree pathways. Within each pathway, but beyond the Intern Teacher Credential Program and the Induction Program, the master's degrees in each Academy are distinguished by a classroom-based capstone action research project. To ensure that the projects comport with recognized standards for master's degree level work, the Reach faculty has been engaged in a resolute two-year effort to strengthen academic rigor and graduate level proficiencies guided by the WSCUC's MQID training and the Lumina Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP). Using the DQP as a guide, the Teaching Academy and Instructional Leadership Academy program faculty have met weekly to make modifications to course content, analyze data, and collaborate on assessment. Under each academy, the objectives framing pathways to the master's degrees were compared with two graduate institutions (UC Berkeley Graduate School of Education and Mills College) as well as the San Joaquin Teachers College and High Tech High (M.Ed. in Education Leadership). A set of degree proficiencies is now in place to determine if candidates possess the knowledge and skills commensurate with master's level work at other institutions. (CFR 2.3, 2.6, 2.10)

Program coordinators and faculty report, and SAV2 team members confirm, that rubrics have been skillfully refined or developed to provide greater depth and richness to the capstone action research projects. This further distinguishes the master's degree programs from intern and induction certification strands. Data collected from the full portfolio of rubrics are now reviewed and assessed as part of the overall *Assessment Plan* and also as part of academy-specific data analysis.

During interviews faculty members reported that they appreciated the utility of data derived from the use of these rubrics. Specifically, an improved ability to diagnose and identify areas of growth as well as challenges facing the institution is a key strategy for shaping programs and strengthening practice. For example, the problem of practice rubric was modified to be more explicit and, as a result when applied, faculty members posit that an increase in candidate scores can be tied to the use of the rubric as a diagnostic tool. In another example, faculty created a rubric for candidate panel presentations allowing program faculty to see where improvements were needed. However, it is important to note that because this level of analysis is new to Reach, many rubrics were used for the first time in 2016, and second-year data on some rubrics are in the process of being analyzed. As many of these rubrics were used for the first time last year, longitudinal data have been collected only on rubrics assessing the problem of practice and literature review; a second year of data gathering on other rubrics is in progress. These data, along with student survey data and faculty observational data, are used to identify approaches for making changes to curriculum and securing faculty support. Over time, it is recommended that data be both aggregated by rubric criteria to view historical patterns for program improvement and disaggregated by student demographics to ensure all students have achieved learning outcomes at the time of graduation. (CFR 2.2b, 2.3, 2.4,2.5,2.6)

Even at this very early stage of implementation, faculty who were interviewed were able to confirm that the following elements have been added to the capstone project strands:

- A theoretical framework has been applied to practice in the initial years of the programs;
- Explicit rubrics have been developed for the action research projects, including a stronger connection between the literature review and the rationale for intervention;
- An emphasis on developing stronger skills in reading and making meaning from the literature review is now in place;
- Greater opportunities to develop skills in data collection and analysis have been added to each pathway;

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- Formal opportunities for candidates to develop skill in articulating and defending proposal rationale and presenting findings (i.e., both internally and externally) are a part of the capstone action research project; and
 - Feedback in written as well as verbal form on work and skill development is available for every student. (CFR 2.2b, 2.3, 2.6)

A review of ten culminating action research projects indicated an increased level of sophistication with regard to faculty's use of rubrics for greater consistency and depth of assessment for each of the elements of the project (e.g., action plan; problem statement; literature review; analysis, findings, and implications). Students' capstone projects were impressive in that the students' theoretical knowledge was applied with skill to real problems faced by K-12 teachers and students. Examples of the applied research included metacognition for independent learners, mathematics anxiety, literature circles, reading, bilingualism, novice teachers, student engagement, student behavior, and collaborative learning. The quality of the research was judged by faculty to have met standards for graduate education and demonstrated achievement of program and institutional learning outcomes. (CFR 2.2b, 2.4, 2.6, 2.8)

In terms of moving toward a research-based theoretical framework within the context of applied learning, consistent throughout interviews with current students and alumni was the importance and value of analyzing practice through the lens of a theoretical framework. This lens is most notably guided by Dr. Anthony Bryke's work (the "Bryke Framework") and its utility in guiding practice at the school and district levels. One alumna summarized this finding by noting the success of the Reach's approach to master's degree work "has a lot to do with the extent theoretical research [maps on to] and informs practice... the relevancy to practice caught me by surprise." Another added that Reach's master's programs have taken on "the craft of teaching" through the theoretical framework that makes it more useful.

While appreciable progress has been made in the initial implementation and refinement of a research-based theoretical framework, the master's degree programs are at the nascent stage. While course sequences and related institutional learning outcomes, program learning outcomes, and program learning outcomes descriptions are clearly stated in the *Student Handbook* and available online, questions remain with regard to ways in which faculty link course assignments to student learning outcomes as well as the weighting of those assignments. Also missing from syllabi or appending materials reviewed during the SAV2 visit are the criteria employed for assessing quality of student work. (CFR 2.8, 2.9)

Reach has adopted a formal *Academic Program Review Policy* and, as recommended in the SAV 1 team report, external reviewers have now been incorporated into the review process. The program review policy is made up of eight components, including a comprehensive self-study; Board presentation of the academic program review process and progress; internal review of findings; an external reviewer's written report and recommendations for improvement; Academic Affairs Committee review and analysis of findings; an application of program review results to frame program improvement, budget and planning; a "post-mortem" process to debrief the process and capture feedback; and the incorporation of program review into institutional planning. (CFR 2.7)

The first formal program review was conducted by two external reviewers in the spring of 2016. The review culminated in the presentation of a written report, including recommendations for working closely with those schools and districts to which Reach students have been assigned and strengthening specific areas of the curriculum dealing with school-level management. The resulting action plan developed by faculty and signed by the executive director, associate director, chief academic officer and the program coordinator was presented to the Finance Committee for approval.

Faculty stated that the external program review process has been helpful in deepening understanding of academic programs, pointing out merits and challenges, and outlining next steps for improvement.

Through the review process, faculty began to incorporate the use of data in decision making. One program coordinator captured the general feeling of the group: “A big thing that came out was that programs have been starting to look at data and using those data to evolve the program, [and] not just what we are doing in [individual] programs, but how we are doing as an *institution*. [In addition], alignment of program with school activities and programs was a result of the program review analysis.” Early in the program review cycle there was “a lot of boot strapping – just figuring it out, but after all of that the learning that was acquired in the process and the creation of the narrative, [faculty] learned institutionally how they function to gather and analyze data, how our systems work, and the flow of information from student services. It was helpful and affirmed that we have a solid system for the collection, analysis, and use of data. Now programs and courses are less ‘siloes’ and more integrated. It was one of the best learning processes we could have engaged in.” (CFR 2.7, 2.8)

Scholarship and Creative Activity

One serious concern identified in the Commission’s action letter was in the area of scholarship and creative activity. Reach faculty have made some progress as evidenced by the hiring of a chief academic officer and induction program coordinator, the establishment of the Reach Academic Integrity and Research Committee (AIRC), and an increase in dedicated time to support research. The AIRC is currently in the process of implementing a more comprehensive conception of scholarship and developing an inventory of all ongoing research and scholarship activities undertaken at Reach in an effort to refine and add clarity to the definition of scholarship. At this time, expectations for inclusion of scholarship as an aspect of evaluation has been presented to the faculty along with modifications to the *Professional Development Plan* that would allow for more independent research. The formal integration of scholarship as a component of evaluation is scheduled to begin in the 2017-18 academic year. Finally, research at the candidate level is “job embedded,” although collaborative research between faculty and students has not yet taken hold. (CFR 2.8)

Faculty reports a high interest in building their research capacity but feel that “their plates are full with teaching, coaching and program development.” One faculty member at the Ph.D. level has been hired to coordinate and support research capacity. One strategy for supporting faculty research under consideration is to start applying for larger federal grants of \$3.5 million or more to buy out faculty time, thereby creating greater opportunity to boost scholarly activity. For example, the focus of one grant would be to scale up professional development strategies in two partner districts based on the coaching model to help students meet the Common Core Standards in mathematics. In another example, two research projects have been designed to compare what new teachers know about equity before they start the intern program and after they become credentialed. (CFR 2.8, 2.9)

Student Learning and Success

Since the SAVI visit, Reach faculty have focused on building and assessing graduate culture and campus climate by incorporating relevant areas of inquiry into the alumni survey for the master’s degree in instructional leadership. The survey now includes responses to questions of campus climate, ongoing professional/academic support, alumni outreach, and academic preparation. It is clear that faculty and staff remain committed to increasing diversity, but because of the small size of current and graduate student populations, disaggregating data by demographic categories remains a challenge. Faculty members appear genuinely committed to analyzing trend data in order to achieve more robust comparisons of student achievement among demographic variables because they believe in the utility of applying sound and reliable data to decision-making. (CFR 2.10)

Reach has made significant progress with regard to accommodating students with special needs by centralizing and streamlining decision-making and the process of accommodating requests. The *Student Handbook* includes a disability policy that comports with Title III of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) guaranteeing equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities. An accommodations request form completed by the requesting student and the associate director also includes pertinent and confidential

information supplied by the appropriate physician or medical provider. All ADA requests submitted under the new special accommodations form now go to the associate director who serves as the contact person for review and processing. (CFR 2.13)

Reach transfer policies are clear and included in the *Student Handbook* and *Course Catalog*. Criteria for transfer credit include a maximum of nine semester units with a grade of B or better, equivalency and currency of course content, and assessment of changes in recent years in the field of study. No students transferred in or out of the institution in 2015-16, and no transfer requests have been submitted as of the fall of 2016. (CFR 1.4, 2.10, 2.13)

Standard 2 Findings

Overall, Reach has shown significant progress in addressing Standard 2, especially as related to teaching and learning and scholarship/creative activity. The team concurs with Reach's self-assessment related to continued expansion of capacity for faculty research commensurate with graduate education and within the context of Reach's mission. Related is the plan to increase strategies for disseminating research findings designed to increase effective teaching and leadership in K-12 schools and districts. (CFR 2.8, 2.9) The team commends and recommends Reach continue its focus on creating a graduate school culture that fosters a rigorous research-based theoretical framework within the context of applied learning. (CFR 2.1, 2.2b, 2.8)

For future accreditation success, the team recommends that Reach continue to mature its assessment and analytic processes that incorporate comparative data of student learning outcomes; disaggregation of data for student sub-populations; longitudinal tracking of students' achievement of learning outcomes, with evidence of the impact of interventions on subsequent student performance; and implementation of formal quality assurance processes for periodic assessment of its non-academic operations, including student services and administrative effectiveness. (CFR 2.4, 4.1, 4.3, 4.6)

Overall, the team finds that the Reach Institute for School Leadership meets Standard 2 at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation. It is important to emphasize that only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards.

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

Since the time of the SAV1 visit, abundant evidence illustrates that Reach has continued to develop and apply its resources for organizational effectiveness. The institute has either successfully addressed or has capably explained its challenges in attending to each of the recommendations in the SAV1 report. The administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and other stakeholders can find satisfaction in knowing that their efforts are obvious to outside appraisers.

Faculty and Staff

As the institution has grown it has maintained a focus on highly qualified and dedicated faculty and staff. (CFR 3.1) All programs are led by full-time program coordinators; each coordinator possesses advanced degrees, and three of four (75%) possess doctorates in education. The faculty is comprised of 70% core, 30% adjunct. The staff has doubled in size since 2015, including a new a 1.0 FTE induction program coordinator. The institute initiated a *Leading for Equity Learning Arc*, a year-long, externally facilitated program for faculty and staff to address and enhance dimensions of equity. Additionally, one of two monthly faculty meetings is dedicated to the study and application of equity. An initiative aimed at improving candidate diversity, the Reach Diversity Committee (RDC) is working to improve the representation of candidates from diverse backgrounds in Reach's master's degree programs, particularly targeting more female students in the instructional leadership program, and more male students and more students of color in all programs.

Diversity of faculty, staff, and the Board of Directors has improved. In the last year, the faculty has realized a net increase of two faculty of color, the staff has seen a net increase of one staff of color, and

the Board of Directors has an additional one more person of color. Reach has analyzed variables affecting diversity and remains committed to the goal of further diversification. The visit team recommends that Reach be especially attentive to identifying specific diversity goals and strategies in its new strategic plan, as the leadership has indicated it intends. (CFR 3.1)

Faculty and staff are guided by clearly articulated policies and practices, a number of which have been expanded or newly implemented such as the *Faculty Workload Policy* and the *Professional Growth Plan*. *An Academic Freedom Policy* and effective formal and informal performance appraisal processes have helped to promote a stable workforce. (CFR 3.2) Professional development of faculty, an area of considerable concern in the SAV1 report, has received increased attention that has resulted in expanded opportunities, primarily through the creation of the Reach Academic Integrity and Research Committee. Five hundred dollars is allocated to each faculty and staff member in support of professional development activities. Assessment of the effectiveness of these professional development activities remains largely an isolated activity relegated to individual supervisors. Toward this end, the team suggests Reach consider developing an institutional-wide assessment of professional development activities so that common areas of strengths and weaknesses can be identified and resources can be shared in capitalizing on the strengths and addressing the weaknesses. Overall, opportunities for professional development and, concomitantly, assessment of the effectiveness of professional development endeavors, remain areas to consider for enhanced resource support. (CFR 3.3)

Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources

Reach currently evidences financial stability, but like many relatively small institutions of higher education, it had to maneuver through rockier fiscal straits since the financial review conducted by the SAV1 team. FY16 was the only time there has been a deficit in the institution's 10-year history. With five months of cash on hand, and a reserve of \$500,000, sustainability is premised on stable or growing income generation, conservative forecasting and budgeting, and tight spending controls. Reach leadership is keenly aware of these variables. It was concerning that FY16 resulted in a deficit of \$160,000 (out of a

\$1.95 million budget) and that covering this deficit from the \$500,000 reserve fund depleted nearly one-third of the fund (32%). At the same time, it is reassuring that the FY 17 is in the black and that assertive actions have been identified to replace the depleted reserve funds over the next two years. While not desirable, it was evident that this fiscal challenge has tightened substantially the fiscal structure, controls, and sophistication for overseeing variables essential for fiscal stability. The institution and the Board have articulated their understanding that a healthy reserve is one of the most critical factors in ensuring long-term stability. Fortunately, unlike many small higher education institutions that are more heavily tuition-income-dependent, Reach has a well-diversified portfolio of revenue sources with 37% from student tuition and fees, 41% from foundation grants; and 21% from professional service contracts. Prospects for increasing substantially non-tuition revenue stream are encouraging, premised on the transfer of academic responsibilities from the CEO to the CAO, which has allowed increased time for the CEO to devote to cultivating external support. (CFR 3.4) Another key variable is the cost of tuition. Reach has kept tuition rates far below comparable programs. New tuition rates for 2017-18 will increase approximately 6% and move toward the budget principle that tuition should cover direct costs (faculty salary/benefits). In 2018-19, tuition rates are to contribute to the overall indirect costs as well. The net effect of this action will enhance financial stability and simultaneously allow a SFR no larger than 16:1, which is essential for educational quality and the personalization of instruction that is Reach's hallmark.

Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes

Reach's infrastructure appears to be sufficient to enable execution of the institution's mission. The SAV1 team did not express any significant concerns regarding facilities or information technology systems and services, nor did any emerge in the conversations with the SAV2 team. (CFR 3.5) The institute employs a highly efficient and effective online learning platform (Canvas) that is used for course instruction, peer collaboration, and teacher training. Following through on recommendations made by the SAV1 team, online learning resources (Study.Net and EBSCO) have been enhanced, and affiliations with other

libraries have been established, further strengthening the likelihood for a positive and productive student experience.

There is a highly functioning Executive Team consisting of the executive director, associate director, and chief academic officer, balanced by a Leadership Team that incorporates the Executive Team and program coordinators. These individuals have demonstrated requisite experience and expertise to enable Reach's success and sustainability. The matrix of the decision making structure and processes, delineation of responsibilities by team, and individuals' roles provide expert guidance for the institution's key functions and activities. Formal processes for governance and decision making have been strengthened since the SAV1 visit, including the creation of an Executive Team at the top of the organization. (CFR 3.6, 3.7) The concern noted in the SAV1 report regarding the lack of a dedicated chief financial officer remains relevant. Currently, the full-time associate director serves in this role and oversees financial management and planning along with other administrative support and coordination. As Reach grows it has become more evident that an individual primarily or solely responsible for budget development, fiscal oversight, and financial planning and performance would be a worthwhile investment to ensure efficient operations and fiscal health. Fortunately, the Board of Directors and the Executive Team are already planning and budgeting for increased staffing to address financial management. The team strongly urges Reach as it evolves and builds capacity, to develop a dedicated position of chief financial officer to ensure the institution effectively meets its commitments to fiscal stability and sustainability. (CFR 3.8)

The governing Board of Directors, which meets a minimum of five times annually, was expanded, bringing the total to seven members. In its meetings, the Board's focus is properly applied to Reach's strategic financial and operational goals, budget approval, and chief executive officer hiring and evaluation. (CFR 3.9) The Board is currently engaged in evaluating and improving its composition and activities. One member has a human resources background and one member has a finance and organizational development background, while the remaining five members' backgrounds are in

educational research, finance, and leadership. The Board is currently in the process of further expansion by two more members (for a total of nine) and has targeted nominees with expertise in marketing/public relations and fundraising. Should further Board growth be sought in the future, it is suggested that expertise beyond these categories be sought, such as law, technology, and social justice.

In response to concerns expressed in the SAV1 report, shared governance protocols have been strengthened to include more substantial faculty input. All faculty meet bi-monthly, with a focus on institutional-wide processes and issues and professional development. Program faculty members meet with the program coordinator weekly, focused on program-specific planning and evaluation. Program coordinators, in turn, meet together with the Executive Team monthly for cross-program planning. (CFR 3.10)

Reach's scheduling of all-day faculty meetings twice-a-month appears to be an effective mechanism for ensuring faculty collaboration on curricula and assessment, identification and discussion of important academic issues, and input to institution-wide strategic planning and budgeting decisions. Program Team meetings, conducted for several hours weekly, drill down on the above objectives to ensure that program-specific needs are met. Monthly leadership meetings (the Executive Team and program coordinators) provide a formal forum for bringing these needs, concerns, and suggestions to the upper-level administrators. This governance structure, in addition to encouraging meaningful reflection, dialogue, and deliberation, bestows status on the faculty role in governance and models for students the culture of team work and collective analysis so critical for success as education practitioners. (CFR 3.6)

Particularly notable in Reach's improvements is creation of an enrollment management plan and movement toward a more formal approach to student recruitment and enrollment. Evidence was provided in both the institutional report and in interviews with faculty and administration regarding the high priority given to planning for achieving aggressive enrollment targets. Information offered from the

Executive Team was consistent with views expressed by Reach Board members, in that setting specific goals for recruitment must be viewed within the larger context of fiscal sustainability. (CFR 4.6)

After reviewing data on past enrollments and collecting more detailed information via surveys, interviews, and focus groups, Reach has shifted its priorities on recruitment strategies for the Instructional Leadership Academy to increase enrollments and to increase intentionally the number of candidates coming from diverse backgrounds, including the number of males. (CFR1.4) Using an online Student Information System has improved communication with prospective students, and a subsequent review of the process has pointed out the need for increasing administrative and technology support to maximize system effectiveness. Plans for 2017-18 offer further promise by allocating more staffing resources for expanded recruitment efforts, creating a more streamlined admissions process toward the goals of increasing enrollment and diversity, adjusting the admission timeline, expanding efforts through social media, communicating with local school districts, participating in information sessions and career fairs, and leveraging marketing through alumni—all actions critical to growing the pool of potential applicants. Financial aid counseling is advised as another means for assisting in the recruitment and retention of students. (CFR 3.4)

The team commends Reach for its greater specificity of enrollment and diversity goals and the integration of strategies to achieve these goals into the next iteration of the Reach strategic plan. Further, Reach is in the process of revisiting the strategic planning process and timeline to provide for more meaningful engagement of multiple constituencies and to adapt to environmental changes in shorter cycles of time. The team urges the aggressive implementation of these strategies. (CFR 3.4, 4.6)

Shared governance in relatively small institutions of higher learning is inherently challenging in promoting widespread involvement and defining decision-making while at the same time ensuring accountability. Because all the administrators, faculty, and staff know each other, governance naturally

tends toward the personal rather than the professional. That said, Reach has undertaken notable efforts to achieve effective governance through strengthening shared governance protocols, including substantial faculty input, and promoting dialogue among all of the institution's constituencies (e.g., administration, faculty, staff, students, directors, and alumni). The delineation of decision making authority and responsibilities is clearly identified. (CFR 3.7) In addition, the Executive Team has indicated that it will continue to amalgamate further the results of program review into strategic decisions and the budgeting process. (CFR 2.7, 3.6, 3.7, 3.10)

Standard 3 Findings

Overall, Reach has shown significant progress in addressing the overall intention and specific CFRs of Standard 3. The team concurs with Reach's self-assessment that institutional performance will be enhanced through future expansion of physical resources in response to projected growth of students, faculty, and staff and through increased support for professional development for faculty and staff. (CFR 3.3, 3.5) In addition, the team concurs with the importance of continued development of the Board by increasing its diversity (ethnic, gender, and areas of expertise) and through developing a Board manual for enhancing operations. (CFR 3.9)

Most importantly, the team stresses the importance for Reach to implement optimal strategies for increased revenue generation and sustained financial stability, supported through expanded marketing/communications, systematic enrollment management (particularly for master's degrees), and strategic planning processes. (CFR 3.4, 4.6, 4.7) As Reach evolves and builds capacity, the team urges the institution to develop a dedicated position of chief financial officer to ensure the institution effectively meets its commitments to fiscal stability and sustainability. (CFR 3.8)

Overall, the team finds that the Reach Institute for School Leadership meets Standard 3 at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation. It is important to emphasize that only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards

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

Quality Assurance Processes

In addressing specific recommendations from the SAV1 team review in 2015, Reach has made progress in expanding a set of quality assurance processes in both academic and co-curricular areas to ensure ongoing evaluation and improvement. Reach provided three examples that illustrate improvements made in operationalizing these policies and practices, including: a) *Academic Program Review Policy*, which was used to conduct its first program review in spring 2015; b) *Credit Hour Review Policy*, implemented in fall 2015 and currently underway for Spring 2017; and c) *Program Modification Policy and Practice*, *Decision Making Policy*, and *Reach Inquiry Design and Decision Making Practice*. These policies demonstrate Reach's commitment to creating and institutionalizing practices that ensure continued quality of the programs. These processes enable Reach to consider institutional data on both student and program outcomes while at the same time examining external data from aspirational and peer institutions.

(CFR 4.1)

First, the Academic Program Review (described in detail under Standard 2) offered an external perspective of areas relevant to the growth and improvement of program offerings and content, learning outcomes, and overall philosophy and structure of the institute. Reach staff analyzed the recommendations and proposed next steps for integrating relevant changes/improvements. Next, the *Credit Hour Review Policy* has guided the refinement and increased internal consistency for assigning course credit over the past three semesters. The plan for spring 2017 is to focus on courses that include capstone projects. Finally, the *Decision Making Policy* provides a consistent and ongoing process for making internal changes and improvement by analyzing outcome data at the student and program levels, in the context of external data from designated peer institutions. Specifically, a comparison table featuring

three peer institutions is posted on the Reach website, including learning outcomes, candidate feedback, and completion/graduation data. (CFR 2.7, 4.1)

Overall, it appears that Reach has made notable progress in building on its initial efforts to maximize data for program improvements and implement an overall assessment plan for academic and non-academic institutional effectiveness. (CFR 4.1) Interviews by the WSCUC team held with the CEO, CAO, and faculty revealed clear and consistent understanding of these policies and of the ways in which various elements work together to ensure a deliberate and ongoing strategy for quality assurance and continuous evaluation. The commitment to reflective practices through the use of data collection and analysis was unquestionable. Many examples were provided to indicate improvements made based on these efforts, many of which are detailed earlier in this report. The inclusion of co-curricular activities in the evaluation efforts are now more fully addressed with the addition of the student services associates who are responsible for supporting each of the programs via technology and other administrative functions. They also provide support for institutional research and program quality assessment. (CFR 4.1, 4.3)

Institutional Learning and Improvement

In lieu of hiring a full-time institutional research officer, Reach implemented a new framework within their existing structure to address the recommendations from the 2015 review. Toward this end, Reach developed a document, *Institutional Research and Program Quality Assessment Plan*, an updated and expanded version of the table that was included in SAV2 Report (*Institutional Research Inventory of Responsibilities*). This recent working document (version 4) includes a more detailed description of the various institutional research and assessment activities designed to ensure a coordinated approach to data collection, analysis, and use of findings for program improvement. Specifically, the document details the assessment domains, their purpose, person(s) involved and lead person, frequency and timeframes, types of data collected and analyzed, and how the information will be used to make decisions. The CAO supports program coordinators in examining program-related data findings and then synthesizes data

across programs to create an institutional analysis, including changes occurring in the external environment, e.g., labor market and peer/competitor institutions. Findings are then reported to the Academic Affairs Committee and the Executive Team to inform institutional planning. This comprehensive view of all assessment domains, from strategic planning, education landscape, peer analysis with aspirational institutions, and program reviews to budget planning, enrollment management, technology, facilities planning, and faculty/staff development demonstrates significant progress. (CFR 4.2) The CAO attended WSCUC workshops and plans to continue participating in these activities to help build internal capacity for institutional research. Given the decentralized structure for IR, the team recommends increased training for the student services associates and program coordinators via participation in WSCUC workshops and other appropriate venues.

In demonstrating its commitment to continuous improvement, Reach has been building “a culture of evidence, a culture of improvement, and a culture of quality.” In its report, several examples of how faculty “close the loop” on specific areas of assessment demonstrated how they identified the goal (e.g., outcome of Integration into Practice), the process for analyzing data, and the resulting actions they took based on the evidence and analysis. For example, after re-examining their coaching model, faculty made modifications to reduce the coaching workloads and offer professional development about the coaching model in general, to ensure a shared understanding of strategies and structures. Faculty used the same sequence of steps in examining ways to improve their students’ success in passing required certification examinations for teachers and academic writing support for graduate students. The examination and analysis of data and solutions resulted in partnerships with a test preparation service and with UC Berkeley to offer writing support by consultants through the Bay Area Writing Project. (CFR 4.3, 4.4)

Team members met with faculty to hear about their commitment to institutional learning and improvement. The passion and commitment to teaching for equity, using collaborative models for peer feedback and support, and individualizing instruction for their students were reflected in their

descriptions. They were appreciative of the SAVI review which “pushed them to the next level” in formalizing assessment processes, creating multi-year plans, establishing concrete program learning outcomes better aligned across programs, and benefiting from the external reviewers that brought new perspectives for them to consider. In answer to the team’s questions about their ideas for future activities, faculty identified their intent to manage better and use qualitative data to improve their own practice. For example, they referred to analyzing their coaching transcripts to help Reach faculty view how their teaching is being demonstrated. Faculty then discussed the ways in which they consider hiring new faculty. One of the newer faculty members said that she appreciated how she was “engaged in the WSCUC process, rather than having it just presented.” This led to describing the implications for hiring, including more “Reach-y” ways of getting to know applicants, e.g., submitting demonstration tapes of their work, participating in a mock session, assessing how they take feedback, and trying to determine if they have an “assets-based mindset.” It was evident that the recommendations from the SAVI visit were taken seriously and that the improvements made since then were implemented authentically. (CFR 4.3, 4.4)

A discussion with current students in the Instructional Leadership Academy programs revealed the way in which this commitment to improvement is realized in their learning. The participants referred repeatedly to the PEAR cycle, that is, Plan – Execute – Analyze – Reflect, which they incorporate into everything they do as leaders. It was clear that students not only use data to inform their practice, but that they are actively seeking ways to leverage their findings into research that can be published and presented in the field. Students spoke about the importance of improving instruction in their schools and how their data collection and analysis strategies were embedded in their work and thought processes. They described themselves as “instructional leaders” not as managers, and they expressed pride in their progress, noting that the programs are “rigorous, lots of hard work, and totally worth it.” (CFR 4.3, 4.4)

Reach addressed three areas for increasing its capacity to anticipate and respond to the changes in the

higher education environment. First, Reach increased the number of faculty holding terminal degrees. Specifically, Reach now has six faculty members with doctoral degrees, twice as many since the SAV1 review, which is noteworthy given the size of the faculty in general. Two of these faculty have programmatic oversight in the master's programs and bring experience as school and system leaders, which addresses the second concern of employing sufficient number of faculty for each graduate program. (CFR 4.7) Responding to the third issue, Reach has placed greater emphasis on surveying and being responsive to the local context to understand if and how the changing ecology of the higher education environment impacts Reach's graduate programs. Reach described the way in which they have become more intentional in using both formal and informal methods to gather and examine relevant data. The Instructional Leadership Academy Advisory Council, formed in spring 2016, has offered suggestions to strengthen certain knowledge and skill areas and, as a result, the faculty designed steps to address their concerns. These include filling gaps in targeted curriculum and content areas, scope and sequence, and leveraging training offered in collaboration with school and district partners. Another area of need identified by the Advisory Council was improving candidates' skills in the area of school management. As a result, efforts are underway to include knowledge and skills related to school budgeting and human resource management in the curriculum and by leveraging external training. The Instructional Leadership Program Review Action Plan (approved in June 2016) includes details on how improvements will occur with plans for possible revision for 2017-18. (CFR 4.7)

As noted in the previous SAV1 report, "Reach is in a unique position to impact regional schools, as well as contribute to the national dialogue surrounding school reform for great student access and achievement of K-12 students." Discussions on site with the CEO and Executive Team, Board members, program coordinators and other faculty, students, and alumni reflected their interest and determination in documenting what they are learning to prepare professionals. Faculty and students are beginning to present at conferences, submit research for publication, and discuss additional ways for disseminating their scholarly findings. Their strategic plan reflects these intentions, and the growth of their graduate

program is critical to support these efforts.

Standard 4 Findings

Overall, Reach has shown significant progress in addressing the overall intention and the specific components of Standard 4. Evidence provided in the report was further clarified by discussions and observations completed during the site visit that demonstrated Reach’s integration of the Commissions’ recommendations. The institution demonstrated a commitment to a practice of continual learning and improvement through the use of relevant data. They use these reflective strategies to improve the quality of their academic programs and co-curricular services as well as modeling a mindset and culture of inquiry for their teacher and leader candidates. The cohesive way in which they “walk their talk” was impressive and pervasive, demonstrated at all levels of the institute and noted by their various stakeholders and community partners. (CFR 4.7)

Within Standard 4, the team strongly recommends that Reach enhance its institutional research capacity and sophistication for assessment of institutional effectiveness and use of data in decision making, including evaluation of the most effective institutional research infrastructure that meets the needs of the institution in the long-term (CFR 4.2). Likewise, the team concurs with Reach’s self-assessment for areas of improvement to include revisiting the strategic planning process and timeline to include more meaningful engagement of multiple constituencies, to adapt to environmental changes in shorter cycles of time, and to monitor its achievement of strategic directions. (CFR 4.6) Similarly, the team concurs that Reach increase its sophistication in executing its enrollment management plan, particularly as focused on more aggressive use of effective marketing and communication strategies. (CFR 4.6, 3.4)

Overall, the team finds that the Reach Institute for School Leadership meets Standard 4 at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation. It is important to emphasize that only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards.

SECTION III. FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings

The spring 2017 visit is the second site visit for Reach's efforts to seek initial accreditation. The SAV2 team concluded that the Reach Institute for School Leadership was vigilant and addressed thoroughly those salient issues identified by the WSCUC Commission. The institution's diligent efforts have resulted in demonstrable improvement of institutional functioning and advancement of Reach's educational mission.

Based on a thorough review of the institutional report, exhibits, and interviews of various constituents and external stakeholders, the SAV2 team achieved agreement in its professional judgment that the Reach Institute for School Leadership meets Standards of Accreditation 1, 2, 3, and 4 at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation. It is important to emphasize that only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an institution is in compliance with the Standards.

The following commendations and recommendations are offered as a means for continuing improvement in Reach's continued realization of its educational mission and institutional effectiveness:

Commendations

The team commends the Reach Institute for School Leadership for the following elements:

1. Impressive progress made since the initial site visit, especially related to academic program review, student support services, definition and refinement of faculty scholarship aligned with mission, assessment of student learning outcomes, expansion of members and range of expertise of the Board of Directors, and appointment of a chief academic officer.

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2. Refinement and expansion of decision-making processes in academic affairs, administrative operations, board functioning, and strategic planning to ensure genuine shared governance and institutional advancement.
 3. Dedication of institutional commitment across all constituencies to Reach's mission of an innovative applied learning model dedicated to reforming the preparation of teachers and instructional leaders enabling them to address equitable access for K-12 students.
 4. Genuine and reciprocal partnerships with local school districts in a mutual commitment to urban schooling characterized by exceptional teachers and leaders.

Recommendations

The team recommends the following elements for enhancing institutional quality and student achievement:

1. Advance Reach's institutional research capacity and sophistication for assessment of institutional effectiveness and use of data in decision making, including evaluation of the most effective institutional research infrastructure that meets the needs of the institution in the long-term. (CFR 4.2)
2. Increase maturation of assessment and analytic processes that incorporate comparative data of student learning outcomes; disaggregation of data for student sub-populations; longitudinal tracking of students' achievement of learning outcomes, with evidence of the impact of interventions on subsequent student performance; and implementation of formal quality assurance processes for periodic assessment of its non-academic operations, including student services and administrative effectiveness. (CFR 2.4, 4.1, 4.3, 4.6)

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3. Implement optimal strategies for increased revenue generation and sustained financial stability, supported through expanded marketing/communications, systematic enrollment management (particularly for master's degrees), and strategic planning processes. (CFR 3.4, 4.6, 4.7)
 4. As Reach evolves and builds capacity, develop a dedicated position of chief financial officer to ensure the institution effectively meets its commitments to fiscal stability and sustainability. (CFR 3.8)
 5. Expand capacity for research by faculty and students to disseminate findings aimed to increase effective teaching and leadership in K-12 schools and districts. (CFR 2.8, 2.9)
 6. Focus attention to creating a graduate school culture that fosters a rigorous research-based theoretical framework within the context of applied learning (CFR 2.1, 2.2b)
 7. Enhance Board operations by adding members with specialized knowledge and skills, particularly related to marketing and public relations, fundraising, and law. (CFR 3.9)

Preparation for Reaffirmation under 2013 Standards

In evaluating how Reach will design a process sufficient to prepare for reaffirmation of accreditation six years after accreditation is granted, the team finds that the institution has positioned itself as a learning organization capable of evidence gathering, analysis, and action. Through continuation and refinement of its leadership structure, decision-making matrix, and communication processes established to meet initial accreditation standards, Reach has created the infrastructure and capacity for examining continually the meaning, quality, and integrity of its degree programs. The institution has designed and implemented policies and procedures to ensure continuing quality of graduate-level

competencies and to assess achievement of learning outcomes upon program completion. By virtue of its attention to modeling of enrollment trends and revenue streams, its development of a new strategic plan, and its expanding alignment with external partners, Reach is taking the necessary measures to ensure long-term fiscal and programmatic sustainability in a rapidly changing higher education landscape. Further, Reach took seriously the recommendation from the SAV1 team in that it has enhanced institutional performance by seeking external measures of program and institutional effectiveness through the lens of competitor and aspirational peer institutions. In its institutional report, Reach evidences perceptive self-reflection, summarizes its many accomplishments over its ten-year history, and expresses its own recommendations for continuous improvement, which are endorsed by the SAV2 team. In conclusion, the SAV2 team has confidence in Reach's ability to sustain its commitment to the four WSCUC standards and to the higher education community in California.

SECTION IV. APPENDICES

Four federal compliance forms are appended to this report.

Appendix A Credit Hour and Program Length Review Checklist

Appendix B Student Complaints Review Form

Appendix C Transfer Credit Review Form

Appendix D Marketing and Recruitment Form

Appendix A: Credit Hour and Program Length Review Checklist

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Policy on credit hour	Is this policy easily accessible? YES
	Where is the policy located? Course Catalog 2016-17, page 35
Processes for 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.
	Does the institution adhere to this procedure? YES
	Comments:
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? YES
	Comments: Instructional Leadership Academy and Teaching Academy Program calendars articulate meeting times, and faculty/administration verified compliance with credit hours policy
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? No online or hybrid courses are offered
	What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? Not applicable
	What degree level(s)? Not applicable
	What discipline(s)? Not applicable
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? Not applicable
	Comments
Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated) <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	How many syllabi were reviewed? Sixteen (16)
	What kinds of courses? Credential and master's degree courses
	What degree level(s)? Master of Education
	What discipline(s)? Instructional Leadership and Teaching
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? X <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	How many programs were reviewed? Two
	What kinds of programs were reviewed? Master's degree programs in Education and Instructional Leadership
	What degree level(s)? Master level
	What discipline(s)? Instructional Leadership (32 units) and Teaching (34 units)
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? YES The Instructional Leadership Academy is 2 years to a master's degree. The Teaching Academy is 3 years to master's degree.
	Comments:

Review completed March 17, 2017

Appendix B: 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.)	Verified Yes/No
Policy on student complaints	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints?	Yes
	Is the policy or procedure easily accessible? Where?	Yes
	Comments: The institution publishes a policy on student complaints and grievances in the Student Handbook.	
Process/procedure	Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? Please describe briefly: The institution has both an informal and formal grievance procedure. Students are encouraged to discuss issues with the program coordinators and the associate director and to exhaust all informal procedures prior to moving into the formal grievance procedures. Formal grievances are sent in writing to the chief academic officer who makes a determination about the use of informal grievance procedures and takes steps to properly investigate, form conclusions, provide notice, and provide an opportunity for parties to respond before a final decision is made.	Yes
	Does the institution adhere to this procedure?	Yes
	Comments: While the institution has a procedure for addressing student complaints, the institution reports that no complaints have been received.	
Records	Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? Where?	Yes
	Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? Please describe briefly:	Yes
	Comments: Records are to be maintained by senior administration and student complaints monitored over time to discern any patterns that may suggest actions for improvement of institutional processes.	

*§602-16(1)(1)(ix) See also WASC Senior College and University Commission's Complaints and Third Party Comment Policy.

Review completed March 17, 2017

Appendix C: Transfer Credit Review Form

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

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)	Verified Yes/No
Transfer Credit Policy(s)	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit?	YES
	Is the policy publically available? If so, where? Catalog, Student Handbook, website, and attached to Request for Graduate Transfer Credit Form	YES
	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? Grade of B or better; equivalency and currency of course content; assessment of field of study changes in recent years.	YES
	Comments:	

*§602.24(e): Transfer of credit policies. The accrediting agency must confirm, as part of its review for renewal of accreditation, that the institution has transfer of credit policies that--
 (1) Are publicly disclosed in accordance with 668.43(a) (11); and
 (2) Include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education.

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

Review Completed March 17, 2017

Appendix D: 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.	Verified Yes/No
**Federal regulations	Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students?	Yes
	Comments: Federal regulations for recruiting students are followed by the Reach Institute.	
Degree completion and cost	Does the institution provide accurate information about the typical length of time to degree?	Yes
	Does the institution provide accurate information about the overall cost of the degree?	Yes
	Comments: The institution provides clear definitions of degrees and levels of achievement for graduation for its credential and master’s degree programs, including length of time to degree. Tuition information for each program is clear and available on the website.	
Careers and employment	Does the institution provide accurate information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable?	Yes
	Does the institution provide accurate information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable?	Yes
	Comments: Graduate employment information is available on its website and in its recruitment information sessions.	

*§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 March 17, 2017