

**REPORT OF THE WSCUC VISITING TEAM**  
**SEEKING ACCREDITATION VISIT 1**  
For Institutions Seeking Initial Accreditation

To: **University of Silicon Andhra**  
February 18 – 21, 2020

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

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## SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

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

Founded in 2016, the University of Silicon Andhra (UofSA) has operated as a non-profit, public benefit corporation authorized to provide educational programming in the State of California by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE) since September 2018.

Authorized programs offered by the institution include:

- Master of Arts in Carnatic Music
- Master of Arts in Kuchipudi Dance
- Diploma in Carnatic Music
- Diploma in Kuchipudi Dance
- Diploma in Bharatanatyam
- Diploma in Sanskrit
- Diploma in Telugu
- Certificate in Carnatic Music
- Certificate in Kuchipudi Dance
- Certificate in Bharatnatyam
- Certificate in Sanskrit
- Certificate in Telugu

Building on its well-known elementary and secondary curriculum of its partner Silicon Andhra (accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Schools for WASC), UofSA intends to expand its teaching, academic, and performance offerings to become a world-renowned center of Indian arts, languages, culture, health, technology, sciences, and education.

The institution first applied for eligibility for accreditation in Spring 2018 but at that time, the Eligibility Review Committee (ERC) deferred approval of Eligibility until Fall 2018. In Fall 2018 ERC found the institution met the threshold qualifications for eligibility, moving them

to SAV1 status. UofSA has until September 2023 to move from this status to candidacy. For the purposes of this initial accreditation review, the Team is focused on the master's level programs - Master of Arts (MA) in Carnatic Music and the Master of Arts (MA) in Kuchipudi Dance.

On February 19-21, 2020, the Team convened on the UofSA campus in Milpitas, California, to review materials and conduct interviews to assess the readiness of the institution for regional accreditation. The institution's leadership provided an institutional report that was prepared in specific response to the WSCUC Criteria for Review (CFR) and the matters of attention request by the ERC. Those items included:

- Criterion 7. Governance and Administration.
- Criterion 8. Financial Resources and Accountability.
- Criterion 9. Institutional Planning.
- Criterion 10. Degree Programs.
- Criterion 13. Faculty.
- Criterion 15. Admissions.

The team found the report to be heavily influenced by literature on best practices and engaged consultants, leading to concerns that the institution had not yet matured to a level that the related policies and practices are fully enculturated within the organization was forthcoming with requested materials. UofSA's leadership team demonstrated a level of deep learning in matters of higher education administration while being fully transparent that none of the administrators had worked for a post-secondary institution prior to their positions with the institution. Hence, the relative reliance on consultants and literature to prepare the team report.

## **B. The Institution's Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 Report: Alignment with the Letter of Intent and Quality and Rigor of the Review and Report**

The Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 (SAV1) team found the institutional report to be well organized, accurate and fair in its representation of the institution, and aligned with the Letter of Intent. UofSA articulated its goals for the review process to be focused on clarity of performance standards, the standardization of student learning processes and procedures and data across the institution, institutional planning, and recruitment of qualified faculty.

The report documents engagement with items raised in the letter granting eligibility by the Eligibility Review Committee. While the team felt that the institution provided adequate evidence to support the claims made in the report, the team requested additional evidentiary materials that were provided by the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO). The institution also made all materials available during the visit which assisted the team in the on-site review.

For items that were not fully addressed in the institutional report, the team requested a full panel of meetings with constituents across the institution. During the site visit, the SAV1 team found that all constituents were strongly committed to the mission and core values of the institution. The team found the institution to be highly self-reflective and honest in its evaluation of the current state of affairs on campus and extremely committed to the future success of the institution. The scheduled meetings confirmed that administrators, faculty, staff, and students collectively believed in the educational value of the programs offered by the institution.

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

In its September 11, 2018 letter, the WSCUC Eligibility Review Committee commended UofSA's "proactive and sincere approach to responding to the panel's concerns" by providing "evidence of the seriousness of the institution in undertaking the process to achieve WSCUC accreditation." However, the committee recommended that UofSA address issues related to six Eligibility Criteria. The team found that the institution was able to demonstrate that it had made efforts in all of the areas of recommendation and concern raised in the Eligibility Review Committee's letter granting eligibility. While most of the issues appear to have been addressed, the Team has identified areas requiring additional work. Those matters will be addressed in Section II. Below is the summary of the institute's responses to the Committee's recommendations and concerns:

#### ***Criterion 7 – Governance and Administration.***

The institution indicated that Board Bylaws have been reviewed to meet the WSCUC Board Policy requirements. Since the EAC's findings, the Board has added four new members of which three are female, and the administrative organizational structure has been revised. The institution also plans to add one new Board member in 2020 and rename the Board committees and begin to conduct more business as committees. There were some areas of Board governances lacking which will be addressed in Section II, CFR 3.9.

#### ***Criterion 8 – Financial Resources and Accountability.***

UofSA has secured services from the independent accounting firm, Lalit Khanna and Associates to conduct an audit of its financial statements. Prepared financial statements were

provided to the SAV1 Team for review. The Team has identified additional opportunities for ensuring the financial position of the institution which are addressed in Section II, CFR 3.4.

***Criterion 9 – Institutional Planning.***

Addressing the recommendation to create milestones, timelines, and budget for strategic planning, UofSA shared the Strategic Plan for 2018-20. It has been developed with objectives, initiatives and milestones and it has been operationalized. Some initiatives have been completed and others have timelines associated with them. While leadership was able to present a unified vision for the institution, those plans have not been formalized past 2020. The Team addresses this issue in Section II, CFR 3.4.

With regard to the recommendation to develop more formal policies for program review, the Team confirmed a formal program review policy has been developed. Using the new program review policy, the program review for the MA in Kuchipudi Dance has been completed. The program review for the Masters in Carnatic Music is currently in progress and will be completed by the end of 2020.

***Criterion 10 – Degree Programs.***

Accurate retention and graduation data representing two cohorts of students was made available to the team. Additional recommendations regarding retention and graduation data collection and use for decision making is addressed in Section II, CFR 2.10.

***Criterion 13 – Faculty.***

The institution developed a faculty handbook and academic policies and procedures which were reviewed and approved by the Faculty Senate members. Structures are now in place for periodic review by the faculty. The Faculty Senate is now operational.

The team believes that UofSA has met the Eligibility Review Committee's recommendation by presenting audited financial statements from an independent auditor (Criterion 8; CFR 3.4) and developing a formal program review policy (Criterion 9; CFR 2.7). The team also believes that UofSA has made some progress in developing retention and graduation data (Criterion 10, CFR 2.10), however the presentation of the data and the dissemination of this information throughout campus has not been fully formalized. The team further believes that UofSA has demonstrated progress in addressing Governance and Administration (Criterion 7; CFR 3.9) and developing a strategic plan and planning process that includes milestones and timelines and for a Strategic Plan (Criterion 9; CFR 4.6) but the team noted that the Strategic Plan failed to include budget figures tied to strategic initiatives. There are also concerns about the governing board's structures and process for evaluation of the President/Chief Executive Officer (CFRs 3.6, 3.9). The team believes that UOFSA must make more progress in these two areas to substantially meet standards for accreditation, and the team provides further analysis and makes specific recommendations below where it discusses UofSA's development relative to each of the Criteria for Review.

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

### **STANDARD 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives**

#### Institutional Purposes

UofSA has developed a mission and vision statement that is clearly articulated and widely embraced throughout the institution’s constituents (CFR 1.1). The mission reaches deeply into the existing curriculum, the identified learning outcomes at all levels, and is fundamental to its purpose and vision (CFR 1.2).

#### Integrity and Transparency

The faculty expressed an abiding commitment to academic freedom which is demonstrated in the policy statements of the institution and its practices (CFR 1.3). This was evidenced by the encouragement of gender equality through the institution. Given the cultural history of the ancient India art forms taught in the current curriculum, the celebration of women in scholarship and performance was one fully embraced by the Board, the administration, and the faculty. The focus of the mission statement, “Founded upon the rich culture and values of India and rooted in the traditions of India...” means the institution remains very rooted in the Indian historical and cultural significance of the art forms, not quite reaching outside of the Indian culture in its composition of faculty, staff, or students (CFR 1.4). However, its mission and values do demonstrate a desire for inclusiveness and in conversations with faculty and staff, it is clear there is a commitment through the growth of the institution and its planned future programs to increase its diversity.

UofSA enjoys a deep connection to Silicon Andhra (SA), a local organization which supports K-12 educational and community cultural opportunities. Many of the same leaders of UofSA share connections between the institution and SA, including financial connections (more on this in Standard 3). It is also clear, that the institution's acts independently on the behalf of its own constituency (CFR 1.5).

The institution has done well articulating and sharing learning outcomes, admissions criteria, and other key metrics on the public website (CFR 1.6). The SAV1 Team has suggested additional opportunities such as sharing the admissions evaluation rubric for assessment of past experience in the performing arts, increasing the level of transparency for potential students.

There are structures in place for policy and practice development including grievance processes. The team suggests a review of those process as the institution grows to allow for internal levels of escalation (currently, most things go to the Provost and Chief Academic Officer for review) to ensure opportunities for resolution. All in all, these processes are appropriate for an institution of the size and maturity of UofSA (CFR 1.7).

Finally, it is the opinion of the SAV1 Team that the institution and its leadership has acted with the highest levels of integrity with WSCUC and its representatives throughout the process of seeking accreditation. This was demonstrated throughout the visit, in the documentation we were provided, and in the course of our on-site interview. (CFR 1.8)

#### Summary of Standard I

Overall, the Board, administration, faculty, and students demonstrate the necessary components expected for an institution that has clearly defined purposes and educational

objectives. The SAV1 Team finds UofSA has sufficiently met the criteria for review in Standard 1 to a level of readiness for initial accreditation, subject to the WSCUC Commission review and final determination regarding compliance with this Standard.

## **STANDARD 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions**

### Teaching and Learning

The SAV1 team completed a comprehensive review of the evidence for Standard 2 including interviews with the Board, administration, staff, faculty and students; a review of syllabi, and thesis requirements, study of policies and practices related to faculty hiring, scholarship and professional development; study of policies and practices related to admissions, retention and achievement; design, assessment design and implementation in addition to the review of degree requirements for both MA programs, institutional learning outcomes, program learning outcomes, and the program review for MA in Kuchipudi Dance.

A review of the degree requirement and course descriptions demonstrates the primary purpose of the master's degree programs are aligned to the mission of the institution to provide educational programs based in Indian Culture. The degree requirements for both the Master of Arts in Kuchipudi Dance and Master of Arts in Carnatic Music are clearly defined and are satisfactory in terms of length, content and rigor (CFR 2.1, 2.2b). In addition to requiring candidates to hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, both degree programs require at least 6 years of prior performance experience in either in Classical Indian Dance or Classical Indian Music, and the admissions process includes a formal assessment of performance proficiency with faculty members through an online video conference to

determine each student's eligibility to be a candidate in the program (CFR 2.2). The required performance assessment is critical to student success in the program, because of 1) the distance learning pedagogy and 2) the concentration of theoretical frameworks offered through both of the programs to deepen the student's demonstrated proficiency in the practiced-based performance discipline (CFR 2.2b). In conversations with faculty, the team learned of the formal performance audition process required for admission into either program but did not see a document or rubric outlining the levels the proficiency required in these performing arts disciplines. The SAV1 team suggests, as a way to improve transparency in the admissions process, that the institution creates a document providing explicit criteria for performance audition and share that directly on the website. The delivery format for instruction in both MA Programs is completely online with weekly synchronous sessions held with faculty in India, and asynchronous sessions through the learning management system Canvas. All of the faculty for the MA programs reside in India and hold doctorates in their respective Performance Arts disciplines, and the faculty to student ratio is 1:5 (CFR 2.1).

The faculty model is unique with no full-time faculty but the clear designation of program directors for each of the degree programs. The program directors are both recognized academic scholars and practitioners in the academic disciplines of Kuchipudi Dance and Carnatic Music, holding teaching and research positions at institutions in India in addition to this institution. All of the faculty in these MA programs are recognized academic scholars, practitioners and researchers in these highly specific and codified Performing Arts disciplines. Faculty expertise is foundational to the development and evaluation of Student Learning

Outcomes and standards for performance in each course (CFR 2.1, 2.2b, 2.3, 2.4, 2.8, 2.7). Both programs require 10 courses at 3 semester units; the MA in Kuchipudi Dance offers 7 core courses and 3 electives, while the MA in Carnatic Music requires a set 10 core courses; both programs have required courses primarily focused on the Master's Thesis which are highly developed toward both scholarly research and performance practice. The faculty are responsible for creating SLO's and assessment measurements as they pertain to student learning and performance in both the theoretical studies and practice-based performance disciplines (CFR 2.4, 4.3, 4.4). It was unclear to the SAV1 team, if the SLO's, PLO's, ILO's, were recently created during the workshop held in India, or had been established prior to that, but at the time of the site visit all learning outcomes were incorporated on all syllabi. It was recognizable that the mission, culture and institutional goals are shared across the institution, but some of the more measurable learning outcomes were too new to be sufficiently integrated in teaching, learning and assessment systems. The institution demonstrated a strong commitment to establishing educational effectiveness and was honest and transparent about the process of faculty undergoing a recent training to create and adapt the curriculum to meet WSCUC Standards, particularly as they are adapting curriculum from India to the United States (CFR 2.4, 2.7, 4.3, 4.4). The SAV1 team encourages the continued development and refinement of SLO's and PLO's to measurable metrics, specifically addressing the practice-based performance discipline in relation to the online course delivery format.

The faculty expressed having full academic freedom in scholarship and in establishing all of the curriculum, SLO's and PLO's, and shared their passion and excitement because teaching

at this institution allows a level innovation and academic freedom (specific to frameworks that are restricted in India), therefore this opportunity has offered increased potential for research and scholarship (CFR 2.4, 2.8, 2.9). The team suggests ongoing needs assessment of full-time faculty positions, specifically for Program Directors, as the institution continues to look at scale and future growth.

The high standards for student learning are evident through the admission process, curriculum, and level instruction. The students are required to demonstrate program learning outcomes, proficient mastery of the performance, and scholarly research throughout the program and in their culminating in the master's thesis. In compliance with professional and academic standards for the Performing Arts, the assessment of programmatic learning outcomes is evaluated during the culmination of both a practiced-based performance and a written document (CFR 2.1, 2.6, 2.7). There are times throughout the programs, for specific course finals and performance-based thesis topics, that both the student and faculty meet in-person at the UofSA's campus for live performances, giving the faculty the opportunity to assess the physical nature and embodied assessment of live performance art. Through a review of the student surveys and interviews, the SAV1 team confirmed the high standards and rigor established in the program were sufficiently challenging and meaningful (CFR 2.5, 2.6). At the time of the site-visit, the institution had conducted one program review for the MA in Kuchipudi Dance in 2019; the program review includes SLOs, retention and graduation data and external review. It became apparent during the visit that courses exceed the required contact hours when including the one-on-one assessment sessions between faculty and students, which

was not clearly evident when reviewing the syllabi in the program review. The institution will benefit from the development a formal credit hour policy including the additional assessment and time-on-task requirements. By making this policy easily accessible on class materials, website and marketing materials, UofSA will improve public transparency regarding student expectations. Through the program review process, the MA in Kuchipudi Dance yielded actionable items for revised curriculum and methods of instruction. The review guidelines and processes are clearly communicated in the institutions program review guide, outlining the systematic evaluation and assessment with appropriate stakeholders and outside evaluation (CFR 2.6, 2.7, 4.3, 4.4).

#### Scholarship and Creative Activity

The institution maintains a high level of scholarship and creative activity among its faculty. Many of the faculty publish and perform in dance or music to remain actively involved in their respective fields. Scholarship and creative activity are encouraged in the curriculum in both of the master's programs, as courses are comprised of theoretical and practical components, creating a pathway for students to explore outside relevant opportunities for publication, performance, and presentation. The institution has an in-house publishing service to support the publication of student and faculty work (CFR 2.8). It is commendable to see the level of passion, expertise and commitment the faculty possess for scholarship and creative activity (CFR 2.8).

While scholarship and creative activity are emphasized and encouraged at the institution, it is unclear if any type of professional development or financial stipends are

available for this type of activity. It is also unclear if there is any link to evaluation in this area as no formal faculty evaluation process exists that inclusively links faculty evaluation to scholarship, teaching, student learning, and service. This component is measured during the program review process, but not in any formal faculty evaluation. The student course evaluations contain questions that evaluate the faculty, but these results are not systematically and openly shared with faculty at this time due to the nature of the qualitative feedback provided by students (CFR 2.9). As the institution matures, suggests a formal and inclusive process of evaluation for faculty with structured rubrics for scoring in various domains, documented meetings where data and feedback is shared, on a cyclical time frame for evaluation.

#### Student Learning and Success

The institution actively tracks and reports the retention and graduation data for the MA in Kuchipudi Dance and the MA in Carnatic Music through both internal reports as well as BPPE reporting (CFR 2.10). To date, the graduate programs retention rate is 90%. As of fall 2019 44 of the 49 students who started in the MA Kuchipudi program have persisted. The institution also utilizes student satisfaction surveys, course evaluations, as well as the Institute of Higher Education Policy survey. While the institution has been proactive in administering surveys and collecting data, the campus has not fully disaggregated and shared this data among its constituents on campus. It was also made clear during the site visit that the institution had not designated a set of peer institutions because of the unique nature of the program offerings. Ideally, this data should be further cultivated to ensure that it is shared on campus amongst all

constituents. This data should also be furthered disaggregated by demographic variables as deemed important to the institution and its future goals.

The institution offers several programs outside of the classroom that center around cultural events that happen through partner institutions and organizations (CFR 2.11). These events are primarily sponsored by external entities and marketed to students through the Student Services Office. Even though both students and faculty spoke highly of the potential of the co-curricular events, there was no centralized system of tracking these events, assessing their relevance and effectiveness, or incorporating these events into existing coursework. Ideally, the institution should formalize the co-curricular offerings in order to properly track, assess, and further integrate into the curriculum.

The institution provides clear and accurate information in recruitment information as well as advising (CFR 2.12). In the open sessions with students, many spoke of the in-depth advising that they felt they received from their course faculty, with some referencing the ability to contact their faculty at any time of the day or night to receive information.

The institution provides academic and student support service through a variety of means including interacting directly with the provost, faculty of the courses, or the manager of student services (CFR 2.13). While both faculty and administrators conveyed an open-door policy for students to ensure that all students felt comfortable reaching out to anyone about academic and student support services, as the institution grows these lines of support should be clearly formalized and articulated for students with a formal review process is put into place to evaluate the effectiveness of academic and student support services. It would also behoove

institutional leadership to explore support services that are developed be appropriate for adult learners in online environment.

#### Summary of Standard 2

The SAV1 team finds that the programs were appropriately rigorous with dedicate, qualified and passionate faculty who are commitment to scholarship and creative activity. Opportunities for improvement include the need for a formal review of faculty workload including service, teaching, scholarship, and student learning. Formalization, tracking, and assessment of participation in co-curricular activities would enhance the co-curricular student experience. Overall, the team finds that the institution meets the level sufficient for initial accreditation for Standard 2, subject to the WSCUC Commission review and final determination regarding compliance with this Standard.

### **STANDARD 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability**

#### Faculty and Staff

While the institution does not have any full-time faculty, it does have an appropriate number of highly qualified contract (adjunct) faculty to meet the instructional requirements of its two master's programs. Diversity of thought, albeit not cultural or racial, is created instructionally by having different faculty members teach various courses in the programs, whereas in India, the standard practice is for only one instructor to teach the entire program. The faculty provides a unique perspective to the institution's students as they bring significant practical experience and expertise to the courses they teach. There are a substantial number of female faculty members which speaks to the institution's commitment to gender

equality. The student to faculty ratio ranges from 2 to 8, and the institution plans to maintain similar ratios as it grows. The institution has an eight-person administrative team to support programs and operations (CFR 3.1).

In 2019, the institution developed a faculty handbook addressing appropriate policies and practices that is in the initial stages of implementation. The faculty handbook covers topics relevant for the faculty member, such as academic affairs, student services, grading, LMS, technical issues, shared governance, course evaluations, and student academic progress, as well as ethics and regulations. The selection process for faculty involves initial screening interviews followed by formal interviews with the department chair and provost. An online teaching demo is also required to ensure they are a good fit to the institution's instructional model. Once hired, faculty receive an orientation and onboarding through various offices of the institution to cover all necessary information. The faculty receives feedback from the department chair and provost twice in the semester after student evaluations are completed. The institution also has appropriate staff policies in place, including grievance procedures, hiring process, and a development plan (CFR 3.2).

In November 2019, the institution hosted a 3-day Faculty Senate Workshop in Hyderabad, India, which covered topics related to educational effectiveness, learning models and online learning, outcomes-based programs, assessment and rubrics, course and program learning outcomes, and the faculty handbook. This workshop is on a 2-year cycle and will happen again in 2021. The institution is hosting a workshop for staff this year, focusing on areas of development and growth. This workshop is on a 2-year cycle and will alternate with

the faculty workshop each year. Although these are the only formal faculty and staff developments offered by the institution at this time, it was mentioned that informal development on a one-on-one and small group basis is happening regularly and consistently due to the nature of being an online institution (CFR 3.3).

The team witnessed the passion and commitment of the faculty and staff and recognizes that it is an area of strength for the institution. As the institution continues to implement and strengthen the use of the faculty handbook as a source to house all formal and informal processes related to faculty, it will clearly indicate expectation of performance and engagement in the UofSA learning community. It is commendable that the institution has both organized and informal development opportunities for its faculty and staff. The team encourages the institution to continue to build on it.

#### Fiscal, Physical and Information Resources

Due to the newness of UofSA, audited financial statements were only available for fiscal years 2017 and 2018, and internally prepared financial statements were provided for fiscal year 2019. Both fiscal 2017 and fiscal 2018 audit opinions were unqualified (CFR 3.4). Fiscal year 2017 results showed an increase in net assets of \$717K and fiscal year 2018 showed a decline in net assets of \$121K. The unaudited financial statements for fiscal year 2019 show a positive contribution to net assets of \$60K. Financial statements in each year reviewed benefited heavily from fundraising activities. The team commends UofSA for putting a strong focus on fundraising in its early years and diversifying revenue sources away from tuition and fees (CFR 3.4). Fundraising to date has been heavily dependent on funds raised from its Board Chairman

and from funds provided by its sister entity, Silicon Andhra (SA). For fiscal years 2017, 2018 and 2019, contributions from fundraising activities exceeded revenue from tuition and fees, and contributions from the Board Chairman and/or from SA make up the majority of fundraising receipts. It is worth noting that the UofSA and SA Boards are related – the same individual is the Chairman of both entities, the UofSA CEO founded SA, and both the UofSA CFO and UofSA Vice President of Development serve on the Board of SA. UofSA provided the team with a Board Resolution from SA whereby SA will continue to provide full financial support to UofSA until one or both of the following criteria are met: a) the institution's enrollment is at sufficient levels to be self-supporting, or 2) the total fundraising received for the preceding three years will cover the institution's operating expenses for the following 10 years (CFR 3.4). While the Board resolution is strong, the team would have preferred to see quantifiable levels of financial commitment based on future projected operating needs. Additionally, because the team did not review SA's financial affairs, the team cannot comment on SA's ability to continue to fund UofSA's future operating needs.

The only employees on the UofSA payroll are the CEO and the CFO and all other roles including those in important departments such as Admissions and Student Services are volunteers. If those acting in a volunteer capacity were on payroll, even at minimum wage levels, operating results for 2018 would have been more negative and 2019's net surplus would have been a deficit.

Operating results for 2017 was largely influenced by a \$1 million donation received from the Board Chairman for the purchase of the campus building. While it would have been more

beneficial to add this contribution to operating reserves, one can understand the desire to purchase real estate in northern California given the rate at which prices increase in value. UofSA cannot reliably plan for volunteers to operate key positions at the institution in the long-term. If a volunteer suddenly left their position, it could also put the institution in a vulnerable position. As part of the overall strategic planning effort, the team recommends UofSA create a strategic staffing plan that shows where the institution will add employees as enrollment grows, and which positions will be volunteer positions versus paid positions (more about this in Standard 4, CFR 4.6). This staffing plan should then be incorporated into the overall institution budget plan. UofSA's planned enrollment growth also makes it critically important for the institution to recruit and retain individuals with experience in higher education.

The institution has entered into a purchase agreement to purchase the building it currently occupies from SA. SA purchased the building in 2016 and subsequently entered into an agreement in the same year to sell the building to UofSA. The terms of the agreement call for a \$5.48 million total purchase price of which UofSA has already put down \$1 million toward the purchase from the gift received from the Board Chairman. The agreement also calls for \$100,000 minimum annual debt service payments beginning in early 2020. UofSA currently has no long-term debt which leaves it nimble to react to a changing higher education landscape. It will likely be required to take on long-term debt to finance the building purchase and this debt amount will leave the institution highly leveraged. A bank loan for \$4.4 million, even with a standard 30-year amortization period, would likely require debt service payments exceeding \$150,000 per year. UofSA had only \$36K in cash in its bank account as of December 31, 2019

and a \$100K payment due in early 2020 will leave it with a liquidity issue. As a forward-thinking position, the team suggests that UofSA do further financial analyses to determine when in the future it should incur long-term debt for the building purchase. Ideally, senior leadership get more training and development on financial key performance indicators (KPI's) specifically related to higher education as no KPI's were provided to the team. Doing so will allow the institution to carefully study the impact of long-term debt on the institution's Department of Education Composite Score, and the effect the composite score could have on its future ability to offer federal financial aid. Engaging with related higher education professional organizations would also be a benefit. Joining organizations such as the National Association of College and Institution Business Officers (NACUBO), the Western Association of College and University Business Officers (WACUBO) and the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) provides access to the related resources and networking.

An enrollment management plan was presented that shows projected enrollment increasing from the Fall 2019 enrollment of 84 students to 116 students in Fall 2020, 143 students in Fall 2021, 200 students in Fall 2022 and 257 students in Fall 2023 (CFR 3.4). Although the sheer number of enrollments is achievable with the addition of planned new programs, the enrolment management plan lacked the specificity usually seen, and the underlying assumptions upon which the enrollment projections were calculated was not provided. A strong enrollment management plan that supports the institution's mission is important for the institution in order to maintain fiscal sustainability. In discussions with management, it was readily apparent that achieving WSCUC accreditation is an important part

of its future enrollment plans. However, it doesn't appear that the institution has developed a "what if" scenario for budget and enrollment planning in the event WSCUC accreditation is not achieved in 2020. UofSA has plans to increase its programs, personnel and facilities and in conversations with senior leadership, the institution has a goal of reaching 5,000 students within ten years. However, no written document detailing a pathway to reach that enrollment figure as presented which suggests a lack of long-term planning.

The institution has developed a budgeting process that includes input from all aspects of the institution including faculty, staff and administrators (CFR 3.4). A budget was presented through 2023 which shows a positive change in net assets for each year except 2021 which shows a slight decline. The budget presented was fairly simple with no division of expenses by cost center or by program. From documents provided in the institutional report and discovered during the site visit, resources do appear to be aligned with educational purposes and outcomes (CFR 3.5). Given UofSA's lofty enrollment goals, it may be important to move towards financial performance by program as a monitor of the viability of each program. Such an analysis is also beneficial for new program start-ups to achieve best practices that could assist the overall institutional financial sustainability. There also needs to be more integration between the various departments and the budgeting process. For example, the fundraising plan which is central to the institution's financial sustainability effort goes through 2021 but the overall institution budget document goes through 2023. Additionally, the overall institution budget assumes \$625K in fundraising revenue in 2020 and \$700K in 2021, but the fundraising plan document the team was provided shows different fundraising goals - \$500K in 2020 and

\$750K in 2021. The fundraising plan should demonstrate support of the institution budget and both documents should have identical fundraising goal amounts.

As mentioned earlier, the team commends UofSA for its success in fundraising and creating a diversified revenue stream. 63% of fiscal year 2018 revenues came from fundraising and this figure increased to 67% in fiscal 2019 (CFR 3.4). If the institution can maintain this ratio of fundraising revenue to total revenue in the future, any negative enrollment trends will have a smaller impact on the institution's long-term financial sustainability. Fundraising is led by a VP of Development who, like most staff members, is a volunteer, and this individual also serves on SA's Board of Directors. Information about donors and their history of giving is maintained in a Microsoft Excel file. The fundraising and development plan that was presented to the team targets a minimum 35% increase in fundraising in 2020-21. Based on prior success, the increased fundraising goal appears achievable. To solidify the fund raising effort, the UofSA might consider investment in a donor constituent relationship manager (CRM) software system to store and organize information about its donors. A CRM should also serve to improve outreach strategies and increase fundraising ROI and staff productivity. Future success in UofSA fundraising is in large part dependent on SA's success in its own fundraising activities, since SA is a large contributor to UofSA. To ensure continued and sustained development activities between the institution and UofSA, the institution might consider creating a fundraising plan that is integrated with SA to ensure the maximum ROI for both organizations.

The institution would benefit from strengthening both its short-and long-term planning processes and documenting performance against those plans. The team strongly recommends

that the management team create an updated rolling long-term strategic plan that shows specific initiatives, the responsible party, resources required, metric of measurement, estimated timeline for completion, and the specific WSCUC CFR the strategic initiative relates to aligning enrollment strategy, human resources, budget requirements, and development activity.

An area of strength for UofSA is the facilities and IT services for students. The building is of sufficient size for administrative support for the current student population and there is adequate room to grow or even hold some classes on-ground. Access to information and technology for administrative activities such as those in the business office, admissions and advising, is provided through the Jenzabar student information system. The university supports student learning by using Instructure's Canvas as its learning management system and the platform contains course syllabi and in-class materials. UofSA also has a dedicated technology support professional available to solve IT issues for both staff and students (CFR 3.5). The online classes the team viewed were taught without any noticeable issues. UofSA has no direct lending library available for students however each course outline contains an extensive listing of and citations for the particular learning resources utilized. The students can then do more research if necessary and the institution would support the student's request. Students also have access to resources from the Karnatic Music Book Centre, the Chennai Music Academy and The Centre of India, among others. Interlibrary loan services are also available (CFR 3.5). Given the small size of UofSA's enrollment and that all instruction is online, the team did not have an issue with the lack of physical library resources.

## Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes

The institution has eight full-time administrative staff members of which six are volunteers. This requires some staff members to manage more than one functional area. For example, the CFO is also the Accreditation Liaison Officer. The executive team consisting of the CEO, CFO and CAO provide the top-level leadership to guide the institution in its day-to-day operations. UofSA operates effectively with a limited number of administrative professionals supported by volunteers, a reality that aligns with its mission of providing an affordable education (CFR 3.6). While the team was impressed by leadership's enthusiasm for growing the institution, most of these individuals had no prior experience in US higher education administration.

The role and function of the Board of Regents is clearly articulated and powers of the CEO have been defined in the Board By-laws. Curricular activities are guided by the Provost, Faculty Senate and Faculty Council and are detailed in an Academic Policies and Procedures guide. The institution's decision-making structures and processes for staff are not contained in a stand-alone document. However, within the organizational chart and within each job description, the decision-making abilities of the staff position can be seen. As one would expect at a small institution, most decisions are made with input by the CEO and the CFO but it wasn't clear which types of decisions would require Board approval. Although Board meeting minutes were provided, the team did not see evidence in meeting minutes that revealed the Board's degree of involvement in decision-making. Going forward, it will be important for UofSA to clearly document decision-making processes on paper that outlines the scope of authority and responsibility across its administrative positions (CFR 3.7).

The leadership team of UofSA has driven the institution's financial performance to date, primarily from development activities. The team could clearly see that the institution's leadership team is filled with individuals fully committed, responsible and accountable to the mission of UofSA (CFR 3.6). The team could also see that there is a good working relationship between staff members and between staff and faculty. Because several key staff members serve as volunteers, it will be important for institutional leadership to ensure compliance with laws regarding volunteer employees who work full time work schedules. Human resource policies require job descriptions for all faculty and staff in order to clearly delineate the responsibilities of each position, and all staff members receive an annual performance evaluation (CFRs 3.2, 3.8).

A review of job descriptions for senior leadership showed vague performance criteria to be used in the annual evaluation process. For example, the CEO's job description indicates the position is "evaluated by the degree of success of the school's students, which in turn is reflective of the quality of the school's curriculum and instruction and overall operations" and the CAO's job description states the position is "evaluated by the degree of success of the school's students, which in turn is reflective of the quality of the school's curriculum and instruction." The team suggests that the institution considering adding measurable criteria or goals that can be used in the performance evaluation which will improve accountability. Faculty members are also regularly evaluated each semester. Faculty reviews consist of a self-evaluation, and course evaluations by students, the appropriate Program Chair and the Provost. The Provost receives and reviews the faculty member's self-evaluation, along with student

evaluations, and meets with each faculty member individually to finalize the review. If there are concerns about a faculty member's performance or conduct the Provost may call for a special meeting of an Academic Review Committee.

The academic organizational structures meet the creative demands of the programs. Faculty members participate in academic governance as outlined in the Faculty Governance document provided to the team. There are clearly stated roles and responsibilities for both the Faculty Senate and Faculty Councils and many faculty members have terminal degrees in their teaching subjects. The Faculty Council is composed of all faculty of a particular program and the Provost, and the Faculty Council is responsible for the curricula of the programs, assigning faculty to teach specific courses, and recommending additions to the adjunct faculty (CFRs 3.7, 3.10).

UofSA's leadership is passionate about the future success of the institution. The institution has a full-time CEO and a full-time CFO, and these two positions have job descriptions similar in nature to those found at other educational institutions within the U.S. Other positions are staffed similarly to its counterparts in the U.S. that are considered to be comparable institutions however as indicated earlier, most employees have little to no prior higher education experience (CFR 3.8). This is to be expected when the institution has a high number of volunteers in key roles. This puts that much more pressure on the CEO and CFO to be well versed in all aspects of higher education administration so they can properly lead staff members who serve in a both an employee and a volunteer capacity. The CEO has three direct reports, the Provost, CFO and VP of Development. The faculty, admissions and student services

managers then report to the Provost, and the finance and technology staff report to the CFO. Administrative decision-making mostly falls with the CEO or CFO given that smallness of the institution and the corresponding budget. As a small institution, this structure seems adequate.

The CEO reports to a nine-member UofSA Board of Regents and only a few Board members have prior US higher education experience and primarily in the academic area. It was also determined that the UofSA CEO serves as a voting member of the Board which creates an unusual situation of governance and leadership. During meetings with the Board, they acknowledged this situation and indicated that the CEO will be changed to an ex-officio status. The Board has also not established the minimum number of committees of the Board which is mandated by WSCUC as documented minutes of meetings for those committees do not exist. Additionally, the Board has not developed a mechanism for evaluating the CEO and creating a “CEO scorecard”, nor have they created a mechanism of evaluating themselves as trustees (CFR 3.9). The team recommends that the Board immediately create a systematic and timely evaluation process for the CEO that that focuses the CEO's activities on UofSA’s mission and strategic plan, establishes measurable performance expectations, and fosters coordination and teamwork between the Board and the CEO. Further, the CEO’s role as a key founder of SA should play little to no role in the evaluation process of his performance at UofSA. The team recommends that the institution review WSCUC standards regarding board governance and also join an organization such as the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) for information on best practices in board governance.

The role of faculty in academic leadership is codified in the Faculty Handbook and UofSA has an active Faculty Senate and Faculty Council. The faculty appears to have the appropriate level of independence in determining matters of curricula and pedagogy. The progress made by the institution on identification of SLOs and design of the assessment process testifies to significant faculty engagement (CFR 3.10).

#### Summary of Standard 3

Areas of strength identified by the team were the passion and commitment of both faculty and administrative staff to the mission of the institution (CFR 3.1), faculty evaluation processes (CFR 3.2), faculty and staff development activities (CFR 3.3), the quality of the IT systems, facilities and support services provided to students (CFR 3.5), and effective academic leadership by faculty (CFR 3.10). The areas requiring the most attention are long-term planning and budgeting (CFR 3.4) and instilling the proper governance and operating structures for the Board of Regents which includes an annual evaluation of the CEO (CFR 3.9). Overall, the team finds that the institution meets the level sufficient for Candidacy for Standard 3, subject to the WSCUC Commission review and final determination regarding compliance with this Standard.

### **STANDARD 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement**

#### Quality Assurance Processes

The institution has developed a set of quality assurance processes such as program review, course evaluations, and the routine surveying of students, faculty, and staff. As stated earlier, the MA in Kuchipudi Dance's program review, in its first phase, has been completed. The finalized documents for the MA in the Carnatic Music program review and action plans will

be available towards the end of 2020. While the institution has developed a program review guide, there does not seem to be a standardized process for the comparative review of data from external sources. The institution utilizes input from student evaluations within the program evaluation process. While the institution has many of the proper data collection methods in place, the actual process of analyzing and utilizing the results is still in infancy stages. The institution provided results from several institutional surveys as evidence with this report, however there was no formal report that analyzed the data, provided explanation and interpretation, or connected to overall institutional processes (CFR 4.1). The institution should develop a cohesive reporting process that enables the data that is routinely collected to be shared in a concise fashion with the campus. Also, there is a concern with data transparency and dissemination amongst the campus. For example, in discussion with academic leadership the team learned that the PACE course evaluation data is not directly shared with the faculty. Only the Provost and the Academic Advisory Council Chair review the course evaluations and discuss the findings with the faculty. With the development of a consistent and systematic process to share course evaluation results directly with faculty, the institution will find opportunities to assist in faculty development and course improvements. The institution has not fully developed processes for evaluating non-academic offices, though academic leadership did note that they are planning to do so in the future. As the institution matures, it will be important that it develop a comprehensive evaluation process for both academic and non-academic offices and services.

The institution does not have a formal institutional research office, however many of the traditional institutional research duties are carried out by the Vice President of Finance and Operations (who also serves as the Accreditation Liaison Officer) (CFR 4.2). The institutional research function produces analysis of several types of data including retention and graduation data, survey data, and student data from the Jenzabar Student Information System. While some of these data is publicly available on the institution webpage (such as retention and graduation data from the Bureau for Post and Secondary Education annual report), most of the data requests are routed internally through the academic leadership team. Because of the small size of the institution, it is common for many of the senior level roles to wear multiple hats and serve in multiple functions at the institution, however the team recognizes that as the institution plans for growth, they should formalize the work of the institutional research office. While some data, such as metrics included in program review are shared with department chairs, the institution does not seem to have a process to share data widely across the institution. Again, in the spirit of transparency, the institution should further develop data reports and visualizations so that they can be disseminated to faculty, staff, and students at large. It will also be helpful to formalize the process of requesting so the function can be tracked over time. The institutional research function has yet to be formally reviewed, though the academic leadership mentioned a desire to evaluate all non-academic offices at the institution. The institution should develop goals collaboratively with key constituents to ensure the effectiveness of the institutional research and to gauge the usefulness of the existing data as well as the types of the data that the community would like to have regularly reported.

### Institutional Learning and Improvement

The institution has demonstrated a commitment to assessment-based improvement and has sufficient understanding to support continued development, structures and processes for assessment. The systems for assessment and data collection specific to program effectiveness and program sustainability are newly developed, as well as faculty's shared understanding of criteria for WSCUC accreditation, but through the site-visit it was apparent that all stakeholders are committed to assessment-based improvement through the program reviews process and evaluation of teaching through student and alumni surveys (CFR 4.3, 4.4 4.5). The team commends the institution for its commitment and for quickly developing guidelines and policies for assessment in relation to the Program Review before the site-visit. The team looks forward to a time when these assessment metrics surpass the beginning stages of quality assurance and institutional learning. As the team is aware that many of these policies, measurement tools and the one program review for the MA in Kuchipudi Dance were developed and finalized just prior to the site-visit, and encourages the continuation of these assessment efforts design and improve curriculum, teaching effectiveness, program sustainability, and assessment methodology.

As would be expected in the early development of a university, many of the strategies and decisions are made by the executive officers of the organization. While this is true at UofSA, it is very clear that other constituencies have been included in the development of the vision and as appropriate, the development of key policies and practices (CFR 4.6). Based on this behavioral norm during these first two years of development, the team has every expectation that full engagement of all involved parties will continue.

In the face of numerous ways to develop an institutional strategic plan, the team recognizes the challenges of creating a long-term strategy for an institution that is so new. The plan the was presented for team review provide a high-level framework of strategy, many of which had been executed prior to the team's arrival on campus. Of concern, however, was the fact that outside of a shared vision for a 5-year horizon, no specific plans had been developed beyond 2020. The team strongly recommends that the institution's leadership create a rolling strategic plan that allows for agile decision-making in these early growth years but is comprehensive in nature, aligning enrollment, staffing and expected expenses, academic program roll-out, and development in a single document with specific and measurable milestones and deliverables (CFRs 4.6, 4.7).

UofSA is in a unique position, at this time offering academic programming that cannot be found in the Western world. The commitment to advance ancient forms of performance art and language to a ethnic culture that is world-wide is commendable. It puts the institution in an interesting market position, one that defies standard practices in market feasibility studies, enrollment strategies, and financial positioning. At the same time, this unique position makes the institutional efforts to be seen a high-quality US higher education entity creates challenges in and of itself. To be better equipped for this juxtaposition, ensure the leadership is surrounded with resources and expertise who respect and cherish the institutional mission will be key for preparing for the ever-changing landscape of higher education (CFR 4.7).

#### Summary of Standard 4

The team agrees that areas of strength identified include the prompt development of program review guidelines and a demonstrated commitment to the guiding principles of assessment including best practices, data-driven decision making, and engaging appropriate constituencies (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5). The areas requiring the most attention are the need to develop a plan to evaluate the institutional research function, the need to further develop and disseminate data on campus that can assist in decision making, and the need to develop a comprehensive strategic plan that allows for agile decision making (CFRs 4.4, 4.6, 4.7). Overall, the team finds that the institution meets the level sufficient for candidacy for Standard 4, subject to the WSCUC Commission review and final determination regarding compliance with this Standard.

#### **Presenting Issues, Analyzing Evidence and Formulating Conclusions**

In its review of the institutional report and all supporting documentation, the team found three primary presenting issues: lack of comprehensive strategic planning, maturity in institutional reporting and distribution of findings, and issues of Board governance.

The first presenting issue is the need for comprehensive planning that includes all aspects of an organization with significant growth aspirations. There is strong need for a plan that will unite enrollment growth expectations with program expansion and a growing demand for human resources and expertise, linking to budget planning and development efforts (CFRs 3.4, 4.6, 4.7). This was evidenced in the lack of strategic plans beyond 2020, a disconnect between the operating budget and the development/fund raising plan, and no discernable

milestones for growth that includes a human resources strategy in the documents provided to the team. In addition, interviews with key leadership including the CEO, CFO, and others demonstrated a shared vision but no specific detailed plans to support the pathway to that vision.

The second issue, a lack of demonstrated maturity in institutional reporting and distribution of findings, was concerning to the team. Again, in recognizing the development of a two-year old institution, the team sought to encourage and provide commendations for the activity that was demonstrated in the institutional report and included appendices.

Institutional leadership was very forth coming with their efforts and desire to learn, particularly in areas related to co-curricular assessment. It was clear, their primary focus has been with BPPE reporting. The team felt there was a need to improve internal transparency through sharing the data collected in student surveys and via institutional research activities to fully inform decision-making throughout the institution. These conclusions were drawn by the team based on the reporting that was available to the team prior and during the visit and through qualitative interviews while on-site.

The final issue is related to Board governance (CFRs 3.9). The documentation provided to the team showed a real effort on the part of UofSA to respond to the feedback from the ERC. It was only through interviews with the Board Chair and fellow Board participants that there is much work to be done here. It is imperative that the institution remedy the concerns about a lack of formal evaluation for the CEO and the Board itself, there is no formalized process for Board member selection and onboarding, the committee structure was not fully formalized or

engaged, and the CEO was identified as a voting member of the Board. As a result, the SAV1 team concluded the institution out of compliance with CFR 3.9.

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

UofSA's academic leadership has chosen to focus on Degrees/Programs: Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of Degrees for their major area of focus. The institution intends to utilize the Lumina Foundation Framework (DQP) as the framework to examine the meaning, quality, and integrity of degrees. There will be a focus on the intellectual skills and whether this exhibits a bias towards a certain style of teaching and learning; the quality of the degree will be examined by tracking alumni feedback about the programs; and finally the integrity of the degree will be reviewed by assessing whether graduates put effort into earning their degree. The institutional report also lists five institutional learning outcomes that will be assessed at graduation through the completion of a thesis and oral defense. The institution also intends to conduct an indirect review of this same student work by a panel of external reviewers. Finally, the institution intends to take advantage of the online modality by understanding different learning styles, adapting andragogy as a teaching philosophy, and understanding the role of instructor as a facilitator as they prepare for changes in higher education.

While the institution references several frameworks in their preparation for accreditation, many of the processes are vague and utilize language reliant on external frameworks that require further internal definition. For example, the institution plans to review the integrity of student's degrees by assessing the effort put forth by graduates. The institution

does not define what effort means in the context of their degree programs or how exactly it will be assessed. Also, the institution does not fully address the process of how they will prepare for changes in higher education, as the items mentioned the understanding and adapting to different learning styles and pedagogies which are concepts that do not deviate much from standard practice. These are considerations for UofSA's academic leadership to consider in application of the DQP to explore the meaning, quality, and integrity of their degree programs.

## SECTION IV. INVENTORY OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS

The institution has completed the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI) and provided the appropriate information for both programs and the institution.

## SECTION V. FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Findings**

#### Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

The team finds that UofSA meets **Standard 1** at a level sufficient for **Initial Accreditation**. 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

The team finds that UofSA meets **Standard 2** at a level sufficient for **Initial Accreditation**. 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

The team finds that UofSA meets **Standard 3** at a level sufficient for **Candidacy**. 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

The team finds that UofSA meets **Standard 4** at a level sufficient for **Candidacy**. Only the Commission is authorized to make the final determination as to whether or not an Institution is in compliance with the Standards.

## Commendations

The team commends UofSA for the following:

- At every turn, the Institution has demonstrated clarity in its mission and purpose, infusing its operational, educational, and recreational activities in support of that mission. Members of the institutional community have been forthcoming and transparent. That same level of authenticity has been communicated with the WASC staff throughout the eligibility and SAV1 process (CFRs 1.1, 1.2, 1.5).
- Academic freedom is a founding premise of higher education in America. The team was deeply moved by the demonstration of academic freedom, equity, and inclusion in the voices of faculty and their opportunity to demonstrate a level of liberation not found elsewhere in the studies of Kuchipudi Dance and Carnatic Music (CFR 1.3).
- The relationship between learning, teaching, creativity, scholarship, and student success, which is reflected in the institution's unique, innovative and rigorous curriculum, is evident at all levels of the academic experience (CFRs 2.1, 2.2, 2.2b, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.5).
- The quality of faculty, their academic credentials, and the deep and abiding commitment to teaching and learning are a central tenet of the efforts of UofSA. Regarding the ongoing inquiry into teaching and learning to improve curricula, pedagogy, and assessment, the commitment and passion for student learning and innovative pedagogy deeply impressed the team. The joy demonstrated brings historical importance to the modern world, seeking to unite generations in this shared understanding of Andhra culture (CFRs 2.5, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 3.1).
- We commend UofSA for creating a diversified revenue stream with 63% of fiscal year 2018 revenue derived from fundraising and 37% from tuition and fees. If the institution can maintain this ratio of fundraising revenue to tuition and fees, the Institution's long-

term financial sustainability will be strengthened in the face of enrollment disruption (CFR 4.7).

## Recommendations

The SAV1 Team provides the following recommendations to the UofSA:

- Many of the processes, policies, and practices are new, as would be expected in an institution at this stage in its development. The team recommends the administration, faculty, and staff of UofSA to continue to mature their efforts with an eye to scale, transparency, and a commitment to continuous improvement. Maturing processes for data-driven decision making using available learning outcome and institutional effectiveness data will be key. This practice should include evaluation of faculty and staff as well (CFRs 1.3, 1.6, 1.7, 2.10, 2.11, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2).
- Embrace a process of planning that is demonstrated in a documented 3-year rolling strategy that includes major milestones in enrollment management, appropriate staffing that matches enrollment growth, financial management including development activities, and academic program expansion (CFRs 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.7, 3.8, 4.1, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7).
- Continue efforts as a learning institution through the development of leadership ready to lead an institution in the 21st century through engagement in appropriate higher education professional organizations and consideration of staff highly skilled in postsecondary administration (CFR 3.7, 3.8).
- Pursue opportunities for Board development that ensures full compliance with state law and best practices in higher education Board management including formal mechanisms of evaluation of the CEO, decision documentation, member selection and onboarding, committee structure, and fiduciary responsibility (CFR 3.9).

## APPENDICES

**Credit Hour and Program Length Review (Appendix A)**

## 1 - CREDIT HOUR AND PROGRAM LENGTH REVIEW FORM

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Policy on credit hour	Is this policy easily accessible? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, where is the policy located? Student Handbook
	Comments: <i>The policy is fairly standard and does not clearly articulate the unique qualities of direct and in-direct instruction found in online coursework. It should be noted how many hours of instructional learning and independent learning constitute the credit unit requirements for the course.</i>
Process(es)/ periodic review of credit hour	Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: N/A
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses  Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.	How many syllabi were reviewed? 4
	What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? Online
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Kuchipudi Dance and Carnatic Music
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:
Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships,	How many syllabi were reviewed? N/A
	What kinds of courses?
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)?
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

<p>labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated)</p> <p>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</p>	<p>Comments:</p>
<p>Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)</p>	<p>How many programs were reviewed? 2</p>
	<p>What kinds of programs were reviewed? Kuchipudi Dance and Carnatic Music</p>
	<p>What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral</p>
	<p>What discipline(s)? Kuchipudi Dance and Carnatic Music</p>
	<p>Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>
	<p>Comments: <i>The length of both master's programs is 30 credit units. The Master's in Carnatic Music has 10 core courses that comprise the degree. The Master's in Kuchipudi Dance requires 7 core classes and 3 elective courses to complete the program. All courses are 3 credit units each in both programs. Both programs are 2 years in length and can be completed in 4 semesters. The course catalog notes the total credits of the program and each course.</i></p>

Review Completed By: Pardeep Kullar

Date: 03/25

## Marketing and Recruitment Review (Appendix B)

### 2 - MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT REVIEW FORM

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

Material Reviewed	Questions and Comments: Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this table as appropriate.
**Federal regulations	Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO Comments: <i>The institution did not provide any marketing material outside of the website. In reviewing the website there is no evidence that the institution promotes or states any type of job or salary guarantee upon completion and earning the master's degrees in either program. The tuition and fees are visible on the website, as well as relevant academic and admissions information. The website states that the institution has applied for and received Eligibility Status from WSCUC and is approved by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education. The vision and mission statement, and Institutional Learning Outcomes are visible on the website under the "About Us" section.</i>
Degree completion and cost	Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:
Careers and employment	Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:

\*§602.16(a)(1)(vii)

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

Review Completed By: Pardeep Kullara  
Date: 03/25/2020

## Student Complaints Form (Appendix C)

### 3 - STUDENT COMPLAINTS REVIEW FORM

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

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Policy on student complaints	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, is the policy or procedure easily accessible? Is so, where? School website.
	Comments: N/A
Process(es)/ procedure	Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, please describe briefly:
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: <b><i>Grievance Process for Academic Matters</i></b> <i>Prior to submitting a formal grievance, the student must consult the instructor whose action is being appealed. This consultation generally must take place within 14 calendar days of the start of classes after the grading period in question. The instructor is expected to meet in person or online with the student and respond to his/her grievance in writing within 10 calendar days. If the student and the instructor are unable to reach agreement, or if the instructor is unwilling or unable to meet with the student, the student shall meet with the chair of the instructor's department. If the instructor involved is the Department Chair or if there is no Department Chair, the student shall meet with the Chief Academic Officer involved. The Chief Academic Officer will meet with the student and with the instructor and recommend a solution to both the instructor and the student in writing within 10 calendar days.</i>  <i>All timelines for this process are suggested and may be extended for just cause. A student seeking clarification or guidance regarding filing an academic grievance should contact the Student Services for assistance at (844) 872-8680 or info@universityofsiliconandhra.org.</i>

Records	Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where? <i>Office of Student Services</i>
	Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, please describe briefly:
	Comments: <i>The college has received no formal complaints as of the date of the site visit.</i>

\*§602-16(1)(1)(ix)

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

Review Completed By: Richard Crowe

Date: 2/19/2020

## Transfer Credit Policy Form (Appendix D)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Review Completed By: Cherron R. Hoppes, Team Chair

Date: February 15, 2020

## Distance Education Report (Appendix E)

WSCUC Distance Education Review-Team Report Appendix

Institution: University of Silicon Andhra

Type of Visit: SAV1

Name of reviewer/s: Cherron R. Hoppes, Team Chair

Date/s of review: Feb 19-21· 2020

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report for all comprehensive visits to institutions that offer distance education programs<sup>1</sup> and for other visits as applicable. Teams can use the institutional report to begin their investigation, then, use the visit to confirm claims and further surface possible concerns. Teams are not required to include a narrative about this in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings and Recommendations section of the team report. (If the institution offers only online courses, the team may use this form for reference but need not submit it as the team report is expected to cover distance education in depth in the body of the report.)

1. Programs and courses reviewed (please list)

MA in Kuchipudi Dance

MA in Carnatic Music

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

Number of Degree Programs Offered by the institution: Two

Degree Levels: Masters

FTE Enrollment in Distance Education (Academic Year 2019-2020): 46.6 (FTE means 9 credit hours per Semester)

History of offering distance education: 3 years

Percentage growth in distance education offerings and enrollment: As these are new programs, not much history is available

Platform: Canvas LMS, BigBlueButton integrated with Canvas LMS

Delivery Method : Distance Residency with Synchronous weekly meetings

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

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<sup>1</sup> See Distance Education Review Guide to determine whether programs are subject to this process. In general only programs that are more than 50% online require review and reporting.

Review included access to course content shells and observation of two courses, one from each program as well as interview with students, faculty, academic technology support teams.

### Observations and Findings

Lines of Inquiry (refer to relevant CFRs to assure comprehensive consideration)	Observations and Findings	Follow-up Required (identify the issues)
<i>Fit with Mission.</i> How does the institution conceive of distance learning relative to its mission, operations, and administrative structure? How are distance education offerings planned, funded, and operationalized?	Programs are in alignment with the mission and are funded through the operation budget – including tuition and fund-raising.	None.
<i>Connection to the Institution.</i> How are distance education students integrated into the life and culture of the institution?	Distance education is the only pedagogy offered to UofSA students. They are fully integrated	Opportunities to advance support services and co-curricular activities to online, adult learners.
<i>Quality of the DE Infrastructure.</i> Are the learning platform and academic infrastructure of the site conducive to learning and interaction between faculty and students and among students? Is the technology adequately supported? Are there back-ups?	The LMS is stable with sufficient support and is hosted by a reputable company including support, updates, and back-ups. The design was created with universal design principles	None.
<i>Student Support Services:</i> What is the institution's capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services, academic support and other services appropriate to distance modality? What do data show about the effectiveness of the services?	All services are new but focused for the online student. While there is limited longitudinal data, the performance of the first two cohorts is quite strong.	Continue to mature data analysis (see the SAV1 report for additional details)
<i>Faculty.</i> Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? Do they teach only online courses? In what ways does the institution ensure that distance learning faculty are oriented, supported, and integrated appropriately into the academic life of the institution? How are faculty involved in curriculum development and assessment of student learning? How are faculty trained and supported to teach in this modality?	Part-time faculty who only teach online/blended courses for the institution. They are fully involved in governance, assessment, and community integration. They are trained in annual sessions and are provided one-on-	None.

	one support from internal resources.	
<i>Curriculum and Delivery.</i> Who designs the distance education programs and courses? How are they approved and evaluated? Are the programs and courses comparable in content, outcomes and quality to on-ground offerings? (Submit credit hour report.)	There are no on-ground offerings, so all course designs are let by faculty, assessed by faculty, and approved by faculty.	None.
<i>Retention and Graduation.</i> What data on retention and graduation are collected on students taking online courses and programs? What do these data show? What disparities are evident? Are rates comparable to on-ground programs and to other institutions' online offerings? If any concerns exist, how are these being addressed?	Institutional research is focused only on the performance of the online student. The longitudinal data is not available but to date, retention and graduation rates are exceptional.	None.
<i>Student Learning.</i> How does the institution assess student learning for online programs and courses? Is this process comparable to that used in on-ground courses? What are the results of student learning assessment? How do these compare with learning results of on-ground students, if applicable, or with other online offerings?	Because of the nature of the institution, all learning is online and is assessed appropriately. One program has completed a full program review, including the assessment of student outcomes. The results for student learning are positive and are culminated in a thesis of academic research and performance.	Continue with program review efforts.
<i>Contracts with Vendors.</i> Are there any arrangements with outside vendors concerning the infrastructure, delivery, development, or instruction of courses? If so, do these comport with the policy on <i>Contracts with Unaccredited Organizations</i> ?	The institution uses Instructure's Canvas LMS, support and hosting services. The contract complies with the appropriate WSCUC guidance.	None.

<p><i>Quality Assurance Processes:</i> How are the institution's quality assurance processes designed or modified to cover distance education? What evidence is provided that distance education programs and courses are educationally effective?</p>	<p>The QA processes are focused only on the online student/program experience. The institutions educational effectiveness was found sufficient for initial accreditation in the recent review.</p>	<p>Continue maturing processes for institutional research and learning outcome assessment</p>
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