

REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM

SPECIAL VISIT

To Woodbury University

February 26-28, 2020

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SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution and Accreditation History

Woodbury University is a private not-for-profit institution of 1,237 students and 70 full-time faculty in Burbank, California. The school was founded in downtown Los Angeles in 1884 as Woodbury Business College, and was renamed Woodbury University in 1974. In 1987 the institution moved to their current location on a verdant 22.4-acre campus in the eastern San Fernando valley, a location strategically close to the southern California media and entertainment industry. In 1998 they opened a small satellite campus in San Diego.

The institution has traditionally served under-represented students in the Los Angeles area, with a mission “to transform students into innovative professionals who will contribute responsibly to the global community.” Woodbury's emphasis on small classes, professional accreditation of its architecture and business degrees, practical skills development, and applied internships have earned the institution recognition in national educational rankings. In fall 2019 41% of students enrolled in the School of Media, Culture and Design; 34% in Architecture; 21% in Business; and 4% in Liberal Arts. Woodbury is particularly known for its architecture programs, which are professionally accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) and the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA), and its Fine Arts bachelor's degrees accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). Its Business bachelor's program is accredited by both the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP).

Woodbury is focused on undergraduate education, with 90% (1,117 students in fall 2019) of its students pursuing a bachelor's degree and 10% (118 students in fall 2019) pursuing a

master's. Ninety-one percent of its students are enrolled on the Burbank campus, and 9% are enrolled in San Diego. The institution offers five bachelor's degrees in 20 areas and five master's degrees, four of which are in the School of Architecture and one in Business. The College of Liberal Arts and the School of Media, Culture and Design offer only undergraduate courses, with the College of Liberal Arts providing undergraduate General Education (GE) courses.

The Woodbury student body is highly racially diverse, particularly in its undergraduate population. The institution's undergraduate enrollment is 37.8% Hispanic, 33.7% Caucasian, 11.7% international, 9.9% Asian, 3.6% African-American, 3.5% bi- or multiracial, and .2% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. The graduate programs, in contrast, are over half Caucasian (54.2% of the graduate enrollment), 18.6% international, 11.9% Hispanic, 5.9% Asian, 4.2% African American, 1.7% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 1.7% bi- or multiracial. International students make up 11.7% of the entire student population. Woodbury is officially classified as a Title V Hispanic Serving Institution, which enabled it to procure in 2019 a \$3,000,000. federal grant to improve academic programs. A high percentage of Woodbury's students are first-generation and come from families with limited economic means, with 71% of Woodbury students receiving financial assistance. The gender basis of the undergraduate body is approximately equal (51.7% female and 48.3% male), while graduate enrollment shows more females (58.5%) than males (41.5%).

After an accreditation visit in spring 2018, in June 2018 the WSCUC Commission reaffirmed Woodbury's accreditation for a period of six years. The Commission's 2018 action letter required Woodbury to address the following issues in a Progress Report, including "audited financial statements and progress toward financial sustainability," by February 2019, with a

Special Visit scheduled in spring 2020 to update the Commission on progress. The seven issues are:

1. ***Long-term Financial Sustainability.*** "The university must follow through on achieving a balanced budget in order to ensure long term financial sustainability. The university has experienced unqualified financial audits and managed its resources to provide adequate reserves to make up for recent budget deficits but this trend needs to be reversed, utilizing the plans and detailed projections prepared for multiple scenarios."
2. ***Long-term Integrated Strategic Planning.*** "Woodbury should initiate the development of a comprehensive longer-term strategic plan that integrates operating plans such as enrollment, advancement, and marketing, with resource allocation based on strategic priorities." (CFRs 4.6, 4.7)
3. ***Diversity Plan Development and Implementation.*** "The university should develop and implement a diversity plan that is aligned with Woodbury's core mission to serve diverse students, and underscores the university's commitment to diversity as a strength and value. The diversity plan, under the university's comprehensive strategic plan, should guide the university's: 1) recruitment of diverse students, including those from international settings; 2) prioritization on enhanced student support services to improve student success, retention and graduation rates, particularly for underrepresented students and international students; 3) recruitment and promotion of diverse faculty, staff, and administrators; and 4) greater emphasis on Woodbury's classification as a Hispanic-serving institution." (CFRs 1.4, 2.10, 3.1)
4. ***Assessment and Decision-making.*** "The university should expand the culture of assessment and data-driven institutional decision-making through continued assessment efforts that

include student support services, co-curricular programming, General Education, and core competencies." (CFRs 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 4.1)

5. ***Program Review Procedures and Guidelines.*** "Woodbury should continue the process of developing procedures and guidelines of program review that meet WSCUC standards." (CFRs 2.7)

6. ***Faculty Workload Equity and Sustainability.*** "The university should continue the analysis of faculty workload to ensure equity in salary, stipends, course release, and professional development, and to ensure that faculty workload is sustainable." (CFRs 3.1, 3.2)

7. ***By-Laws Compliance.*** "The Board of Trustees bylaws should be revised to come into compliance with the WSCUC Governing Board Policy." (CFR 3.9)

Major Changes at the Institutional Level

Woodbury has experienced major changes since its last accreditation visit in spring 2018, most notably with budget cuts, loss of faculty, staff, and administration personnel and positions, and reorganization of key roles. Cabinet positions in Development, Finance, Instructional Technology, and Student Affairs, in addition to the Controller position, were eliminated; faculty in key areas, such as the chair of the new Applied Computer Science in Media Arts program, were not retained; key positions were restructured to incorporate committee oversight, such as the newly formed IT Committee; and staff turnover, for example in Admissions, has been substantial.

At the same time, new positions in administration, most notably in Assessment and Educational Effectiveness, were created; and new staff positions including registration, student learning, mental health, security, and housing were added. Replacement personnel in Academic Affairs and Disability Services are planned.

Enrollments, which had been steadily declining, stabilized in fall of 2019. Woodbury associated this with increased recruitment and enrollment of first year students; increased retention of first year students; and increased retention of international students.

B. Description of Team's Review Process

The team prepared for the Special Visit by studying the institution's December 2019 Report and examining the data and supporting materials. Because some areas required additional documentation and explanation, the team requested additional information. This included a request for audited financials for 2018 and 2019; documentation of loan / bond repayments; multiple budget scenarios reflecting differing enrollment forecasts; Board of Trustees minutes; disaggregated retention and graduation data by ethnicity and gender; a copy of the Hispanic Serving Institution grant; executive summary of the School of Architecture diversity plan; program review, GE, and core competency assessment schedules; templates for assessments and Program reviews; sample faculty contracts; Board of Trustees conflict of interest policy and timeline for presidential review; and an organization chart.

During the accreditation visit the team met in person with administrative personnel, staff, faculty, and students. Meetings included the President; ten members of the 16-member Board of Trustees; the Accreditation Liaison Officer; Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs, Administrative Services and Human Relations, and Finance and Accounting (a new position to start in March 2020); the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs; x school and college Deans; Associate Deans; program Chairs; School Assessment Officers; the University Librarian; Directors of Academic and Educational Effectiveness and Institutional Research; full-time and adjunct faculty; staff; and students. The team communicated via teleconferencing with one San Diego

faculty member. The team monitored and read the contents of the confidential email account during the visit.

Institution's Special Visit Report: Quality and Rigor of the Report and Supporting Evidence

Woodbury's December 2019 Report was well-organized and clearly written, with clear data tables and hyperlinks that connected to supporting materials. It described changes since the last visit; the seven areas of Commission concern; four areas significant to the university (changing education landscape; academic programming; faculty hires; and systems overhaul); and next steps (refocus on core mission; develop the strategic plan; build on diversity; develop stronger data-driven decision-making culture; and shared governance). The Commission areas of concern contained a description of Woodbury's process; individuals and personnel involved; data collected or reviewed; discussions; procedures, policies, or guidelines developed; and final products issuing from the work. Woodbury is in its second year of a six-year process and much work is still in the emerging phase.

While it was a pleasure for the team to read the report and review the data, some areas of Commission concerns were not present or addressed in the report. The team requested audited financials, multiple budget scenarios, loan repayment documentation, disaggregated retention and graduation data, bylaws, and Board of Trustees meeting minutes, all of which were provided.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS

A. Issue 1: Long-term Financial Sustainability

"The university must follow through on achieving a balanced budget in order to ensure long term financial sustainability. The university has experienced unqualified financial audits and managed its resources to provide adequate reserves to make up for recent budget deficits but this

trend needs to be reversed, utilizing the plans and detailed projections prepared for multiple scenarios."

The Special Visit team reviewed Woodbury's report on achieving a balanced budget; 2018 and 2019 audited financials; unaudited financials for the current fiscal year; multiple budget scenarios for varying enrollment projections; Board of Trustees minutes; a financial planning presentation supporting refinancing debt; and documentation on loan / bond repayments.

Woodbury has made progress towards achieving sustained balanced budgets, while proactively dealing with issues involving debt, financial management, and pension benefits. (CFR 3.4) As noted in the 2018 Team Report, falling enrollment (from a high of over 1700 in 2012 to a low of 1160 in 2017) resulted in several years of budget deficits and a drawdown of reserves. Since 2017, enrollment has stabilized and grown to 1237 for Fall 2019, which is around 50 more than forecast in the institution's February 2019 Progress Report. This growth, combined with an increase in tuition and significant expense reductions, has resulted in an expected balanced budget for FY2020.

Woodbury shared three 5-year budget scenarios with the team, with the "expected scenario" assuming continued enrollment growth of over 3% per year, along with corresponding growth in tuition rates. (Forecasted expenses in all three models are the same.) The expected scenario projects significant annual surpluses starting in FY2021, which could be used to replenish reserves, fund new programs, support faculty and staff, along with other initiatives to ensure a sustainable institution. Woodbury feels this is the most likely scenario due to the increased retention rates it has seen this past year, potential new student interest, and the attractiveness of new and planned programs. This case, however, does assume that the recent enrollment increase is the new long-term trend.

In contrast, the “worst case scenario” assumes resumption of the falling enrollment trend, but with the same increases in tuition rates. This scenario would lead to an estimated additional total draw on reserves of over \$5 million (again, assuming no cost savings). Woodbury is fortunate to have unrestricted financial reserves of over \$16 million, so it would be able to cover these deficits, at least for the foreseeable future.

Achieving a sustainable financial situation for Woodbury also must address two debt-related questions. First, the institution continues to be out of compliance with the debt service coverage ratio on its bond debt, and the bondholder has again agreed to a waiver through FY2020, though requiring that Woodbury repay \$2 million of the then-\$26 million bond principal. (This repayment transaction in November 2019 was confirmed by notes to the 2019 audited financial statements.) This expense, of course, reduced unrestricted reserves to the current \$16 million. Per conversations with the Board and President, the bondholder also has indicated that it wants Woodbury to refinance the bond with another lender, and thus fully pay off the bond in the near future, though with no set target date. The university is actively preparing a financing proposal for spring 2020 for presentation to multiple potential lenders. This proposal also includes new financing to replace the institution’s \$5.6 million line of credit, which Woodbury fully used in 2019 for cashflow management (repaying it in full with tuition revenue) and which expires in 2021. Given the current interest rate environment, this refinance package could work to the benefit of Woodbury, but in the short run it does increase financial uncertainty.

The second debt-related question involves the pension liability Woodbury faces from the defined benefit plan it terminated in 2011. The majority (approximately 70%) of the plan liability is funded through mutual fund investments whose value varies with the market. The

remainder is unfunded, so Woodbury must cover that amount (along with any market-driven investment shortfalls) out of assets. In the financial statements, the net change in assets does not reflect this additional pension liability charge (which varies annually), so that a reported balanced budget in operations can still imply (and has implied) a decrease in net assets. However, as noted above, the institution has reserves that can cover this for several years. Both the administration and the Board are very aware of this challenge and monitor it closely.

Related to both the bond and pension debt issues is also the need to increase reserves through fund-raising. Currently the President is solely responsible for institutional advancement. Now that the finances have been at least partially stabilized, the team urges the President and the Board to focus more deliberately on increasing the institution's financial resources through more attention to attracting gifts and other new diverse revenue streams.

The final observation about financial sustainability reflects the very significant turnover Woodbury has experienced in financial administration over the past two years. For the first time in several years, the FY2019 audit noted a significant deficiency in internal controls and financial reporting, attributed to inadequate application of policies and procedures, an observation with which the institution agreed. The auditor noted that this deficiency had no material impact on the audited statements. Woodbury has now hired an experienced full-time CFO, who starts on March 1, 2020, and who met with the team. This should help significantly in addressing the auditor's concerns. (CFR 3.8)

Findings and Conclusions. Overall, while conservative budget projections continue to place the institution in danger of being out-of-compliance with CFR 3.4, the stabilization of enrollment, careful monitoring of resources by the administration and Board, and willingness of

the faculty and staff to go the extra mile to address what is widely understood to be a “budget crisis,” all indicate attention to the concerns expressed in the 2018 Commission letter.

B. Issue 2: Long-term Integrated Strategic Planning

“Woodbury should initiate the development of a comprehensive longer-term strategic plan that integrates operating plans such as enrollment, advancement, and marketing, with resource allocation based on strategic priorities. (CFRs 4.6, 4.7)”

Woodbury has actively reinvigorated its strategic planning process, creating in February 2019 an institution-wide Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) that has representation from multiple and diverse stakeholders. (CFR 4.6) Building on the institution’s mission statement, the SPC has developed a draft 5-year plan (2020-2024), based upon a SWOT analysis that encompassed academic programs, student support, enrollment, branding, advancement, and financial stability. The draft plan includes specific tactics that reflect an awareness of the challenges Woodbury faces, as well as opportunities to engage with its community. (CFR 4.7) Thus, Woodbury has responded constructively to the Commission’s concerns expressed in the 2018 letter.

In parallel, Woodbury has developed a 5-year budget plan that reflects an assumption that enrollment will continue to trend upward at a significant rate, and that tuition will be raised annually. (CFR 3.4) This budget plan would provide the funds both to stabilize the institution financially and underwrite many of the strategic plan initiatives. In their present form, though, there is not an explicit linkage between the draft strategic plan and the budget plan. The budget plan is based on a goal of between 1400 and 1500 students in 2024, which represents about a 17% increase in enrollment from 2019. The draft strategic plan does not address enrollment growth specifically, nor does it reflect a conversation about how the enrollment goal was

determined. Further, many of the tactics in the strategic plan would require financial support, and Woodbury has not specified how that would happen, nor how the expenditure side of the budget plan reflects the goals and tactics from the strategic plan. (CFR 3.4)

Findings and Conclusions. Since the 2018 visit Woodbury has developed a 5-year Strategic Plan. Only a handful of specific performance indicators, as well as links between the goals, tactics, and the specific performance indicators, including administrative responsibility for the various initiatives, have been developed. Further, there has not been a formal adoption of the plan within the Woodbury governance structure (Board, Cabinet, Senate). Thus, the institution is still at the emerging stage of comprehensive strategic planning. Given the desire for this to be a plan for implementation in 2020-2024, the team recommends that Woodbury move forward more urgently in this process. (CFRs 4.6, 4.7)

C. Issue 3: Diversity Plan Development and Implementation

"The university should develop and implement a diversity plan that is aligned with Woodbury's core mission to serve diverse students, and underscores the university's commitment to diversity as a strength and value. The diversity plan, under the university's comprehensive strategic plan, should guide the university's: 1) recruitment of diverse students, including those from international settings; 2) prioritization on enhanced student support services to improve student success, retention and graduation rates, particularly for underrepresented students and international students; 3) recruitment and promotion of diverse faculty, staff, and administrators; and 4) greater emphasis on Woodbury's classification as a Hispanic-serving institution." (CFRs 1.4, 2.10, 3.1)

The Special Visit team reviewed information contained in the report; the December 2019 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan Outline approved by the Board of Trustees; the 2013 School of Architecture Diversity Report and its 2019-20 update; responses to a faculty questionnaire on diversity in the curriculum; the Retention Initiative Prioritization List and Rubric; the Strategic

Initiative for recruiting more diverse students; the recruitment plan for international students; and the timeline for completion of diversity goals. The team requested and reviewed first-year retention and 6-year graduation data disaggregated by race / ethnicity, international status, and gender, sorted by school and program; retention data on students entering the institution with lower GPAs; the Developing Hispanic-Serving Institution Title V grant commencing in 2020; and the Student Retention Initiative Draft.

Diversity Policy. After the 2018 accreditation visit Woodbury formed a Diversity Team consisting of the Vice President of Administrative Services and Human Resources, the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, Deans, a WASC Steering Committee member, an Admissions Specialist, and a student. The Diversity team benchmarked diversity plans in other institutions of higher education and set a long-term process that included information-gathering from faculty and programs, analyses, goal-setting, setting timelines, reviewing budgets, and setting metrics. This process resulted in the Campus Diversity Plan Draft approved by the Board of Trustees in December 2019. (CFRs 3.1, 3.10)

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan for 2020-2024 includes 6 goals, including student recruitment, success, and retention; faculty, staff and administrator recruitment and development; campus climate; curriculum; and external partnerships. As of yet the goals have no metrics, allocated budget, or a timeline to complete them.

As part of its accreditation activities the School of Architecture developed a Diversity Plan in 2014, updated to encompass 2023, which set 4 goals (environment, recruitment, scholarship, and co-curricular partnerships) and corresponding strategies, metrics and assessment measures. Some of these have been incorporated into the School of Architecture practices.

The team recommends that Woodbury align School and College diversity efforts with the university's plans and incorporate them into strategic planning and budgeting. (CFRs 3.1, 3.4)

A newly-formed Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee consisting of the President, Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs, a full-time and an adjunct faculty member, a Director, staff member, student, and trustee has been charged to review and approve diversity initiatives. The committee is convened and overseen by the Vice President of Administrative Services and Human Resources. How the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan is allocated resources within the strategic planning process is not clear to the visiting team.

Student Recruitment. While the undergraduate program is already significantly diverse, the university is expanding its recruitment efforts to community colleges and under-represented populations, and is asking alumni, faculty, and students to step up to assist with student recruitment efforts.

International student enrollment has fallen from 24% of the student population in fall of 2016 to 11% in fall of 2019. International recruitment initiatives were unsuccessful in Europe and Latin America in 2017, and Woodbury indicated in its 2019 Report that China and India have been chosen as future sources for international recruitment. A second recruitment focus is domestic international students, predominantly Saudi Arabian, as transfer students and incoming first year students.

As of yet there are no systematic assessment measures in place to evaluate the success of these diversity student recruitment efforts. The efficacy of the international recruitment strategies was not reported. (CFR 2.10)

Student Support Services. In response to multi-year low retention rates and declining enrollments, the university developed the Summer Bridge program for students with low (2.25 to

2.5) GPAs, continued with the Transition Track program for incoming first year students with GPAs of 2.5-2.78, and piloted a First-Year Experience program. Data show that retention for students in the Summer Bridge and Transition Track programs is 72%-80% over 1-2 years, a commendable outcome. A Coordinator of International Student Support Services was hired, as well as a Writing Center tutor, for international students' support. The university associates these initiatives with a 9.9% increase in first-year retention rates, and steadily increased international student retention from 65% in 2016, to 73.5% in fall 2017, to 83.3% in fall 2019.

The university continues to use its Starfish early reporting system to notify faculty and staff of student problems, the CARE team is active, and there is collaboration between staff and faculty regarding next steps in helping students. With one professional academic advisor for all students, faculty continue to advise students intensively, which in combination with teaching and administrative duties contributes to faculty workload. During the visit the team heard plans to hire additional professional academic advisors who would alleviate advising pressures currently placed on faculty. In addition, Woodbury has programs using advanced students to serve as peer tutors in Math, Science and Subject areas, and Academic Peer Advisors and International Peer Advisors. Library orientations and access to campus writing, disability and counseling resources serve as resources to support student learning.

International programs offer support to 155 international students. The newly hired (since 2018) Coordinator maintains a database of financial information and scholarships, presents weekly workshops, and created an Early Alert system for visa issues.

In interviews with students, the visiting team learned of student organizations, some of which were started or revived by students, that focus on underrepresented groups. These clubs provide valued support to students, promote leadership, boost self-confidence, and promote skills

development. These clubs are involved in creating co-curricular activities at Woodbury which have a positive impact on student learning.

Retention. The Special Visit team requested disaggregated data by race / ethnicity, gender, and international status for retention and 6-year graduation rates. As was true in its 2018 team visit, there are significant disparities in overall 1-year retention rates (fall 2013) between white students (83%) and international students (71%), African American (69%) and bi- or multiracial students (64%). The disparity exists in all Schools, and is especially marked in the College of Liberal Arts where white students have an 80% 1-year retention rate while Hispanic students have a 43% rate. Business shows white students at 91%, African American at 75%, and international at 71%. Media Culture & Design shows white students at 79%, international at 69%, and African American at 67%. Architecture shows white students at 81%, international at 74% and African American at 67%.

6-year Graduation Rates. Also as reported by the team visit in 2018, there are overall discrepancies in graduation rates between white and other students. Overall there are significant disparities in 6-year graduation rates (fall 2013) between white students (68%) and Hispanic students (57%), international students (51%), Asian students (54%), African American students (54%), and bi- or multiracial students (55%). The disparity exists in all Schools, and is especially marked in the School of Business where white students have a 79% 6-year graduation rate while Asian students have a 29% rate, Hispanic students have a 54% rate, international students 50%, and bi- or multiracial students 50%. African American students in Business have a 100% rate.

Media Culture & Design shows the 6-year graduation rate for Asian students at 63%, white students at 61%, bi- or multiracial 50%, Hispanic 38%, African American 33%,

international 31%. Architecture shows excellent parity in graduation rates except for African American at 33%.

Curriculum. The university surveyed faculty to describe the diversity content and pedagogy used in the classroom and curriculum. The School of Architecture took care to include and promote diversity in its rewriting of its mission and vision statement. It recently rethought and restructured its gateway class in response to noticing high failure rates for some students. The class now emphasizes practice and is not as quantitatively focused; these changes are in line with changes in the professional licensing exam in the field, so they meet the learning needs of students. (CFR 2.2a)

Faculty. As recommended in the last team visit, Woodbury has developed the means to provide a demographic analysis of faculty, who are 54% white, 8% Asian, 6% Hispanic, 1% African American, and 1% bi- or multiracial (30% are unknown or unreported). Sixty percent of faculty are male while 40% are female. The team notes that current faculty demographics do not match the student body diversity in race, ethnicity, or gender.

As noted in the 2018 team visit report, as a university focused on professional education, Woodbury faces a challenge in matching faculty, who often come from fields that lack diversity, with a diverse student population that reflects Woodbury's mission. While the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan includes faculty hiring in its goals, there isn't yet a specific diversity hiring policy in place. (CFR 1.4) During the visit administration personnel referred to plans to post jobs in arenas that promote diversity, and to include hiring questions that reflect diversity experience.

Staff. Woodbury's staff and administration are remarkably diverse. While the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan includes hiring in its goals, there isn't yet a specific diversity

recruitment, hiring and promotion policy in place for staff and administration. (CFR 1.4) The next step is to craft needed metrics and budget allocations to promote these areas.

Board of Trustees. In a move toward greater focus and diversity, the Board of Trustees decreased in number from 24 to 16 members and increased in diversity, with ¼ (four) of its members identifying as Hispanic, and one as Asian.

Findings and Conclusion. Since the 2018 team visit Woodbury has researched and developed a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy. Its next steps are to provide specific metrics and budget allocations for the policy's goals that are in alignment with, and informed by, the university's Strategic Plan. The team recommends that Woodbury align School and College diversity efforts with the university's plans and incorporate them into strategic planning and budgeting. The university's diversity planning is thus in the emergent phase. (CFR 1.4)

As in 2018, disaggregated measures of student success as measured by 1-year retention and 6-year graduation rates show inequities across racial groups, with white students in general showing higher rates of student success. These disaggregated measures are not widely disseminated, transparent, or accessible, and are not provided to deans or faculty. They are thus not used by faculty and staff to analyze academic curriculum or pedagogy, or student success. (CFR 2.10, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3) The team recommends that the university reflect on the patterns contained in the time-to-graduation and retention data, particularly as it applies to African American, international, Hispanic, and bi- or multiracial students. Systematically thinking through the meaning of disaggregated measures of retention and graduation will allow Woodbury to target student academics and support services that meet these students' learning needs. (CFR 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 2.14)

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan and the Strategic Plan could provide metrics for assessing the effectiveness of student services in supporting the learning of diverse students, in allocating resources to make improvements, and in resolving racial disparities in retention and graduation. The team recommends that Woodbury continue to address these issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. (CFR 1.4)

D. Issue 4: Assessment and Decision-Making

"The university should expand the culture of assessment and data-driven institutional decision-making through continued assessment efforts that include student support services, co-curricular programming, General Education, and core competencies." (CFRs 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 4.1)

The team reviewed the institution's report, program reviews, IR's report on the San Diego campus, Assessment Group meeting minutes, assessment workshop slides, and two narratives describing how data collection had informed decision-making.

Woodbury is developing a culture of collecting and using data, and has addressed Commission concerns in this area in three ways: 1) focusing the role of Institutional Research (IR) in providing core data sets using the Tableau and SharePoint Online information software; 2) hiring a Director of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness to provide training in assessment and to oversee assessment initiatives in program review, GE assessment and core competency assessment; and 3) forming an Assessment Group to liaison with Schools and Colleges and to provide a working group developing and piloting assessment models and reporting assessment data.

Office of Institutional Research. IR has developed use of Tableau to automate reports in core area of the university: admissions, enrollment, retention, graduation, remediation rates, transfer rates, student-faculty ratio, and cohort data comparisons. Reports are used by administration, staff and faculty who use SharePoint Online to view data tables and reports, and

are used by programs working on program reviews. Woodbury is now developing an online process whereby programs can request data needed for program reviews. Institutional Research conducted a thorough review of the San Diego campus' programs, enrollments, and finances in order to provide data for future decision-making and assess future options. The report was shared with the Board of Trustees and formed the foundation for discussion, options, and decision-making about the viability of the San Diego campus programs in the fiscally challenging environment. (CFR 4.5)

A campus climate survey is being planned, as well as a housing survey that links housing with student success metrics.

Significantly, disaggregated retention and graduation data have not been part of the reports generated by IR and shared online with university groups.

Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness. The Director of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness coordinates assessment efforts across the university. This office develops assessment tools and practices; trains faculty in assessment, assessment thinking, outcomes, and outcome measurement; consults with and guides programs on assessments in program review, GE, and core competency assessments; analyzes data; consults on alignment of program and course learning objectives; and guides development of sustainable assessment plans.

Assessment Group. This group is comprised of Directors of Assessment in each School and College, the Instruction Librarian, ePortfolio Coordinator, and Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs. The group discusses assessment practices and guidelines, acts as assessment leaders and liaisons for their Schools and Colleges, and piloted the Writing Core Competency assessment model. They are working on procedures to report the results of the Core Competency

assessments using a new software program. Finally, they're working on developing GE assessment in collaboration with School and College Deans.

Findings and Conclusions. Since 2018 Woodbury has made significant progress in the area of assessment and decision-making. Organizationally it invested in the offices of Institutional Research, and Assessment and Educational Effectiveness. (CFR 3.7, 3.10) This investment provides a foundation of systematic data gathering and data analyses that can be shared with the Board of Trustees and can be used to improve the university in aligning its goals and strategic plan with budgetary allocation. (CFR 3.4) The report on the functioning of the San Diego campus is an exemplary use of institutional data gathering and analysis to inform decision-making. Continuing to integrate the work and reports of IR in university-wide decision-making is essential. (CFR 4.2)

Woodbury addressed its lack of a data information system and now uses Tableau to develop key reports in core areas of functioning. SharePoint Online now allows general access to reports across the university. The institution is in the process of working out who is licensed to create and see original reports due to Tableau licensing requirements, which has created some confusion in different parts of the institution.

The hiring of an Assessment and Educational Effectiveness director has centralized assessment efforts and has become essential in providing training and guidance in assessment in program review, core competencies and GE. Integrating assessment with the Strategic Plan, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan, and university budgetary allocations becomes the university's next step in integrating assessment and decision-making.

Despite considerable cutbacks in personnel and staffing, Woodbury is using its resources strategically to support and promote student success for students. Continued assessments of the

efficacy of the university's student support services are recommended so that modifications and budgetary allocations may be made to provide optimum support. More systematic initiatives to assess student support services, student satisfaction, and co-curricular activities will help ensure that student learning needs for all students, including under-represented minority students, are being recognized and met. (CFR 2.11. 2.13) This would enable the university to link student support initiatives to diversity student success metrics, for example, and to the goals contained in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan as well as the Strategic Plan. Alumni and stakeholder assessments are also valuable as the university develops metrics and implements its Strategic Plan.

As discussed above, the team recommends that the university reflect on the patterns contained in the time-to-graduation and retention data, particularly as it applies to African American, international, Hispanic, and bi- or multiracial students. Systematically thinking through the meaning of disaggregated measures of retention and graduation will allow Woodbury to target student academics and support services that meet these students' learning needs. [CFR 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 2.14]

Finally, as part of the university's long-term Strategic Plan and in service of financial sustainability, the team recommends that the university develop metrics for the long-term Strategic Plan and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan. Aligning budget allocations with the goals and metrics of these plans will assist Woodbury in integrating data with decision-making. (CFR 3.4)

E. Issue 5: Program Review Procedures and Guidelines

"Woodbury should continue the process of developing procedures and guidelines of program review that meet WSCUC standards." (CFR 2.7)

The visiting team reviewed the report, program reviews in Interior Architecture and Math and Science, Program Review guidelines and templates, and information on program review cycles.

Since the 2018 team visit, the hiring of a Director of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness has provided the university the means to train faculty and guide its assessment efforts, as described in the prior section on Assessment and Decision-Making.

The Educational Planning Committee (EPC) has taken a key role in developing guidelines for program review, in addressing faculty workload issues in conducting program reviews, and in addressing sustainability issues given the cost-cutting that Woodbury has undergone. The EPC streamlined the program review procedures and lengthened the program review cycle to 6 years, which enhances sustainability and makes it less of a burden to understaffed programs, and lengthened the time given to self-studies. Assessment plans are included in program self-studies and are linked with budget allocations.

Findings and Conclusions. The visiting team observed buy-in from faculty and administration for program review, and engaged participation in doing and learning from them. Faculty reported learning from program reviews and feeding their learning back in to improving program curricula. The team recommends that the university continue to clarify how strategic planning and budget allocation are linked to program review, and how faculty workload is negotiated to make the process sustainable. (CFR 2.7, 3.4)

F. Issue 6: Faculty Workload Equity and Sustainability

“The university should continue the analysis of faculty workload to ensure equity in salary, stipends, course release, and professional development, and to ensure that faculty workload is sustainable. (CFRs 3.1, 3.2)”

Woodbury, through the Financial Analysis Committee (FAC), has significantly involved faculty in addressing workload and compensation issues. (CFR 4.4) Two of the four strategies within Goal 4 of Woodbury's draft Strategic Plan ("Build Reputational Strength") specifically address issues of the workplace environment and faculty development. (CFR 3.2) The analysis completed by the FAC delves deeply into the meaning of FTE, as well as how the current FTE definition interacts with current faculty allocations across the institution. (CFR 4.6) This analysis has been transparently shared with the Faculty Senate and includes a survey of how faculty view their current workload. Significant attention has been placed on the issues around faculty administrative workload, particularly as it has been affected by the reduction in FTE faculty due to declining enrollment. (CFR 3.1)

Findings and Conclusions. Faculty workload is a trailing issue from the Commission, over the last decade, which is not fully resolved. Many faculty continue to feel overwhelmed by multiple responsibilities, which for chairs include contractual obligations for recruitment. Faculty also expressed concern over the significant reductions in FTE faculty, particularly related to the impact of governance responsibilities that cannot be easily reduced even as student enrollment declines. (CFR 3.1) At the same time, the team notes that the faculty expressed a deep commitment to Woodbury and students, and expressed willingness to undertake the increased work resulting from financial pressures on the university.

G. Issue 7: Bylaws Compliance

"The Board of Trustees bylaws should be revised to come into compliance with the WSCUC Governing Board Policy." (CFR 3.9) The Commission noted that the Board's bylaws lacked statements about conflicts of interest and about the process for regular and formal evaluation of the CEO (CFR 3.9).

The team reviewed Board minutes and met with Board members on the Special Visit to discuss bylaw compliance with the WSCUC Policy on Independent Governing Boards, especially related to Presidential review, and the Board Conflict of Interest disclosure.

Findings and Conclusions. The team confirms that Board Bylaw updates were recently approved and implemented for Presidential review and for Board Conflict of Interest disclosure, making Woodbury compliant in this area.

SECTION III – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings.

1. ***Long-Term Financial Sustainability.*** Overall, while conservative budget projections continue to place the institution in danger of being out-of-compliance with CFR 3.4, the stabilization of enrollment, careful monitoring of resources by the administration and Board, and willingness of the faculty and staff to go the extra mile to address what is widely understood to be a “budget crisis,” indicates attention to the concerns expressed in the 2018 Commission letter.
2. ***Long-term Integrated Strategic Planning.*** A Strategic Plan has been developed containing overarching goals for Woodbury. Only a handful of specific performance indicators, as well as links between the goals, tactics, and the specific performance indicators, including administrative responsibility for the various initiatives, have been developed. The Woodbury governance structure (Board, Cabinet, Senate) have not yet formally adopted the Strategic Plan. Links between the Strategic Plan and budgetary allocations have also not yet been developed. Thus, the institution is still at the emerging stage of comprehensive strategic planning. (CFR 4.6, 4.7)

3. ***Diversity Plan Development and Implementation.*** Since the 2018 team visit Woodbury has researched and developed a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy. As in 2018, disaggregated measures of student success as measured by 1-year retention and 6-year graduation rates show inequities across racial groups, with white students in general showing higher rates of student success. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan and the Strategic Plan could provide metrics for assessing the effectiveness of student services in supporting the learning of diverse students, in allocating resources to make improvements, and in resolving racial disparities in retention and graduation. (CFR 1.4)
4. ***Assessment and Decision-Making.*** Since 2018 Woodbury has made significant progress in this area by investing in the offices of Institutional Research, and Assessment and Educational Effectiveness. (CFR 3.7, 3.10) These provide the foundation of systematic data gathering and data analyses that can be shared with the Board of Trustees and can be used to improve the university in aligning its goals and Strategic Plan with budgetary allocation. Aligning budget allocations with the goals and metrics of the long-term Strategic Plan and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan will assist Woodbury in integrating data with decision-making. (CFR 3.4)

Woodbury's Institutional Research has developed the use of Tableau to automatize reports in core area of the university. The Assessment and Educational Effectiveness director has centralized assessment efforts and become essential in providing training and guidance in program review, core competencies and GE assessment.
5. ***Program Review Procedures and Guidelines.*** The visiting team observed buy-in from faculty and administration for program review, which is guided by the office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness. The Educational Planning Committee serves

a key role in setting guidelines and procedures and establishing sustainable cycles of self-study. The university continues to clarify how strategic planning and budget allocation are linked to program review, and how faculty workload is negotiated to make the process sustainable. (CFR 2.7, 3.4)

6. ***Faculty Workload Equity and Sustainability.*** Faculty workload is a trailing issue over the last decade which has not been fully resolved. Many faculty continue to feel overwhelmed by multiple responsibilities and the impact of governance responsibilities. The team notes that the faculty express a deep commitment to Woodbury and to the students, and expressed willingness to undertake the increased work resulting from financial pressures on the university. (CFR 3.1)
7. ***Bylaws Compliance.*** The team confirms that Board Bylaw updates were recently approved and implemented for Presidential review and for Board Conflict of Interest disclosure. (CFR 3.9)

Commendations. The team commends the institution for the following accomplishments and practices:

1. Stabilization of enrollment (CFR 3.5)

The team commends the collaborative work on Woodbury's Strategic Enrollment Plan to recruit students, improve its webpages, and increase engagement with the university.

2. Student engagement and satisfaction (CFR 2.5)

The team notes students' appreciation for their financial aid packages, faculty and staff support, leadership opportunities, hands-on learning and internships that network them with future employers and industry influencers. It is clear to the team that students find their education at Woodbury transformational.

3. Ambitious assessment and program review (CFR 2.3, 2.7)

The team notes Woodbury's inclusion of student and support services in its review protocol, and applauds the dedication to assessment and closing loops. It urges the university to take full ownership, versus attributions to WSCUC guidelines and time lines, of all important continuous improvement processes.

4. Department of Education grant to develop new applied programs

The team commends the university for being awarded a prestigious Department of Education grant to develop new applied programs to innovate your curriculum and drive increased enrollment and workforce development. The team notes the broad excitement, revitalized energy and momentum this grant has catalyzed at Woodbury.

Recommendations. The team recommends the following action plans for the university:

1. Continue momentum of university strategic plan (CFR 4.6, 4.7)

The team urges Woodbury to continue the momentum on the university strategic plan. This will give the institution guidance and direction to innovate curriculum, seek philanthropic gifts, and allocate resources. To ensure accountability, the team recommends timely communications and progress updates to the campus and board on progress on the strategic plan.

2. Continue to use data to make decisions (CFR 2.10, 2.11, 2.13)

The team recommends that Woodbury continues to use data to make decisions, and to share data with faculty and staff for transparency. This will be particularly important as the institution addresses equity gaps in retention and graduation rates of underrepresented students across the university in schools, disciplines and majors, and at the course level.

3. Develop Diversity Action Plan (CFR 1.4, 3.1)

The aforementioned data analytics in Recommendation 2 will support the development of a diversity action plan to close student equity gaps and guide Woodbury to hire faculty and staff to support inclusion of the increasingly diverse student population.

4. Expand diverse revenue streams (CFR 3.3, 3.6, 4.7)

Finally, the team urges Woodbury to expand its diverse revenue streams to support its strategic plan, and to ensure financial sustainability. The team recommends involvement of the Board of Trustees in the areas of Advancement and philanthropic giving. In addition, the team recommends that Woodbury involve faculty and staff in entrepreneurial efforts to mobilize increased offerings of self-support certificates, which may augment financial sustainability strategies.