

REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM  
SPECIAL VISIT

# University of the Pacific

April 12-15, 2022

## Team Roster

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

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## SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

### A. Description of Institution, Accreditation History, and Visit

University of the Pacific (Pacific) was founded by Methodist ministers in 1851, and provided California with its first chartered medical school (1858), first coeducational campus (1871), and first conservatory of music (1878) before becoming an independent institution in the 1960s. Pacific offers 68 bachelor's, 35 master's, and 13 doctorate programs through nine schools and colleges across three campuses in Stockton, Sacramento, and San Francisco. Fall 2021 enrollment was 6066, with 3306 undergraduates, 71% of whom came from Northern California. Pacific proudly reports that they were tied for 6<sup>th</sup> in *US News & World Report* for ethnic diversity, that they serve 37% Pell recipients, 31% first-generation students, are currently classified as a non-majority Asian American and Native American, Pacific Islander-Serving Institution, and that they are very close to also becoming a Hispanic-Serving Institution. According to WSCUC Key Indicators, the university's 8-year outcome measures include a 75.8% graduation rate, 15.7 transfer-out rate, and 8.4% attrition rate. With respect to faculty, more than half are full-time, and 85% of those faculty hold a terminal degree.

The university is in good financial standing despite enrollment declines during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Enrollment dropped as low as 6%, but a significant emphasis on yield and retention, alongside one-time expenditure reductions in operational costs and strong fundraising efforts have allowed the university to stabilize the budget. Pacific reportedly has confidence in their outlook for fall 2021 based on a new enrollment strategy and seven new degree programs, some of which are offered online.

Important and significant changes that have occurred since the 2019 reaffirmation review, such as new leadership positions, the introduction of a new data dashboard, and the implementation of a radically different budget model. The most dramatic change that has taken place was the transition of former President Pamela Eibeck and the inauguration of President Christopher Callahan in 2020. Other critical hires followed, including a new Vice President for Strategic Enrollment; Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Vice President for Student Life; and new deans of the Thomas J. Long School of Pharmacy, the School of Engineering and Computer Sciences, and the School of Health Sciences. Alongside these leadership transitions, President Callahan also implemented a new gain-share budget model in order to empower deans with greater autonomy, well as responsibility, for their school budgets. In addition, it must be noted that this new model transforms the way the university is

managing recruitment and enrollment. Finally, Pacific also implemented a new internal dashboard, which



## SECTION II – EVALUATION OF ISSUES UNDER THE STANDARDS

**A. Implementation of the shared governance matrix; and Consultation with faculty, as appropriate according to the university’s shared governance principles, to plan and implement change (CFRs 3.7, 3.10, 4.6)**

Between the 2019 reaffirmation review and the 2022 Special Visit, Pacific has experienced significant changes, further highlighting the importance of effective consultation and shared governance. As occurred with all higher education institutions, COVID-19 forced major and immediate changes in providing quality and remote instruction to a remote student body. Prior to the COVID-19 onset, Pacific was experiencing an opaque budgeting process, enrollment volatility, contentious relations between faculty and administrative leadership, and searching for a new president who would take office July 2020.

Launched in 2014, a shared governance matrix had been developed, but not yet implemented, during the 2019 visit. Its objective was to provide a clear summary of responsibilities in Pacific’s decision making based upon the existing Faculty Handbook. While adopted by the administration and the board of regents, the shared government matrix was never adopted by the Academic Council which serves as the university’s faculty senate.

The Institutional Report serves as a concise and candid discussion of the recent history and improvements made to

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revising the Faculty Handbook as opposed to the previous practice of the provost appointing a revision committee.

The Special Visit team focused on three important elements that are necessary for effective shared governance: process, participation, and product (or outcomes). As these new measures become embedded in Pacific culture, it will be necessary to develop means of assessing the effectiveness in each of the three elements (CFRs 3.7, 3.10, 4.6). For example, is the Faculty Handbook serving the decision-making process or will further clarifications be needed? Is participation inclusive, and is there participation by all parties? And do the outcomes demonstrated align with the university mission and vision?

Faculty, staff, administration, and the board of trustees have created numerous processes for improved governance, consultation, transparency, and communication. New opportunities include regular meetings between the Academic Council leadership and the president and provost, and board of regents. The Faculty Governance Office was also moved from a remote part of the campus to close proximity to the provost's office; resulting in more informal consultation and collaboration. Additionally, regular informal gatherings, such as a monthly coffee events hosted by the provost and deans, are occurring. A staff member observed, "now it feels like I can reach out directly to deans or the provost". He also reported being contacted by Pacific leadership for his advice. He cited a new attitude of "merge out of your lane...and get the job done"; an attitude that was similarly expressed by President Callahan.

Members of the board of regents, including the chair, affirmed their commitment to this new era of improved shared governance and consultation. To be more responsive, the Academic Council also revised its committee structure. With these new processes in place, participation seems to be high, and nearly everyone who was interviewed expressed satisfaction at improving shared governance and consultation. While these changes are still in early stages of becoming part of the university culture, early indications are promising. The outcomes of these changes will become evident soon as Pacific continues to implement its numerous DEI initiatives, recruit new administrative leadership, address different faculty workloads across departments, and institute a new decentralized budgeting process designed to incentivize individual departments to increase performance. While Pacific faces many of the challenges common today to many higher education institutions, the Institutional Report and subsequent meetings with faculty, staff, administration, and board of trustees show a much-improved

process of shared governance and consultation that is crucial to ensuring successful decision making and outcomes.

**B. Communication with all university constituents (CFRs 1.7, 3.6)**

During the previous reaffirmation visit communication appeared to be a significant problem on multiple levels of the organization. In particular, s



faculty, and of course, faculty will greatly benefit from collegial and productive relationships with academic leadership. The team was thoroughly convinced that this is a new era for the university, and an opportunity for faculty and administrative leadership to develop a new vision for the future of the university together.

### **C. Implementation of the new chart of accounts (CRFs 1.7, 3.4)**

The UOP finance team successfully implemented a hierarchal chart of accounts with clear account definitions that support timelier, and more relevant reporting to support decision-making. Pacific leaders expressed confidence that the changes achieved enhanced budgetary control, greater transparency, and the ability to make information-based decisions using current information. Leaders understand that the financial reporting changes remain in the early stages and are prepared to assist in developing systems further as business needs mature.

The university recruited a Chief Financial Officer whose primary focus will be oversight of the financial controls, systems and reporting to join the leadership team. This role will add support to the gain-share strategy planned to support future years. Impact of the gain-share strategy for right sizing academic programs and equitably distributing workload will depend on continuing dialogue between academic leaders and the finance team. Increased understanding and acceptance of financial management principles applied to the management of academic departments will help to ensure efficient operations while maintaining University of Pacific program quality.

The implementation of the new chart of accounts promises to provide deans with tools to realize financial gains and the opportunity to reinvest them in their schools.

### **D. Implementation of the Diversity Plan (CFRs 1.4, 3.1)**

equity, and inclusive excellence to the mission of prioritizing student success is strong and compelling. In addition, the University has rightly con

be met at this point in time. In addition, goals for diversifying the faculty will require clear identification of the pace and scope of hiring needed to make measurable progress. The team recommends the identification, collection, analysis, and dissemination of updated key performance indicator for DEI in alignment with WSCUC's Equity and Inclusion policy (CFRs 1.4, 3.1).

## SECTION IV – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Special Visit team concluded that the information cited in the Institutional Report, along with qualitative data gathered from numerous interviews during the visit, demonstrate that significant progress on the Commission’s recommendations has been made at Pacific since the 2019 reaffirmation review. In order to support Pacific’s efforts to fully achieve their anticipated outcomes on these recommendations by the next full reaffirmation review, the team offers further commendations and recommendations below.

### Commendations

The team commends Pacific for the following:

- striving for and achieving a collaborative resolution to the shared governance matrix;
- prioritizing regular, reliable, and transparent communication with faculty and staff that considers their interests and concerns;
- the new chart of accounts that provides deans with tools to realize financial gains and reinvest them in their schools; and
- the steps that Pacific has made on increasing diversity and equity, and promoting inclusivity. In particular:
  - the new vice president for DEI and the Diversity Leadership Team;
  - the board decision to make DEI issues a central part of their oversight;
  - regular, disaggregated reports to the cabinet on new hires, promotions, and staff and faculty attrition;
  - revision of employee evaluations to include DEI factors;
  - the office of Strategy & Educational Effectiveness, Center for Teaching and Learning, and the university committee on DEI for collaborating to enhance opportunities for faculty development;
  - University Libraries conducting a diversity audit of its collections; and
  - collaboration between general education committee and DEI experts on diversification of requirements and curriculum.

### Recommendations

The team recommends that Pacific respond to the following issues:

- continue efforts to clarify shared governance roles and responsibilities reflecting a collaborative process involving faculty, administration, and board of regents building on the new tone of

