

REPORT OF THE WSCUC VISITING TEAM
ACCREDITATION REVIEW

To San Francisco Art Institute

April 8 – 10, 2015

Team Roster

Nancy Uscher, President, Cornish College of the Arts (Chair)
Kerry Walk, Interim President, Otis College of Art and Design (Assistant Chair)
Hélène S. Garrison, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Laguna College of Art and Design
Bradley E. Williams, Executive Vice President of Business Services, Simpson University
Christopher Oberg, Vice President, WASC Senior College and University Commission
(WSCUC Liaison)

The team evaluated the institution under the 2013 WSCUC Senior College and University Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective evaluation for consideration and action by the institution and by the WSCUC 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. This report and the Commission letter are made available to the public by publication on the WSCUC website.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of the Institution and Its Accreditation History	1
B. Description of the Team’s Process	3
C. Institution’s Reaccreditation Report and Update: Quality and Rigor	3
D. Response to Issues Raised in Previous Commission Actions and Reviews	4

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS

A. Degree Programs: Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of Degrees	4
B. Educational Quality: Student Learning, Core Competencies, and Standards of Performance at Graduation	5
C. Student Success: Student Learning, Retention, and Graduation	7
D. Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program Review, Assessment, and Use of Data and Evidence	9
E. Sustainability: Financial Viability and Preparing for the Changing Higher Education Environment	10
F. Conclusion: Reflection and Plans for Improvement	12

SECTION III – EVALUATION OF ELECTRONIC EXHIBIT PORTFOLIO

A. Compliance Checklist	12
B. Self-Review under the Standards	13

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

A. Commendations	13
B. Recommendations	14

APPENDICES – COMPLIANCE CHECKLISTS

A. WSCUC Compliance Checklist	16
B. Credit Hour and Program Length Review Checklist	19
C. Marketing and Recruitment Review Checklist	20
D. Student Complaints Review Checklist	21
E. Transfer Credit Review Checklist	23

SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

Regional accreditation is an activity that institutions of higher learning participate in voluntarily in order to support the success of all students; continuously improve teaching, learning, and overall institutional effectiveness; and demonstrate integrity, sustainability, and accountability to their higher education peers, their supporters, and the public.

The team greatly appreciates the San Francisco Art Institute’s willing and serious-minded engagement of the WSCUC accreditation process, as well as the institution’s generosity and candor throughout the Accreditation Visit. The team would also like to express gratitude to all who facilitated the visit and participated in it.

A. Description of the Institution and Its Accreditation History

Institutional History

Founded in 1871, the San Francisco Art Association launched the California School of Design in 1874. The institution was renamed the California School of Fine Arts in 1916, and was renamed again in 1961—as the San Francisco Art Institute, also known as SFAI, or the Institute. Private, independent, and nonprofit, SFAI is one of the oldest and most influential professional art schools in the nation, with a long list of prestigious faculty and accomplished alumni. Veritable household names that are associated with SFAI include Mark Rothko, Ansel Adams, Imogen Cunningham, Angela Davis, and Annie Leibovitz, to name just a few.

In addition to providing a rich classroom and studio environment for learning, SFAI has a strong tradition of enhancing students’ artistic education while enriching the cultural life of the city through robust public engagement with art and artists. The newly approved mission statement captures both the Institute’s abiding commitment to preparing students for professional lives in the arts and its related commitment to community outreach:

The San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI) is dedicated to the intrinsic value of art and its vital role in shaping and enriching society and the individual. As a diverse community of working artists and scholars, the Institute provides its students with a rigorous education in the fine arts and preparation for a life in the arts through an immersive studio environment, an integrated liberal arts curriculum, and critical engagement with the world.

Today, SFAI offers the following degrees:

- BA in History and Theory of Contemporary Art;
- BFA in Art and Technology, Film, New Genres, Painting, Photography, and Sculpture;
- Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Studio Art (with optional emphasis in Art and Technology, Film, New Genres, Painting, Photography, Printmaking, or Sculpture);
- MA in Exhibition and Museum Studies, as well as History and Theory of Contemporary Art;

Printmaking,

- MFA in Studio Art (with optional emphasis in Art and Technology, Film, New Genres, Painting, Photography, Printmaking, or Sculpture);
- Dual Degree MA/MFA in History and Theory of Contemporary Art and Studio Art (with optional emphasis in Art and Technology, Film, New Genres, Painting, Photography, Printmaking, or Sculpture);
- MA (low residency) in History and Theory of Contemporary Art; and
- MFA (low residency) in Studio Art (with optional emphasis in Art and Technology, Film, New Genres, Painting, Photography, Printmaking, or Sculpture).

In Fall 2014, SFAI's enrollment was 672 headcount / 651 FTE in the degree programs. The 5-year average retention rate for first-time full-time undergraduates is 63% (data from Fall 2009-13). The 5-year average graduation rate for first-time full-time undergraduates is 38% (data from Fall 2005-08 cohorts). SFAI employs approximately 21 full-time tenure-line faculty, 150 part-time faculty, and 110 full-time staff.

In addition, SFAI offers several non-degree programs that serve the public, as well as approximately 40 lectures and 50 exhibitions a year that are free and open to the public, with annual attendance estimated at 30,000.

Reaccreditation History

SFAI was first accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges' Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) on April 30, 1954, when the institution's name was the California School of Fine Arts. In various action letters written between 1954 and 2005, the Commission expressed concerns primarily about the institution's financial management and stability, and the quality and breadth of the general education program.

SFAI's more recent history of accreditation is as follows:

- Accreditation was reaffirmed in 2005, at which time a Special Visit was scheduled for Fall 2007 to review financial, enrollment, and staffing issues.
- The 2007 Special Visit resulted in a Commission action (February 2008) continuing accreditation but issuing a formal Notice of Concern and scheduling a follow-up Special Visit in Spring 2010.
- The 2010 Special Visit resulted in a Commission action (June 2010) continuing accreditation but also continuing the formal Notice of Concern and scheduling another Special Visit, for Fall 2011, to address issues related to financial viability, the operation and effectiveness of the governing board, and the development of a comprehensive strategic plan.
- The 2011 Special Visit resulted in a Commission action (February 2011) removing the Notice of Concern and requesting evidence of progress in the areas of finances, governing board, strategic planning, and retention and graduation rates in the next accreditation cycle.
- In the current accreditation cycle, SFAI has been a Pilot 2 institution, for which it is to be commended. The cycle began with an Offsite Review in December 2013. The Accreditation Visit, originally scheduled for Fall 2014, was deferred until Spring 2015 to

give SFAI sufficient time to address the lines of inquiry identified by the WASC team. The present report reflects the team's findings following the Accreditation Visit held in Spring 2015.

SFAI is also accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), which sent an evaluation team of peer reviewers to conduct a concurrent, separate site visit during the WSCUC team's Accreditation Visit.

B. Description of the Team's Process

The team met in Oakland, California, December 11-12, 2013, for the Offsite Review. Following a thorough review of the materials provided, the team identified four lines of inquiry to be pursued during the Accreditation Visit—in brief, comprehensive strategic planning (including finances, facilities, and technology), shared governance and decision-making, demonstrated improvement in student learning and success, and greater engagement with the accreditation process. The team also recommended that SFAI be given additional time to prepare for the Accreditation Visit, which was originally scheduled for Spring 2014.

The Accreditation Visit took place April 8 through April 10, 2015. One member of the Offsite Review team was unable to participate in the Accreditation Visit and so was replaced by Brad Williams, Executive Vice President of Business Services, Simpson University. SFAI prepared significant additional documentation in response to the team's Summary of Lines of Inquiry. Team members were assigned to focus on specific WSCUC Standards and components of the institution's Self-Study, and accordingly reviewed relevant documentation and requested additional documentation as necessary. Through a full schedule of meetings, the team heard from dozens of SFAI students, faculty, staff, and trustees on topics that are essential to a consideration of WSCUC accreditation, such as the meaning of the institution's degrees, assessment of learning outcomes at every level, student success, and institutional sustainability.

C. Institution's Reaccreditation Report and Update: Quality and Rigor

The team found that the Self-Study and accompanying exhibits prepared for the Offsite Review in Fall 2013 represented only an initial level of development, lacking supporting evidence related to the topics addressed and lacking sufficient reflection. The team therefore requested significant additional documentation and reflection in preparation for the Accreditation Visit, including the following:

- Evidence of complete and robust planning around finances, facilities, and technology;
- An overview of governance and decision-making processes, including evidence of involvement with faculty in important decisions and policy development;
- Evidence of an approach to student learning and success that includes documented student learning outcome assessment at every level (institutional, program, and course), learning-centered program review, and the use of assessment results and institutional research findings in decision-making and continuous improvement; and
- Deeper reflection on the issues identified above, the additional documentation requested, and, indeed, all documentation required by WSCUC for reaffirmation of accreditation.

Given the relative lack of depth represented by the Self-Study, the team recommended that the Accreditation Visit be deferred until Spring 2015, as noted above, and that the institution consult with the institution's WSCUC liaison, Vice President Christopher Oberg, about steps going forward. The team notes that a similar lack of supporting data and reflection in some areas was noted by the 2011 Special Visit team (see the Commission's March 7, 2012, action letter). As was true during the 2011 visit, the institution provided the necessary documentation immediately in advance of and during the visit. The team recommends that SFAI become more knowledgeable about, and better able to meet, WSCUC expectations regarding reports for reaccreditation.

D. Response to Issues Raised in Previous Commission Actions and Reviews

In reviewing previous Commission actions and reviews alongside the team's Lines of Inquiry from the 2013 Offsite Review, the team notes the following ongoing areas of concern:

- Strengthening the institution's financial position (CFRs 1.8, 3.5, 4.1),
- Developing and implementing a comprehensive strategic planning (CFRs 2.7, 2.13, 3.2, 3.4, 3.8, 4.1-3),
- Clarifying and bolstering shared governance and decision-making (CFRs 3.7, 3.10, 4.5, 4.6),
- Establishing and assessing student learning outcomes at every level (CFRs 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7), and
- Understanding and improving retention and graduation rates (CFRs 2.6, 2.10-13, 3.11)

SFAI's response to these issues is very much the topic of the present report, but in summary the institution has made progress in every area, especially with regard to achieving financial stability and planning strategically for a sustainable future, but must continue to focus institutional attention and resources on these areas to sustain progress.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS

A. Degree Programs: Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of Degrees

The mission statement of the San Francisco Art Institute clearly articulates dual objectives: providing students with a rigorous education in the fine arts while simultaneously engaging with the community through meaningful outreach. SFAI educational programs are fine arts oriented, delivered through an immersive studio practice that encourages critical discourse among peers and with the community. It is one of only a small number of art schools to have chosen this fine arts direction. That said, it offers a wide variety of media and approaches to the fine arts in its BFA and MFA programs: painting, sculpture and ceramics, printmaking, new genres, photography, and filmmaking. Its BA and MA degrees align favorably with the studio programs: History and Theory of Contemporary Art and Exhibition and Museum Studies. SFAI must remain watchful of the issues created by the small enrollment of some of its majors. Although the interdisciplinary nature and fluidity of the programming lessen the risk of very small

numbers in certain classes, it must be noted that a few students interviewed registered concern with classes not having a critical mass of students.

The Institute accurately communicates its programs to the public. The website contains degree requirements, program goals, and curriculum templates. Course descriptions are not included on the website, neither are Program Learning Outcomes.

Evidence of student learning was witnessed in a gallery exhibition curated for the NASAD visiting team. Although the WASC team was not formally invited to view this or any other example of student work, at least one team member found the work to accurately represent the goals of the school. It exhibited a variety of styles and media and manifested a genuine engagement with social concerns.

SFAI earnestly seeks to engage the community in its programming and thereby to enhance the educational experience of its students. The website lists numerous public activities that encourage dialogue and interaction between its students and the public. Under the tab labeled “Exhibitions and Public Events,” SFAI reiterates its goals:

“We invite you to meet an artist, tour an exhibition, converse with leading scholars, sip wine before an artist’s talk, experience the view, join an artist-driven adventure, or take a new look at Rivera’s monumental fresco. By providing direct access to artists and ideas that advance our culture, SFAI inspires individuals of all backgrounds to engage critically and passionately with contemporary art.”

B. Educational Quality: Student Learning, Core Competencies, and Standards of Performance at Graduation

Teaching and Learning (CFRs 2.1, 2.2, 2.2a, 2.2b, 2.8)

SFAI strives for educational excellence and has assembled a talented and dedicated teaching staff composed of 21 full-time faculty and a pool of 167 visiting faculty members. Plans are to hire four more tenure-track faculty for AY2015-2016. The faculty delivers core instruction at four degree levels: BA (Urban Studies – now suspended; History and Theory of Contemporary Art); MA (Exhibition and Museum Studies, History and Theory of Contemporary Art, Urban Studies—also suspended); BFA (Painting, Photography, Film, New Genres, Printmaking, Sculpture, Design and Technology—now called Art and Technology) and MFA and Post-Baccalaureate in Studio Art comprised of Film, New Genres, Painting, Photography, Printmaking, and Sculpture).

Academic and Studio programs are appropriate to the level of the individual degrees.

SFAI faculty delivering the academic and studio programs are experts in their field and fully engaged in teaching. Some full-time members of the faculty express a concern with the challenge of maintaining an artistic practice while engaged in teaching and mentoring. The large part-time, “visiting faculty” complements the work of the permanent faculty and offers students a variety of meaningful perspectives from the art world. The dual/twin mission of SFAI as an educational

institution that is also a cultural center offering public programs further contributes to wide-ranging opportunities for students to engage with the community and the art world while pursuing their degrees.

Interdisciplinarity is a core value of the Institute and students are encouraged to explore disciplines other than their own through the elective courses that are part of their academic plan. This desired fluidity is at times hampered by the uneven application of pre-requisites, perhaps a reflection of the complexity of the multiple programs. Also hampering ideal progress to degree is the fact that required courses are not offered each semester and that a published schedule of the cycle of offerings is not available.

Learning Outcomes (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7)

Institutional Learning Outcomes have recently been developed and appear clear and deliberate, while departmental LOs are somewhat less well-developed. The latter are published on the school's website but they may not be deliberately disseminated to the student population. A review of course syllabi demonstrates an emerging attempt by the faculty to include LOs for all courses, but these are at times embedded in course objectives, thus creating a lack of clarity. Course objectives are teacher-centered while Learning Outcomes are student centered. The distinction between the two could be made more explicit.

Learning Outcomes at the course and departmental level would be improved if curricular mapping supported them. Mapping graphically demonstrates increasing levels of mastery and functions as a guide toward successful completion (A Curriculum Alignment Matrix appears in the Program Review and Self-Study Guide produced in AY013-2014 but no examples of its use were presented). Several efforts have been made toward greater clarity in Learning Outcomes. They are evident in the revamped Contemporary Studio Practices course, the revised Senior Review Seminar and the review of the English Composition sequence. These course reviews show real promise of strengthening SFAI's institutional goals through programmatic and course initiatives.

Assessment (CFRs 2.6, 2.7)

Student assessment is performed traditionally and appears to be done effectively within the scope of the departments. The critique is a mainstay of assessment, as are critical discourse and self-reflection. SFAI fosters students' personal and artistic growth through conceptual challenges: the school's goal is to create critical thinkers who pose difficult questions and break new ground and who are able to function in a complex and increasingly diverse world

There are currently two school wide major student assessment measures: the interdisciplinary freshman Contemporary Practices course and the Senior Review Seminar. A third touch-point assessment is being considered through a Junior or Mid-Point Review. This is a positive development and would assist students in preparing for the capstone experience by revealing any deficiencies or weaknesses that could be remedied in a timely manner without delaying their completion of requirements.

Thus individual student assessment appears well established and efficient. Likewise, course assessment reviews are efficiently done and take into consideration many factors: student evaluations, student surveys and forums, faculty discussions with students and in curriculum committees. However, there appear to be no data collected to support and inform the conclusions of the discussions: there are no grade studies, no persistence rates for individual courses, no disaggregated data to show the performance of specific groups of students in individual coursework. Such data would enhance the fine work being performed in course reviews.

A similar concern can be expressed about departmental program reviews. These are conducted according to a rotating schedule that began in 2009 and continues through academic year 2020-2021. A Program Review and Self-Study Guide was created in 2013-2014 and appears comprehensive in its scope, but while it addresses what it calls “student data,” it only references student demographics, not performance. Each review since 2009 has undoubtedly resulted in program improvements as outlined in the comprehensive audit of program review submitted with the responses to the Lines of Inquiry. This systematic and timely approach is positive but it would also be informed and enhanced by the collection of data. In addition to the elements currently in use for program review—comprehensive self-study and external evaluation by peers in the field—SFAI should collect departmental data concerning grades, persistence in certain courses, and success rates of disaggregated groups. For example, grade inflation was mentioned by one of the faculty groups as a concern but no systematic data was shown to support anecdotal findings and the solutions proposed to address the problem. SFAI would benefit greatly from the systematic use of data in its already fine assessment work at every level.

C. Student Success: Student Learning, Retention, and Graduation

Student success, as measured by first-to-second-year retention rates and graduation rates for first-time full-time undergraduates, has been a serious and ongoing issue for SFAI, one that the Institute has recently taken significant steps to address. Progress in this area is commendable, while sustained efforts will be necessary for genuine improvement to occur.

Retention and Graduation Rates (2.10)

SFAI fully recognizes that retention and graduation rates for first-time full-time undergraduates are “unacceptably low.” Retention has improved somewhat in recent years. In Fall 2008, as the Recession was getting underway, retention of first-time full-time undergraduates hit its lowest point in eight years, at 47%. Since then, improved retention has resulted in a five-year average for Fall 2009-13 of 63%. The retention rate in Fall 2013 (the most recent year for which data were made available) is 69%, a promising result.

Given the Institute’s low retention rates, it is no surprise that the six-year graduation rate for the Fall 2008 cohort is 33%, down from 50% for the Fall 2004 cohort. The five-year average graduation rate for the Fall 2004-08 cohorts is 38%. Recent stronger retention rates suggest that six-year graduation rates will rise in the near future. Even so, both current and anticipated retention and graduation rates are below average for comparably sized institutions in the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD), which comprises similar institutions in the U.S. and Canada.

These relatively low retention and graduation rates require ongoing monitoring, and the Institute must continue to make every effort to better support and promote student learning and success. (Some of the commendable efforts taken to date are discussed below.)

Institutional Research Capacity (1.2, 2.10)

Using WSCUC reporting requirements as a framework for improvement, SFAI has developed its institutional research (IR) capacity to better understand student success, especially at the undergraduate level. The institution is able to disaggregate data by areas of study and appropriate demographic categories, including cohort (e.g., Transfer, upper-division), and has used the data to identify areas for attention and growth. For example, a finding that students who failed to declare a major at the end of the first year were less likely to persist to graduation led to an institutional effort to ensure that all students declared their major in a timely way. The institution also conducts numerous surveys, including a first-year survey, a student satisfaction survey, and an online exit survey, and participates in several consortial and national surveys, such as the Strategic National Alumni Arts Project (SNAAP).

With the establishment of the position of Institutional Research and Academic Planning Associate in 2011-12, reporting to the Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs, SFAI expanded opportunities for more informative program reviews and evidence-based decision-making. The team recommends developing greater statistical expertise in its Office of Institutional Research and better integration with the efforts of the Enrollment Management team.

Student Success Initiatives (2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14)

The institution has made considerable strides in creating structures to support the success of all students. One important step was the development of an institution-specific definition of student success by a group of key stakeholders: “A student is successful at SFAI when s/he develops intellectual/academic/artistic competence; establishes and fosters interpersonal skills, including self-awareness and insight; develops civic responsibility and engages with the SFAI community; and persists through to graduation.” This definition of student success is consistent with SFAI’s mission, values, and character as a private, independent, art school with a focus on preparing students, through a rigorous curriculum and abundant community engagement opportunities, to become professionals in fields related to the visual arts.

SFAI’s most important step in bolstering retention and graduation was the establishment of the high-level, cross-sector Retention Steering Committee (RSC), along with a Retention Working Committee. This RSC has launched a slate of initiatives aimed at achieving concrete goals over the next several years. Following are some of the initiatives overseen by the RSC:

- *Academic Advising.* Expanded academic advising for undergraduates from one professional staff member to two. Academic advising regarding degree requirements was made mandatory for students who have completed under 46 or over 86 units.

- *Major Declaration.* All students are now required to declare their major at the end of the first year as a way to support their learning and success.
- *Priority Registration.* Efforts have been undertaken to increase the percentage of students registering during Priority Registration period.
- *Diversity.* In support of *all* students, SFAI has adopted a Diversity Statement, launched a renewable Diversity Scholarship for first-generation Hispanic/Latino and African American students, developed an Institutional Learning Outcome that focuses on “difference” broadly construed, begun to implement best practices in diversity hiring, and taken other steps that create an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Such efforts are reflective of the institution’s overall commitment to student learning and success.

D. Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program Review, Assessment, and Use of Data and Evidence

Quality Assurance Processes (CFRs 4.1, 4.2)

Although SFAI has recognized the importance of processes to collect, analyze, and interpret data; track results over time; use comparative data; and make improvements, the institution will need to strengthen this critical institutional function in the future. There is currently only one individual staffing this important area. Although the institution has invested in his professional development, which is to be commended, the SFAI will need to continue to develop its IR capacity and expertise. In this challenging environment, the institution will look forward to being increasingly evidence-based in support of decision-making, student learning and success, and program and organizational improvement.

Institutional Learning and Improvement (CFRs 4.3-4.7)

SFAI is committed to improvement based on data and evidence, and as noted in the response to CFRs 4.1 and 4.2, the institution will need to bolster the staffing of the IR office or find another approach to strengthening the IR operations. In an attempt to make improvements in the IR area, SFAI has invested in a more robust statistical package – SPSS by IBM – that will assist the staff in a more complex analysis of institutional data. SFAI is also a new participant in two key surveys – the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Cooperative Research Program (CIRP). As is noted in the report’s Teaching and Learning section, SFAI’s inquiry into teaching and learning to improve curricula, pedagogy and assessment continues to build on early steps, such as developing institutional learning outcomes. The work as yet to be accomplished is conveyed in the aforementioned section, also addressing CFRs 2.1-2.8. Tools such as program review will help achieve the regular and consistent assessment of institutional effectiveness. Moving forward with a multi-year plan for program review, with funding for hiring outside consultants clearly addressed in the budget, will institutionalize this effort. As is noted in one of the report’s commendations, SFAI has created a strategic plan and complementary documents, such as a technology plan, that demonstrate the seriousness of purpose of planning at the institution. Key priorities and future directions are addressed in the plan. The President, Cabinet and Board are aligned as a leadership team to anticipate and respond to the vastly and rapidly

changing higher educational environment.

E. Sustainability: Financial Viability and Preparing for the Changing Higher Education Environment

Adequacy of Financial Resources (CFR 3.4)

The institution has shown a recent history of living within its financial means (i.e. FY 2014-2015 will be the seventh year in a row that operating expenses have been less than operating revenues). This is an important metric in achieving financial sustainability and stability. Given the history of financial instability at SFAI, this is a commendable achievement.

Several good financial indicators continue for the current 2014-2015 fiscal year:

- An end of year operational surplus will allow for
 - Investment into capital projects
 - The addition of monies to a cash reserve fund (anticipated to be a \$1 million fund to be designated for use by the board of trustees)
- As of March 31, 2015 the SFAI endowment had grown to \$9.45 million

Acknowledging recent financial improvement for SFAI, there are still significant operational and infrastructure needs within the institution. Not the least of these is a large backlog of deferred maintenance due to the age of the existing facilities and a lack of resources over the years to be able to keep up with maintenance, make improvements and provide robust disability access.

SFAI and its COO should be commended for getting the Chestnut Street building assets and the value of the existing art work in that facility on to the SFAI financial statements which has helped to stabilize a satisfactory Department of Education Financial Responsibility Index calculation. Specifically, the institution was able to add significant assets to the financial statements through the following:

- Transfer of trusteeship of the Chestnut Street property from the Regents of the University of California to SFAI.
 - Net book value of over \$22 million as of June 30, 2014
- Capitalization of artwork owned by SFAI.
 - Fair Market Value at June 30, 2014 of over \$9.5 million
- Recording these previously unrecorded assets has helped to achieve a consistently satisfactory Department of Education Financial Responsibility Index score.

As SFAI proceeds with its plan to improve and expand facilities, caution is recommended relative to taking on long-term debt. Additional debt service increases fixed operating costs, thereby limiting operational flexibility and putting greater risk on consistently being able to achieve a balanced budget through operations. Any debt that cannot be serviced through donations and gifts will be obligated to be paid through operations funding.

Alignment of Financial Resources (CFRs 3.4 and 3.5)

It is important for an educational institution to appropriately align its resources to support student learning and success. It appears that recent budget and resource allocations have been in line with institutional priorities. The strategic plan that was recently developed and is currently being used across the institution has served the school well in this regard. In addition, the strategic plan has provided stability, common ground for discussion about the future and a blueprint for bold goals and aspirations.

Discussions with members of the SFAI organization indicate a good working relationship and open communications with the COO regarding budget priorities and resource allocations. While not all requests for funds can be fulfilled in any given budget year, there seems to be a broad understanding of what drives SFAI revenues and how resources are allocated.

There are some questions about the alignment of financial resources that are being asked on the campus. Three of the most consistent questions/concerns follow.

- Will an emphasis on public programs and community engagement divert financial resources away from student priorities, student learning and student success?
- Recently the academic structure was changed with respect to the faculty organization structure (i.e. number of department chairs was reduced). Will this change have an impact on the ability to serve students well and provide an excellent student experience?
- Will borrowing in order to be able proceed with the Fort Mason project hamstring the organization as any debt service that cannot be covered by donations and gifts will be funded through operational expenses? While the Fort Mason project and the move of the graduate program from the 3rd street facilities to this new location will serve graduate students, will the student experience for the undergraduate students suffer for a lack of adequate resources?

Evaluating the Changing Higher Education Landscape and Anticipating Potential Changes (CFR 4.7)

SFAI has used the strategic planning process and the development of its strategic plan to evaluate the current higher education landscape and to anticipate how to respond over the next 5 years. Primary among the plans for SFAI is the establishment of a mission that incorporates both being an educational institution and being an institution committed to public programs and public engagement.

Several questions that the institution has been grappling with and will continue to consider moving forward include:

- SFAI is committed to being a fine arts school only
 - Will this limit growth?
 - Will demand for fine arts programs provide enough students (i.e. revenue) to adequately fund the operations and infrastructure of the institution?

- Physical capacity is currently limited to approximately 700 to 750 students and will continue to be limited to approximately these numbers even after the Fort Mason and Chestnut Street physical plant projects.
 - Will this number of students be enough to be able to sustain SFAI financially?
- There is currently no distance learning component to the SFAI experience.
 - Is there a way to incorporate distance learning into the SFAI curriculum in order to enhance the student experience and/or to expand the capacity of the institution?
- Rising costs of higher education put a strain on student access to that education, and the ability for students and families to pay those costs gets more and more challenging.
- In order to implement the plans for the Fort Mason project, a very aggressive (in light of the history of fund raising for SFAI) fund raising goal has been established. Should actual fund raising fall short of this goal, the SFAI contingency plan is to borrow required funds in order to carry out the Fort Mason project. In that event, and in accordance with their contingency plans, SFAI would likely be required to annually increase tuition beyond the original goals stated in the strategic plan.

F. Conclusion: Reflection and Plans for Improvement

Over the past five years, San Francisco Art Institute has made considerable gains in becoming a healthy and thriving institution. The quest for continuing improvement is a fundamental part of accreditation's goals. Therefore, even with the positive developments in the institution's evolution, improvement must be sustained. Embedded in the team's seven recommendations are specific areas on which to focus. These strategic pathways are: mission and vision, shared governance, assessment of student learning outcomes, student success, institutional research capacity, financial stewardship and ADA access.

While San Francisco Art Institute has developed plans and initiatives for improvement, the institution needs to be vigilant about coordinating these efforts and disciplined to make sure that there is steady progress toward specific goals. One of the most important aspects of continuous improvement is reflecting on evidence and incorporating this feedback into the plans for building quality assurance into the life of the institution.

SECTION III – EVALUATION OF ELECTRONIC EXHIBIT PORTFOLIO

A. Compliance Checklist

SFAI submitted a Compliance Checklist for the Offsite Review in Fall 2013. During the Accreditation Visit in Spring 2015, the team was pleased to receive an updated checklist. The checklist accurately lists locations and links for required documents. In addition to making several documents available via the Institute's public website, many others are available on a password-protected intranet site, accessible only by members of the SFAI community. The team encourages SFAI to post all relevant documents on the intranet site as a way to support the dissemination of information within the academic community and to promote shared governance.

B. Self-Review under the Standards

SFAI prepared a self-review under the Standards for the Offsite Review in Fall 2013 that represented the institution's status with honesty and fairness. The self-review usefully notes how three different stakeholder groups—the Cabinet, the Executive Committee of the Board, and the Faculty—assess the Institute's performance with regard to the Standards, showing differences of opinion that can focus attention on areas that might otherwise be ignored. For example, each stakeholder group regarded the establishment and assessment of institution-wide educational objectives (CFR 1.2) differently—the Cabinet, as a high priority; the Faculty, as a lower priority; and the Executive Committee, as an area not needing to be addressed. The team happens to agree with the Cabinet's assessment, but a critical point to be made is that SFAI's recognition of diverse viewpoints potentially enables clearer institutional self-reflection—the foundation of continuous improvement.

Although an updated self-review was not submitted for the Accreditation Visit in Spring 2015, the team was able to see substantial progress in some areas. For example, since the Offsite Review, SFAI has developed a new mission statement (CFR 1.1), which more clearly describes its purposes; made strides in terms of assessment of student learning outcomes at every level (CFRs 2.2-2.6), though efforts in this area need to be bolstered and sustained; made significant progress in achieving financial stability (3.4); and developed new mechanisms and refined existing ones, such as strategic planning and program review, for becoming a learning organization (CFRs 4.1-4.2).

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

SFAI undertook this reaccreditation review with seriousness of purpose and a strong commitment to using the process to bolster educational effectiveness and support institutional capacity and sustainability. The team makes the following commendations and recommendations based on the discussion in the body of this report.

A. Commendations

1. *Leadership Alignment (CFRs 1.3, 4.1)* – The Board of Trustees and the President are commendably aligned and forward-looking in their vision for the Institute, which builds on a rich history as a distinguished educational institution with a strong impact on the cultural life of the city.
2. *Strategic Planning (CFRs 4.1-4.4)* – SFAI has demonstrated robust strategic planning that has served the institution well, providing stability, common ground for discussion about the future, and a blueprint for bold goals and aspirations.
3. *Academic Excellence (CFRs 2.5, 2.7)* – The new academic leadership at SFAI and the dedicated faculty are commended for delivering an excellent education. Indeed, faculty and staff commitment to student learning is an important cornerstone of the institution and a testament to its values.

4. *Financial Stability (CFR 3.5)* — SFAI shows a good recent record of achieving a balanced operating budget and adding significant assets, resulting in a consistently satisfactory Department of Education Financial Responsibility Index score.

B. Recommendations

1. *Mission and Vision (CFR 1.1, 4.1)* – SFAI has a rich tradition of enhancing students’ artistic education with public programming that brings students into close contact with professional artists, critics, and intellectuals while enriching the cultural life of the City of San Francisco. The newly approved mission statement appropriately and laudably makes explicit the connection between the educational mission of the institution and its commitment to community engagement. The team recommends that SFAI strive in daily practice to achieve a full integration of these interrelated purposes and to keep in view the educational value of public programming.
2. *Shared Governance (CFR 3.11)* – Shared governance is a fundamental value of American higher education. In recognition of this value, the team recommends that SFAI continue the work of illuminating shared governance across the institution, deepening an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the different constituencies (including the involvement of faculty in important decisions and policy development), expanding channels of communication, and clarifying decision-making processes. Moreover, the team recommends that SFAI enrich the strong leadership group with a diversity of perspectives and areas of expertise so that all aspects of institutional life are represented in planning for the future. Similarly, there needs to be continuous responsiveness to capacity-building and cultural diversity in looking at Board composition in alignment with the needs of a 21st-century art institute.
3. *Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (CFRs 1.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.11, 4.4, 4.6, 4.8)* – Assessment of student learning outcomes is essential to ensure educational effectiveness and continuous improvement at every level—course, program, and institution. The team commends SFAI for the progress it has made in establishing course, program, and institutional student learning outcomes and recommends clarification of SLOs at every level, communication to the academic community, documentation of assessment results, and the use of these in curricular and institutional improvement.
4. *Student Success (CFR 1.2, 2.10)* – SFAI is encouraged to continue its efforts to support and improve student persistence and completion, enabling students to achieve their educational and professional goals.
5. *Institutional Research Capacity (CFR 2.10, 4.5)* – Institutional research is increasingly important for all higher education institutions in the current challenging environment. The team recommends that SFAI continue developing its institutional research capacity and expertise and expanding the use of institutional research in support of decision-making, student learning and success, and program and organizational improvement.

6. *Financial Stewardship (CFR 3.5)* – As SFAI proceeds with its plan to improve and expand facilities, caution is recommended relative to taking on long-term debt. Additional debt service increases fixed operating costs, thereby limiting operational flexibility and putting greater risk on consistently being able to achieve a balanced budget through operations. Any debt that cannot be serviced through donations and gifts will be obligated to be paid through operations funding.

7. *ADA Access (CFR 1.5)* – Access issues in accommodating persons with disabilities have constituted a long-standing challenge for SFAI. Such matters are included in the scope of the capital campaign. It is recommended that a phased project to reprogram the SFAI Chestnut Street building, including the library, be considered among the institution’s priorities, as an effort to champion inclusivity in improving the experience of students, staff, and faculty.

APPENDICES – COMPLIANCE FORMS

A. WSCUC Compliance Checklist

CFR	Documents Required	Link to Website or Document Portfolio	WASC Check
1.1	Mission Statement	Mission Statement	Yes
1.2	Public posting of student achievement (retention/graduation, student learning) if not in Catalog	Student Outcomes	Yes
1.3	Organization chart	Human Resources; SFAI Intranet	Yes
1.4	Academic freedom policy	Student Handbook, p.27	Yes
1.5	Diversity statements and procedures; also for accommodations of disabilities	Diversity Statement; Accessibility Services	Yes
1.6	Documents setting forth the authority of a controlling or sponsoring entity that is affiliated with the accredited institution, if any	WASC Statement of Accreditation Status; NASAD Listing; AICAD Listing	Yes
1.7.a	Catalog (online, hard copy) with complete program descriptions, graduation requirements, grading policies	Course Schedules; Degree Programs;	Yes
1.7.b	Student complaint and grievance policies	Student Handbook, p.21	Yes
1.7.c	Grade appeals policies	Student Handbook, p.11	Yes
1.7.d	Faculty complaint and grievance policies	Employee Handbook (Human Resources Office, SFAI Intranet); Faculty Handbook	Yes
1.7.e	Staff complaint and grievance policies	Employee Handbook (Human Resources Office, SFAI)	Yes
1.7.f	Employee handbook or equivalent	Employee Handbook (Human Resources Office, SFAI)	Yes
1.7.g	Redacted examples of student transcripts with key that explains credit hours, grades, degree levels, and related interpretive information	Registrar's Office	Yes
1.7.h	Policies for changing grades	Student Handbook, p.11	Yes
1.7.i	Tuition and fee schedule	Student Accounts, see Tuition and Fees	Yes
1.7.j	Tuition refund policy	Student Accounts, see Refunds	Yes

1.7.k	Policy on credit hour/award of credit; processes for review of assignment of credit; examples of reviews of syllabi to ensure equivalency among kinds of courses	Student Handbook, p.8	Yes
1.7.1	Policies on human subjects in research, if applicable	NA	N/A
1.8	Independent annual audit of finances	Controller's Office	Yes
2.1	List of degree programs, showing curriculum and units for each	Degree Programs	Yes
2.2	For associate and bachelor's degrees: general education requirements	Undergraduate Core Curriculum	Yes
2.6	Placement data, if available	NA	No
2.7	Program review process and schedule	See Appendix 14 of 2013 WASC Institutional Report	Yes
2.8	Programs re faculty scholarship and creative activity	SFAI Agreement for FUSAI, 2012- 2017, p.18	Yes
2.10	Policy on student evaluation of faculty	Faculty Handbook (Academic Affairs)	Yes
2.12	Academic calendar	Academic Calendar	Yes
2.13	Examples of recruitment and advertising material	Marketing / Admissions Office	Yes
2.14	Policy on transfer of credit	Student Handbook, p.8;	Yes
3.1	Staff development policies	Human Resources Office	Yes
3.2	List of faculty with classifications, e.g., core, full-time, part-time, adjunct, tenure track, by program as relevant	Faculty Directory ; Academic Affairs Office	Yes
3.3.a	Faculty evaluation policy and procedures	SFAI Agreement for FUSAI, 2012- 2017, p.15	Yes
3.3.b	Faculty handbook or equivalent	Faculty Handbook (Academic Affairs)	Yes
3.4	Faculty development policies	SFAI Agreement for FUSAI, 2012- 2017	Yes
3.4.a	Faculty orientation policies and procedures	Faculty Orientation Packet (Academic Affairs)	Yes
3.4.b	Policies on rights and responsibilities of non-full-time faculty	Faculty Handbook (Academic Affairs); Employee Handbook (Human Resources Office, SFAI Intranet)	Yes

3.5.a	Most recent financial aid audits	CFO and Controller's Office	Yes
.5.b	Last federal composite score, if applicable	Federal Student Aid Composite Scores; CFO and Controller's Office	Yes
3.5.c	Last report of two- and three- year cohort default rates	CFO and Controller's Office	Yes
3.9.a	List of governing board members with CVs	President's Office	Yes
3.9.b	List of governing board committees with members	President's Office	Yes
3.9.c	Minutes of board meetings for last two years (where located; not the actual minutes)	President's Office	Yes
3.9.d	Governing board bylaws and operations manual	President's Office	Yes
3.10.a	CEO biographical information	Administration, see President; Human Resources Office	Yes
3.10.b	Policy and procedure for the evaluation of president/CEO	Board Chairman	Yes
3.11.a	Faculty governing body charges, bylaws and authority, if applicable	Faculty Senate President	Yes
3.11.b	Faculty governance organization chart, if applicable	NA	No
4.1	Strategic plan and related documents	See Appendix 1 in 2013 WASC Institutional Report	Yes
4.2	Description of planning process including plan for monitoring of implementation	See Appendix 1 in 2013 WASC Institutional Report	Yes
4.4	New program approval process	NA	No
4.5	Description of institutional research function and staffing	Human Resources Office	Yes
4.8	List of major industry or other advisory committees	NA	No

Accuracy and Availability of Records: Team Only	
Policies and procedures for students, faculty and staff are stated consistently in all media	Yes
Policies, procedures, and information are readily available to relevant constituents	Yes
Records are accurate and up to date	Yes

B. Credit Hour and Program Length Review Checklist

Under federal regulations*, 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
Policy on credit hour	Is this policy easily accessible? XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Where is the policy located? In the Student and Campus Handbook, pp. 8-10
	Comments: None
Process(es)/ periodic review of credit hour	Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)? XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the institution adhere to this procedure? XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: Procedures are contained in program reviews and course approval processes. The Registrar approves all new course proposals, including credit hour compliance, and also sets up credit hours within the registration system, which Academic Affairs audits each semester
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: There are no online or hybrid course offerings.
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? N/A
	What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? N/A
	What degree level(s)? N/A
	What discipline(s)? N/A
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO N/A
	Comments: There are no online or hybrid course offerings.
Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical,	How many syllabi were reviewed? 20+
	What kinds of courses? Tutorials and Directed Studies

independent study, accelerated) <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	What degree level(s)? BFA and MFA
	What discipline(s)? Multidisciplinary, studio courses that include painting, sculpture, printmaking, new genres, film, photography.
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: None
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	How many programs were reviewed? 11
	What kinds of programs were reviewed? Studio programs as above, plus art history and theory of contemporary art and exhibition and museum studies.
	What degree level(s)? BA, MA, BFA, MFA
	What discipline(s)? Painting, sculpture, printmaking, new genres, film, photography, history and theory of contemporary art, and exhibition and museum studies
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? XX <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: None

* §602.24(f) (Credit Hour) §602.16(a)(1)(viii) (Program Length)

Review Completed By: Hélène Garrison

Date: April 16, 2015

C. Marketing and Recruitment Review Checklist

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

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments	Verified Yes/No
Federal regulations	Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students?	Yes
	Comments: SFAI's recruitment policies and practices are in line with federal regulations.	
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: Tables showing average Time to Degree for first-time full- and part-time undergraduate students, lower- and upper-division undergraduate transfer students, and master's and post-baccalaureate students are available via SFAI's website. Time-to-Degree data are also broken down by gender and ethnicity. Tables showing Cost of Attendance for undergraduate students and graduate (including post-baccalaureate) students are available via SFAI's website. Included is a Net-Price Calculator to help students and their families understand their eligibility for financial aid, giving them a more realistic sense of the Cost of Attendance.	
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: The website lists the kinds of jobs for which SFAI graduates are qualified, provides alumni profiles that demonstrate professional outcomes, and provides results of a major national survey of arts program graduates, the Strategic National Alumni Arts Project, or SNAAP, which allows institutions to compare their alumni results with those of other institutions.		

*§602.16(a)(1)(vii) and Section 487 (a)(20) of the Higher Education Act (HEA)

Review Completed By: Kerry Walk
Date: April 10, 2015

D. Student Complaints Review Checklist

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

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments	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 / student handbook and on the website
	Comments: A process is outlined for student grievances (see below). In addition a complaint process that outlines an escalation process for grievances that involves WASC and ultimately the state of CA is in place.	
Process(es)/ procedure	Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? Please describe briefly:	Yes
	The student grievance procedure begins with a written document transmitted by the student to the Dean of Students within 30 days of the events giving rise to the grievance, unless good cause for additional time exists. The Dean of Students then notifies those at the Institute whose decision or actions are at issue. The Dean of Students makes efforts to resolve the grievance and/or forms and convenes a student grievance review committee (SGRC) within 30 days of the filing of the grievance, absent exigency or absence of key persons. After a full hearing, a determination is made and parties are notified in writing. In addition to the grievance process noted above, SFAI has developed a student complaint procedure that outlines an escalation process for grievances that involves WASC and ultimately the state of CA.	
	Does the institution adhere to this procedure?	Yes
	Comments: None	
Records	Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? Where?	Yes / With the Dean of Students
	Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? Please describe briefly:	Yes
	SFAI has not had a student complaint case to date. However, if a complaint were to be filed, procedures for tracking and monitoring the complaint(s) would be similar to the process for tracking conduct cases.	
	Comments: None	

*§602-16(1)(1)(ix)

Review Completed By: Brad Williams
Date: April 10, 2015

E. Transfer Credit Review Checklist

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

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments	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?	Website - Admissions
	Does the policy(s) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education?	Yes
	Comments: SFAI provides transfer credit guidelines on its website, including the types of institutions from which transfer credit is accepted, the maximum number of credits accepted, general criteria regarding non-transferable credit (e.g., no courses graded C- or below), standards for Advanced Placement Exam credit, and a table for converting quarter units into semester units. A more detailed set of guidelines listing specific transferable courses is used by Admissions Counselors to articulate transfer credit.	

*§602.24(e) (Transfer of Credit Policies) and 668.43(a)(11) (Public Disclosure of Transfer Credit Policies)

Review Completed By: Nancy Uscher
Date: April 16, 2015