REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM
For Reaffirmation of Accreditation

To Humboldt State University

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SECTION 1 – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

    A. Description of Institution and Accreditation History

Founded in 1913, Humboldt State University (HSU) is the fourth smallest university and most remote campus in the California State University System (CSU). It is located in a rural setting on the Pacific coast in Arcata, California, 275 miles north of San Francisco and serves more than 8,600 undergraduate and graduate students. Through its three academic colleges, the university offers 51 undergraduate majors, 69 minors, 12 graduate degrees, and 13 certificate programs. In 2016-2017, Humboldt awarded 1902 bachelor's degrees and 175 master's degrees.

The university was designated a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in 2013. In fall 2016, the university enrolled 8,649 students, 87.2% of whom were undergraduates. Most students attended full-time (91.1%). In keeping with its HSI designations, 34% of enrolled students were Latino/a, 43% White, 3% African-American, 1% Native-American, 5% multiracial, 2% international, and 7% unknown.

Humboldt State University's student demographics have changed rapidly over the last six years. Since 2009, enrollment of underrepresented groups (URGs) and first-time freshmen in Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics (STEM) majors has increased by over 80%. The majority of these students arrive from distant urban centers (Los Angeles, San Diego, and the Bay Area). This growth and change in demographics presents challenges for the campus to achieve inclusive success, especially for first-time freshmen. It has also made it difficult to cultivate an inclusive community of learners – with faculty, staff and students all feeling a common purpose, welcomed and valued.

HSU provided evidence of undergraduate student engagement in real-world research experiences and hands-on learning with professors engaged in research and community service. Examples included The Coral Sea, an oceangoing vessel where students study with leading experts in oceanography, marine biology, and wildlife programs. Other examples provided included the study of the properties of forest fires, and lab experiences bringing sustainable lighting to the developing world.

HSU students participate in out of class activities in more than 190 campus clubs and have access to a state-of-the-art recreational facility. Each year, HSU brings nationally recognized performers and speakers to campus and there are 12 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division II athletic teams.

Among the 605 faculty employed in fall 2016, 74% were White, 5% Asian, 5% Latinx, 1% African-American, 3% Native-American, 3% multiracial, and 9% other/unknown. 51% of the faculty were employed full-time, with 48% holding non-tenured positions and 53% either tenured or on tenure-track.

The operating budget for Humboldt State in fiscal year 2016-2017 (Self-Study Report, 2017) was $134 million, with 38% from student tuition and fees, 59% from state appropriations, and 3% from other revenue sources. On July 1, 2014, Humboldt State's seventh president joined the campus, and began a strategic planning process with a commitment to student centered, data-driven decision-making and continuous improvement.

WSCUC first accredited Humboldt State University in 1949. The university's recent accreditation history included a Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) visit in March 2008, followed by a June 2008 commission action to receive the CPR team report and schedule an Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) for fall 2009. The review team conducted an EER visit in February 2010, followed by a June 2010 commission action to receive the EER report and reaffirm accreditation. In an action letter dated July 14, 2010, the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) requested a fall 2013 Interim Report to address: a) progress on assessment of student learning at multiple levels, b) continued development of inclusive excellence initiatives, c) progress in embracing institutional change and making critical choices, d) progress in realignment of resources and institutional structures to educational objectives and student learning outcomes, and e) sustaining current efforts.

On November 15, 2013, a panel of the Interim Report Committee (IRC) commended the university on its hard work and important steps taken to address these issues and acted to receive the Interim Report. They also requested that progress on these topics, including the sustainability of these efforts over time, be included in the institutional report as part of the fall 2017 Offsite Review and spring 2018 Accreditation Visit.

From spring 2011 to spring 2014, there were five Substantive Change actions for distance education programming – Master of Social Work, Bachelor of Social Work, Master of Arts (MA) in Education, Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Interdisciplinary Studies, and MA in Applied Anthropology. The Commission approved all substantive changes.

Description of Team's Review Process

In November 2016, WSCUC appointed a review team to conduct the OSR, followed by a Accreditation Visit in 2018.

On June 30, 2017, Humboldt State University submitted its institutional report and supplemental materials. The team reviewed the materials and completed worksheets in preparation for the initial review. On September 6, 2017, the team chair led a conference call during which the team discussed the consolidated worksheets and identified issues it wished to pursue during the OSR. The team met at the Hilton Oakland Airport in Oakland, California, on October 2-3, 2017, to conduct the OSR and to prepare Lines of Inquiry for the Accreditation Visit scheduled for March 20-23, 2018. During a teleconference with Humboldt State at the conclusion of the OSR, the team chair confirmed that the team recommended proceeding with the Accreditation Visit, reviewed the Lines of Inquiry with the university president and campus accreditation team, and discussed the next steps. The WSCUC Staff Liaison submitted the Lines of Inquiry to the campus and the assistant chair submitted requests for additional information needed by the team to prepare for the visit. The team held a pre-visit conference call on February 21, 2018.

B. **Institution's Reaccreditation Report and Update: Quality and Rigor of the Report and Supporting Evidence**

Following its review of the institutional report, the team concluded that Humboldt State had demonstrated a clear focus on improvement and noted the recent implementation of new initiatives under the new president. The team felt that the report was well written and highlighted the points of concern from the Interim Report Committee review in 2014 and was open and honest about the university's challenges.

The report preparation had included broad representation from the campus community. It also conveyed a strong campus-wide commitment to community engagement, as well as a commitment to place students at the center of the institution's educational and organizational initiatives.

The team agreed that Humboldt State had provided sufficient evidence for its actions, decision-making, and claims, while also recognizing the need to improve data gathering and analysis. It was clear that the new leadership team had catalyzed improvement in every area of the institution. While the report clearly and seriously addressed the Criteria for Review (CFRs), as well as concerns from previous reviews and internal processes, specific information on the campus's plans for continued development of internal processes, such as assessment and program review, was insufficient.

The team acknowledges Humboldt State's strengths in research, experiential learning, and community partnerships. The team commends HSU for achieving the highest financial indicators since 2006 and their efforts to address the structural budget deficit. Lastly, HSU is to be commended for the myriad efforts focused on increasing overall student success and decreasing the gap between URG and non-URG students, such as the new program in Critical Race, Gender and Sexuality Studies and the MultiCultural Centers (MCC).

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS

Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions

The institutional report contained a brief section on Humboldt State's response to previous Commission actions, with links to more detailed supporting documents. As mentioned in an earlier section of the team report, the July 14, 2010, action letter requested an Interim Report in fall 2013 to address the a) progress on assessment of student learning at multiple levels, b) continued development of inclusive excellence initiatives, c) progress in embracing institutional change and making critical choices, and d) progress in realignment of resources and institutional structures to educational objectives and student learning outcomes, and e) sustaining current efforts.

In 2009 HSU formed the Cabinet for Institutional Change (CIC). A report, "Building the Capacity for Change: Improving the Structure and Culture of Decision Making at HSU", issued in 2010, included recommendations for improvement in areas of campus vision, shared governance, student success, developing a collegial, respectful, and responsive community, and cultivating evidence-based decision making.

Also in 2010, a Change Steering Committee (CSC) was created to champion and monitor the progress of the above recommendations. In 2012, oversight was transferred to the University Senate.

While the campus has taken steps to address the Commission's concerns, work was still underway at the time of the accreditation review. The Commission's response to the 2013 Interim Report noted that although the university provided evidence of significant efforts in the areas of assessment of student learning, student success/inclusive excellence, campus culture, and re-alignment of resources and institutional structures, the efforts were in early stages of development and requested that progress on the topics be addressed in the institutional report as part of the fall 2017 Offsite Review and spring 2018 Accreditation Visit.

Component 2: Compliance: Review under WSCUC Standards and compliance with federal requirements; Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with the Standards. Final determination of compliance with the Standards rests with the Commission. The team also found the institution met federal requirements for credit hour, marketing and recruitment, student complaints and transfer policies (see appendices) and completed the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI) reflectively.

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

Institutional Purpose

HSU has a published mission statement that clearly describes its purposes. In addition, formally approved statements that the team reviewed clearly define its role in the California State University System and its educational objectives. The mission statement is student-centered and explicitly acknowledges HSU's focus on access, affordability, and preparing graduates to "…be responsible members of diverse societies" [CFR 1.1]. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness webpage includes information about student achievement, such as, measures of retention and graduation, and evidence of student learning goals and outcomes. While the team found evidence that educational objectives are widely recognized throughout HSU, it also felt that the assessment of outcomes needed further development [CFR 1.2]. HSU's Faculty Handbook has published statements on academic freedom. In addition, the California

State University System statements on academic freedom were developed with HSU faculty representation and are widely known to HSU faculty and administrators. Due process procedures are appropriately described in publicly available documents [CFR 1.3]. Aligned with its mission, vision, and values statements, HSU demonstrates an appropriate response to the increasing diversity in society through its published policies, its educational and co-curricular programs, its stated hiring and admissions criteria, and its administrative and organizational practices [CFR 1.4].

Integrity and Transparency

The team found no evidence to suggest interference by external parties and the role of the CSU governing board was clearly articulated [CFR 1.5]. HSU has published policies on student grievances and complaints, human subjects in research, disability accommodations and services, grading and student evaluation, appeals, and records retention [CFR 1.6]   The CSU consolidated financial statements, which include HSU's financial information, are found on the HSU website [CFR 1.7]. The commitment to honest and open communication with the WSCUC is posted on the website [CFR 1.8].

Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions

Teaching and Learning

From an evaluation of several syllabi including those from different disciplines, both graduate and undergraduate, and of multiple modalities (face-to-face, hybrid, online), it was determined that the programs are appropriate in content, standards and degree level [CFR 2.1]. Moreover, the degrees are defined sufficiently in regard to admissions requirements and levels of achievement for graduation on both the undergraduate and graduate level [CFR 2.2]. Student learning outcomes on the course, program, and institutional level are reflected in curricula and programs, and these learning outcomes are determined by faculty [CFRs 2.3, 2.4]. While the outcomes have been set, the assessment of these outcomes still needs to be addressed [CFR 2.5]. There is a lack of integration and alignment of program level outcomes to university-level outcomes. Additionally, many assessment plans (the Core Competency Assessment Plan; the Graduate Program Assessment Plan) demonstrate viable assessment structures, but there is no evidence that data has been gathered in a comprehensive and meaningful way [CFRs 2.6, 2.7].   Despite some deficiencies in the gathering and the assessment of student learning outcomes, the institution's academic programs do involve students in learning and challenge student to meet high standards. The students demonstrated their

commitment to their academic degrees and expressed close connections to faculty mentors. The program reviews that were made available to the team provided evidence of student learning, and were examined by external reviewers. The program review process, however, is still uneven in terms of the number of programs actually assessed according to the assessment calendar. The university lacks an overall assessment plan – while the hiring of an assessment coordinator is encouraging, much work has yet to be done to link and align all assessment activities [CFR 2.12].

Scholarship and Creative Activity

HSU demonstrated a strong relationship between students and faculty – particularly in experiential learning models that privilege undergraduate research and creative activities. The Undergraduate Research and Mentoring Program in the Biological Sciences, is funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), provides significant support to assist undergraduates [CFRs 2.8, 2.9]. Over twenty programs at HSU have academic internship options for students, and the Center for Community Based Learning has also supported service learning to over 1,000 students. Faculty processes for evaluation based on scholarship, teaching, and service appear to be intact and functional.

Student Learning and Success

Through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, HSU identifies some of the needs of students. Data from the National Survey of Student Engagement was clearly presented to wide constituencies and publically available; the efforts of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion were noted, as was the Humboldt Orientation Program in terms of delivering content to include graduation requirements [CFR 2.10]. Co-curricular programs are aligned with academic goals and are designed to support the students' professional development [CFR 2.11].

Different constituencies voiced concern over the insufficient student support services. It is recommended that that services such as tutoring, career counseling, and especially housing be evaluated and modified as needed. Transfer students, especially, may be in need of further support [CFRs 2.13, 2.14].

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

Faculty and Staff

The total number of faculty, staff, and administrators remained at approximately the same level for the past few years [CFR 3.1]. As enrollment has fallen for the past three years (including the 2017-18 academic year), there has been a growing financial stress to the university. HSU has implemented a freeze on tenure-line position requests for fall 2019 and all staff and administrator hiring requests must be approved by the President's Cabinet with the intent of reducing recruitments and hiring of staff, faculty, and administration over the next 18 months.

In addition, although the diversity of the student body has increased in recent years, the faculty and staff diversity efforts have not kept pace. The current freeze in tenure-line positions will slow progress in adding to the diversity of the instructionsl staff.

There is a systematic process in place for faculty evaluation with set criteria and standards [CFR 3.2]. Staff training and faculty development, including cultural competency, do not appear to be high priority (very little detail available); however, progress has been made in this area since the creation of the Center for Teaching and Learning [CFR 3.3]. Although key financial ratios are cumulatively at their highest level since 2006, HSU's budget situation continues to worsen primarily due to ongoing deficit spending in some areas (e.g. College of Natural Resources & Science, College of Professional Studies), unfunded increases in salary and benefits, continued decline in enrollment, and the recent state 2018-19 budget proposed by the Governor of California [CFR 3.4].

Fiscal, Physical and Information Resources

Although the campus has been open and transparent in addressing the budget shortfall, and has engaged all segments of the campus, the team heard complaints that these communication efforts were not effective and more work was needed to develop trust in the strategies adopted for future success.

The university provides sufficient information and technology (IT) resources for training and support for teaching and scholarship to all its faculty, staff, and students. The IT resources appear to meet the changing demands of the institution [CFR 3.5].

Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes

The team observed the institution's leadership, at all levels, to be characterized by integrity, high performance, appropriate responsibility, and accountability [CFR 3.6].

The University Senate serves as the key body to review and recommend policies to the president, with specific guidelines on how decisions are made and forwarded to the president; however, clear and consistent decision-making processes that align with organizational priorities and utilize assessment to drive institutional capacity and educational effectiveness are areas needing more work [CFR 3.7].

HSU has a full-time Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) whose primary responsibilities are to the university. The CEO and CFO oversee other qualified administrators who assist with management and effective educational leadership [CFR 3.8]. Academic leadership by the faculty was evident at HSU through its representation on various governance committees (academic and administrative). Faculty were also engaged in curriculum, department, and student-learning outcome decisions, university-wide initiatives, graduation and retention initiatives, and strategic planning [CFR 3.10].

Faculty and staff are to be commended for their devotion to the campus and dedication for their students' success. It is clearly evident that the students respect and appreciate the faculty; therefore, students are very concerned that, due to the budget shortfall, many of their favorite lecturers may be let go or placed on reduced loads starting fall 2018.

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

There are several quality-assurance processes in place to collect, analyze, and interpret data, however several of these processes are in the emergent phase, including those for general education and graduate programs [CFR 4.1].   And while the Office of Institutional Effectiveness has demonstrated capacity for disseminating information into planning and decision-making, the actual results of such evidence are scant. Assessment improvement efforts have been inconsistent. It was stated on page 29 of the institutional report: "HSU is currently transitioning from an assumption that grades accurately measure student learning toward a set of metrics that will better inform the continuous-improvement cycle within each degree program." Unfortunately, this does not mark a significant advance from the WSCUC team report of 2010: "According to the team report, seven institutional outcomes have been defined, but at the time of the visit, the University could not provide evidence that the outcomes were being achieved." One of these outcomes is writing, yet HSU acknowledged that only a 'handful' of programs had assessed writing. Department and program outcomes and methods "vary widely in quality", and there is a relative absence of direct methods such as

capstones, portfolios, and senior theses [CFRs 4.3, 4.5]. On the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators only a little over half of programs report assessment of outcomes or improvements made as a result. General education assessment is described as "nascent". In addition, 'alignment of curriculum requirements and assessment of student learning at various levels is still a work in progress'. The report concludes that "there is little ... to suggest that student learning results are currently being systematically and universally assessed and that the assessments are being used to improve learning and teaching". The Commission sees this as an area in which further progress is needed. The 2018 team feels that more progress should have been made, given the WSCUC recommendation in 2010 [CFR 4.4].

There are some weaknesses in areas of program review and assessment. HSU needs to have a consistent, comprehensive assessment program for self-studies for all programs, and link these resources to recommendations. Given the fiscal austerity that pervades the campus, a stronger connection between the assessment of student learning and resource allocations is necessary to make informed decisions about program support [CFR 4.3]. An ongoing inquiry into teaching and learning to improve curricula, pedagogy, and assessment is hard to determine because while the assessment plans are in place, there is not enough information collected, evaluated, interpreted and communicated to ensure such an inquiry actually leads to reflection and planning in regards to strategic purposes [CFR 4.5, 4.6]. And as such, the ability to anticipate and respond to changes in the higher educational environment are difficulty to determine [CFR 4.7].

Component 3: Degree Programs: Meaning, quality, and integrity of the degrees

In particular, the team was interested in ascertaining what it means for a graduate to hold a degree from Humboldt State, the processes it uses to ensure the meaning, integrity, and quality of the degree and the standards used to measure these entities. HSU foregrounds its concept of degree meaning through an attention to learning outcomes on several levels, core competencies, and general education.

HSU has seven established university Student Learning Outcomes (SLO). On page twenty-three of the institutional report it states: "Although many program-level outcomes do incorporate the university-level outcomes, there is room for further integration and alignment". The team agrees with this self-assessment. There is much to do, not only in terms of alignment,

but to ensure buy-in from all programs. In conversation with the Accreditation Committee it was noted that much assessment is done in pockets across campus but there is very little comprehensive oversight in gathering all these efforts.

It is not quite clear how core competencies are met in every degree-granting program, especially at the senior levels. The core competencies align with general education outcomes, but they also extend beyond general education. Efforts to begin to look at capstone projects in each major as a way to assess three of the five competencies is a step in the right direction. The Core Competencies Assessment Plan, however, is dated January 2018 and the WSCUC Handbook first outlined the need for the assessment of these competencies in 2013.   There is sporadic evidence of speech communication and written communication and information fluency, with less for critical thinking and quantitative reasoning [CFR 2.2a].

There were some alarming statements in the institutional report concerning the assessment of general education: Due to a number of reasons, there have been no meaningful attempts to assess or document the assessment of General Education All-University Requirements (GEAR) as a program. The fractured and decentralized nature of HSU's GEAR program has left individual academic programs in charge of the administration and assessment of General Education and All University Requirements (GEAR) courses at a time when those programs were feeling the pressure to assess first and foremost their own major outcomes. "Lack of consistency and continuity has hampered efforts to reform the program over the years". After conversation with the GEAR personnel, the team is more comfortable with the direction the institution is going, but there is still much work to be done.   The reduction of learning outcomes from 39 to seven, the development of rubrics, and the calendaring of assessment activities are vital first steps, but the committee is keen to see the results of such efforts. The recent hiring of the Academic Assessment Coordinator should keep the momentum going in a positive direction. It remains to be determined how this hire – as well as that of the new Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), will further contribute to the advancement of assessment [CFRs 2.4, 2.6, 4.1].

In regard to the dimension of quality, much of the report centered on research, and student-centered research, which is admirable.   The faculty take pride and ownership of their programs, and there is evidence of hands-on learning, especially in the STEM majors. A commitment to undergraduate research is also noted, especially in Undergraduate Research and Mentoring Program in the Biological Sciences [CFR 2.8; CFR 2.9].

The institution should be commended for the more recent refinement of PREP (Program Review, Evaluation and Planning). However, the program review process is still erratic in that the number of programs subject to review don't always occur within the timeline set by the PREP calendar [CFR 2.7].

Like the Core Competency Assessment Plan, there is a concern with the Graduate Program Assessment Plan, which is dated January 2018: the plan itself demonstrates a structure into which assessment can be built, but there is no evidence that data has been gathered from all graduate programs prior to this date [CFR 2.2b].

Component 4: Educational Quality: Student learning, core competencies, and standards of performance at graduation

As a campus of the California State University, Humboldt State adheres to many of the system-wide standards of performance as mandated from the system. There are minimum grade requirements of "C-" for lower-division courses in quantitative reasoning, oral communication, critical thinking, and written communication – all requirements which overlap with the WSCUC core competencies.   However, as noted in Component 3, there is very little evidence of an institutional, comprehensive assessment of these core competencies across all departments and all learning levels – including what might be assessed of these competencies on the senior level [CFR 2.2a].

Assessment improvement efforts have been inconsistent [CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.6]. It was stated on page 29 of the institutional report: "HSU is currently transitioning from an assumption that grades accurately measure student learning toward a set of metrics that will better inform the continuous-improvement cycle within each degree program". Unfortunately, this does not mark a significant advance from the WSCUC team report of 2010: "According to the team report, seven institutional outcomes have been defined, but at the time of the visit, the University could not provide evidence that the outcomes were being achieved". One of these outcomes is writing, yet HSU acknowledged that only a 'handful' of programs had assessed writing. Department and program outcomes and methods "vary widely in quality", and there is a relative absence of direct methods such as capstones, portfolios, and senior theses. On the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators only a little over half of programs report assessment of outcomes or improvements made as a result. General education assessment is described as "nascent" [CFR 2.2a]. In addition,

"alignment of curriculum requirements and assessment of student learning at various levels is still a work in progress". The report concludes that "there is little ... to suggest that student learning results are currently being systematically and universally assessed and that the assessments are being used to improve learning and teaching". The Commission sees this as an area in which further progress is needed. The 2018 team feels that more progress should have been made, given the WSCUC recommendation in 2010 [CFRs 4.1, 4.3].

There are some weaknesses in areas of program review and assessment. HSU needs to have a consistent, comprehensive assessment program for self-studies for all programs, and link these resources to recommendations. Given the fiscal austerity that pervades the campus, a stronger connection between the assessment of student learning and resource allocations is necessary to make informed decisions about program support [CFR 4.3].

Rubrics were available for the assessment of learning outcomes (on both graduate and undergraduate levels), but the data collected from the scoring of these rubrics were thin. As with the Core Competencies Assessment Plan, the Graduate Program Assessment Plan was dated January 2018, with no prior documentation which indicates that assessment efforts were in the emergent phase [CFR 2.2b].

The team was impressed with the strides made by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) and the hiring of the new Academic Assessment Coordinator. A new CTL with a new Director, to liaise with the new OIE, may prove to be a very successful and effective unit, but there is little evidence to date to bear this out [CFR 4.3].

The institution should be commended for its "Klamath Connection" program as it has demonstrated effectiveness in identifying and then taking action to overcome achievement gaps. The program (and its related High Impact Practices in the STEM majors) demonstrates advances in student success – particularly in raising the retention rates and retention rates. The team encourages the build-up of these programs [CFRs 2.11, 2.13].

The Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators appeared in an appendix to the institutional report. Assessment and program review reports were available through links from the OIE. Evidence provided in the appendix points to an accreditation and program review process under development, providing evidence of progress and results.

Component 5: Student Success: Student learning, retention, and graduation

The team found areas of student success where HSU has worked hard specifically with regard to closing the achievement gap [CFR 1.4]. As a recommendation in 2013 from the Retention & Student Success Reorganization working group, which is noted in the institutional report, HSU began an organizational restructuring of the student services programs focused on supporting retention and student success. The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) was created after a multi-year process of analyzing data on student success and conducting multiple qualitative assessments of student needs. This enhanced the work and support for their URG students. While this is a great example of combining some programs and creating others, i.e. African-American Center for Academic Excellence and the Latinx Center for Academic Excellence, there is no evidence to show how this is working and how the new centers' success are being measured [CFR 2.11].

In 2009, HSU took on the goal as part of the CSU graduation initiative to increase the graduation rates of their underrepresented student by 15% and 12% for the remainder of the student body. The improvement of four-year graduation rates was mixed. As of fall 2015, as stated in their SSR, 14.5% of first-time, full-time undergraduates graduated within four years. There is still significant differences between URG compared to the overall rate. URG, in particular African-American was at 11.4% and Latinx students were at 8.2%. New goals were set in conjunction with the CSU initiative 2025 to eliminate the achievement gaps that exist by traditionally underrepresented, first-generation, and low-income students [CFR 2.10].

In working towards improving student success, included in this process, long-term and short-term goals were created. The goals are aggressive, but HSU expressed a commitment to seeing them through. The short-term strategies were to be implemented in 2016-17 and included the Degree Audit Report for Students campaign, reducing excess units and increasing class availability, reducing the number of students on academic probation and improving student and parent onboarding to HSU [CFRs 2.12, 4.1].

HSU shows promotion of student success by implementing several initiatives. One program is the establishment of the Early Outreach department which is made up of seven programs designed to increase college readiness. Three of these programs are under the TRiO program, which is a federally funded college preparatory program designed to generate the skills and motivation necessary for success among limited income students whose parents do not hold a four year college degree. GEAR-UP – Gaining Early Awareness & Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search are all supported by federal dollars. The

state funds the remaining programs; Early Assessment Program, Parent Institute for Quality Education, Student Academic Services and Local Pathways. These programs help articulate the ways in which HSU is promoting student success. In addition, HSU was awarded $3 million in 2015 through California's Innovation Awards competition. HSU partnered with the Humboldt Post-Secondary Success Collaborative to achieve the goal by increasing bachelor's degree attainment, reducing time to degree and increasing transfer pathways for local students. The dollars are to be used to further outreach to students in grades 7-12, establishing a one-stop online application for scholarships, developing articulation agreements and developing a means of data sharing among local high schools [CFRs 2.10, 2.11].

Finding a balance between the overall goals and determining what metrics can be used for the growth of HSU is important and ambitious. It will be important to get an assessment of HSU's early outreach efforts, which have been expanded to 2020 and to determine how results will be shared. Lastly, the absence of a strategic enrollment plan will affect new student onboarding which will eventually affect graduation rates [CFRs 4.1, 4.2].

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) has worked hard to provide access to data in ways that were not available previously and is also using other tools to broadly share graduation rate data.

Component 6: Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program review, assessment, use of data and evidence

During the previous visit, the team noted, "alignment of curriculum requirements and assessment of student learning at various levels is still a work in progress". This 2010 Institutional report concluded that there was little to suggest that student learning results were currently being systematically and universally assessed and that the assessments were being used to improve learning and teaching and there is little to intimate that much has changed up to the submission of the 2017 institutional report [CFRs 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 4.1].

HSU did complete pilot academic program reviews in spring 2017. Assessment and program review archives were to be redesigned for easier access. The results of program reviews were not substantial or useable to the point of informing decisions or improving instruction. The reviews that were done were not standardized and no follow-up occurred.

HSU has however implemented a strategy to improve the assessment of student learning. They have created a new five-year model for academic program review. It uses the Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed (RACI) model that delineates steps, timelines, roles and

responsibilities. The plan and goal is to close the loop with progress tracking, feedback, dean's reviews. This was to begin in fall 2017.

The Self-Study (SS) Report stated that archived annual assessment data/reports were missing and/or hard to access which leads to departments not being able to review work done in the past as reference. Staffing is an issue in this area, with turnover since 2010, resulting in unfilled positions since fall 2013. The general education assessment has not been attempted since 2001. During the visit, the team learned that the assessment and program review archive will be redesigned for easier access.

The team also learned that HSU moved from the Moodle Learning Management tool to Canvas. Canvas' software allows for better collection of assessment data at the institutional, program and course levels [CFRs 4.1, 4.3, 4.4].

The Office of Institutional Planning and Research was realigned and is now the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The changes allowed for more transparency and the HSU leadership team engaged in a multi-year process for data dashboard visualization delivery. Data is now more accessible and allows the standardization of the process for analyzing academic program information which will allow for consistency in evaluation of academic programs and the many other initiatives that exists. HSU would be well-served to look at an overarching approach to the measurement of the initiatives instead of an ad-hoc process [CFRs 4.2, 4.7].

In line with maintaining focus on institutional effectiveness, the new re-designed OIE has an arm of 'change management' to collect, manage and analyze evidence and will provide critical support to administrators, faculty and staff. Developing a comprehensive standardized assessment process to ensure that student success is being measured and evaluated through a continuous improvement process is needed.

Component 7: Sustainability: Financial viability, preparing for the changing higher education environment

HSU is heavily dependent upon the state legislature and student enrollment for its financial resources. Revenues from the state are dependent upon the state of the economy and budget allocation by legislature. All of California's public universities (including HSU) have experienced decreases in state appropriations over the past decade. HSU's state allocations are still below 2007-08 levels. Revenues are also dependent on student enrollment which relies upon recruitment strategies, retention rates, and graduation rates. Based on the Governor's budget, enrollment projections, and other factors, HSU's Budget Office estimates a $7 million deficit

during 2018-19 and a $9 million deficit in 2019-20. Currently, HSU's overall operating budget is approximately $134 million and there is just over $6 million in operating reserves. Although there are some evidence of fundraising efforts and private partnerships, the team feels both these areas need to be strengthened in order to help alleviate the stress on the budget in the upcoming years.

The University Resources and Planning Committee (URPC) which was formed in 2011-12 comprises of faculty, staff, students, and senior administrators. URPC is responsible for ensuring the financial viability of the university and has developed a strategic budgeting approach, a policy for reserves, and a policy to support the allocation of strategic assets. The URPC provides its budget recommendation annually to the university president. The budget allocation process is guided by the strategic plan and the university's highest priorities. URPC is currently focused on reducing the overall budget by 5%. The President's Cabinet recommended using a three-phased approach. Phase I budget reductions were implemented this year, and planned reductions are now being considered for Phase II. To date, there has been approximately $1.5 million reduction in expenditures and progress is being made on another $2.8 million in reductions.

The 2015-20 Strategic Plan functions as the guiding document for the university's four primary goals: prepare students to be socially and environmentally responsible leaders in a diverse and globalized world; foster meaningful relationships across differences, including diverse cultural communities, identities, and competencies; strengthen partnership with local communities; serve as effective stewards of the natural and built environment and the university's financial resources with a focus on sustainability. The university's ultimate goal is to educate its students and HSU measures this success by looking at four- and six-year graduation rates (first-time, full-time freshmen and transfer students) and achievement gaps (underrepresented groups and Pell recipients). The institution's fall 2017 Environmental Scan Visualization Plan does a good job of explaining the workforce and demographics of California, as well as, forecasting the future outlook for these categories; however, the plan lacks detail on how HSU will counter current trends and reach its enrollment, graduation, retention, and achievement gap targets.

Component 9: Reflection and plans for improvement

Overall, Humboldt State was open and transparent about their challenges at the time of the review and communicated effectively the steps they were taking to address the related issues of enrollment and financial health, the changing demographics of their student body and the need to adapt academic and support services, and communicating to the entire campus the need and urgency for change. The team was impressed with the robust institutional research capacity and capacity to become a data driven institution and commends HSU for aligning resource allocation decisions to support strategic goals, particularly around student success.

The steps currently underway to address the budget shortfall have resulted in tensions among faculty, staff, students, and administration. The team was concerned about the need to more effectively communicate across campus and the community to gain trust. The growing diversity of the student body has also placed stresses on the academic and student support programs, and the need for cultural competency professional development, as well as strategies to further increase faculty and staff diversity across campus was noted.

Finally, although there is ample evidence that student success was widely embraced in all of the campus constituencies, and faculty and staff care deeply about the institution, there was a lack of agreement about the strategies needed for future success. And, while there are pockets of excellent assessment activity, there is no consistency across campus, and it appeared that the university was still in need of a well-defined university assessment plan to improve first year retention and four year graduation rates for all students and to close the achievement gaps among underrepresented groups.

SECTION IV – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The team wished to thank HSU's president, her leadership team, and the entire Humboldt State community for its hospitality and openness during the visit. The team extended its appreciation to the accreditation liaison officer (ALO), change management specialist, and HSU chief of police for their help in planning and coordinating the visit. The university fulfilled the intended outcomes for the comprehensive review and the team found that the review process made an impact on the institution through self-reflection and identification of areas needing improvement.

COMMENDATIONS

- Educational objectives are widely recognized throughout the institution, are consistent with stated priorities, and are demonstrably achieved. HSU regularly generates, evaluates, and makes public data about student achievement including measures of retention and graduation. We were impressed with the students' commitment to environment, sustainability, and social justice issues.

- The institution's academic programs actively involve students in learning and challenge student to meet high standards and offer opportunities for them to practice, generalize and apply what they have learned. The students demonstrated their commitment to their academic degrees and expressed close connections to faculty mentors.

- Consistent with its purposes, HSU offers co-curricular programs that are aligned with its academic goals, integrated with academic programs, and designed to support student personal and professional development. The Klamath program is a wonderful example of such a co-curricular program and we commend the institution for actively assessing the effectiveness of this co-curricular program and using the results for improvement.

- We found HSU to have built a robust institutional research capacity consistent with its purposes and characteristics. Data are disseminated internally and externally in a timely manner, and analyzed, interpreted, and incorporated in planning and decision-making. Websites, interactive dashboards, and formal reports are assisting the campus in reaching the goal of a data driven institution. HSU has engaged in a strategic planning process that has helped guide the future direction of the institution by articulating priorities, especially around student success, aligning purposes and core functions, to help guide resource reallocations. We commend the institution for ensuring that resource allocation decisions are supporting the strategic goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implement and sustain appropriate responses to the increased diversity of HSU's students. The evaluation of HSU's academic and student support services including tutoring, housing, students with disabilities programs, financial aid counseling, career counseling and placement, and multicultural centers and adaptation of services based on evaluation results will better meet the needs of the specific types of students that the institution recruits and serves. Evidence-based services would ensure that curricular and co-curricular programs are aligned and sufficiently funded and staffed by qualified faculty and staff. (CFR 1.4, 2.13)

- Ensure that admissions efforts accurately represents HSU's academic programs, campus climate, support services, and costs, to prospective students and to the public at large. Fair and equitable treatment of all students though established policies and procedures addressing student conduct, grievances and complaints, safety, financial aid, and life in the Arcata community facilitate student success. (CFR 1.6)

- HSU's leadership must at all levels be characterized by high levels of performance and accountability to strengthening communication across campus and continue to be transparent about budget challenges. We encourage the institution to focus on improved communication strategies, adopt change management training directed at the myriad of campus initiatives, incorporate sound business practices, clear roles, responsibilities, and lines of authority, and respond to complaints in a timely and fair manner [CFRs 1.7, 3.6].

- The University lacks an overall comprehensive university assessment plan that has been developed by faculty and widely shared among faculty, staff, and students. There are pockets of excellent assessment activity, but no consistency across the institution. Adopt a comprehensive student learning and success outcomes assessment program, including of the General Education All-University Requirements program (GEAR), as well as degree program assessment . Consistently embed the expectations for student learning in the standards faculty use to evaluate student work [CFRs 2.4, 2.6].

- Although 15% of the faculty identify as diverse, the diversity of the student body is almost three times that number. Prioritize efforts to diversify the faculty and staff.   In addition to potential new diverse hires, engage current faculty and staff in cultural competency professional development so as to further the academic achievement of the students and contribute to the achievement of the institution's educational objectives [CFRs 1.4, 3.1, 3.3].

- Continue to take appropriate steps to address the structural deficit.   Engage in realistic budgeting, enrollment management, and diversification of revenue sources. Strengthen fundraising and private partnerships in order to help alleviate the stress on the budget in the upcoming years. Provide more detail in the 2017 Environmental Scan Visualization Plan as to how HSU will counter current trends and reach its enrollment, graduate, retention, and achievement gap targets [CFR 3.4].

APPENDICES

A. Federal Compliance Forms
   1. Credit Hour Review
   2. Marketing and Recruitment Review
   3. Student Complaint Review
   4. Transfer Policy 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? YES
	Where is the policy located? The policy is located on page 43 of the catalog: http://pine.humboldt.edu/reg/catalog/documents/regulations.pdf
	Comments:
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)? YES
	Does the institution adhere to this procedure? YES
	Comments: This is accomplished through new course approval process https://forms.humboldt.edu/sites/default/files/newcourseproposal.pdf As well as in curriculum review processes as conducted in program review
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? YES
	Comments: The course schedule is located here: http://pine.humboldt.edu/registrar/ClassSchedules.html
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses *Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.*	How many syllabi were reviewed? More than 10
	What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? Both
	What degree level(s)? Bachelors and Masters
	What discipline(s)? Spanish, Secondary Education Program, Social Work, Political Science
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? YES
	Comments:
Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated) *Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.*	How many syllabi were reviewed? 2
	What kinds of courses? Music, Elementary Education
	What degree level(s)? Bachelors
	What discipline(s)? Music, Education
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? YES
	Comments:

Review completed by: Stephanie Bowlin

Date: March 21, 2018

APPENDIX A (1)

CREDIT HOUR AND PROGRAM LENGTH REVIEW FORM (continued)

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	How many programs were reviewed? 3
	What kinds of programs were reviewed? Theater, Kinesiology, Natural Resources
	What degree level(s)? Bachelors, Masters
	What discipline(s)? Theater Arts, Kinesiology, Natural Resources
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? YES
	Comments:

Review completed by: Stephanie Bowlin

Date: March 21, 2018

APPENDIX A (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? YES https://admissions.humboldt.edu/
	Comments:
Degree completion and cost	Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree? YES http://pine.humboldt.edu/registrar/catalog/documents/bachelorplan.pdf http://pine.humboldt.edu/registrar/catalog/documents/masterplan.pdf
	Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree? YES http://pine.humboldt.edu/registrar/catalog/documents/fees.pdf
	Comments:
Careers and employment	Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? YES Potential job/career opportunities are listed for each department under their section in the catalog. (ex. http://pine.humboldt.edu/registrar/catalog/documents/sections/Programs/econ.pdf)
	Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable? YES https://www2.humboldt.edu/acac/
	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: Stephanie Bowlin

Date: March 21, 2018

APPENDIX A (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? YES
	If so, Is the policy or procedure easily accessible? Where? https://www2.humboldt.edu/stoprape/filing_campus_complaint.html
	Comments: HSU has a portion of their website dedicated to Title V - https://www2.humboldt.edu/titleix/.
Process(es)/ procedure	Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? YES If so, please describe briefly: CSU Executive Order 1097 is the system-wide procedure for all complaints of discrimination, harassment or retaliation made by students against the CSU, a CSU employee, other CSU students or a third party.
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? YES
	Comments: I don't see any evidence that the procedures are not followed
Records	Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? YES
	Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? YES If so, please describe briefly: There are departments on campus dedicated to maintaining records and monitoring these incidents.
	Comments:

*§602-16(1)(1)(ix)

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

Review Completed By: Stephanie Bowlin
Date: March 21, 2018

APPENDIX A (4)

TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY REVIEW FORM

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

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Transfer Credit Policy(s)	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit? YES
	Is the policy publically available? YES http://pine.humboldt.edu/registrar/TransferCredit.html
	Does the policy(s) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education? YES http://pine.humboldt.edu/registrar/TransferCredit.html#assist
	Comments: Humboldt State University generally accepts credit from regionally accredited colleges or universities, if: the course is intended for a baccalaureate degree, and you earned a passing grade. The following types of credit generally **do not** transfer to Humboldt State. Courses not intended for a baccalaureate degree; technical, vocational or remedial courses; or courses from a non-regionally accredited institution. Articulation agreements (aka "course equivalencies") are published on **ASSIST** and **Transferology™** and show how courses taken at one institution will transfer to Humboldt State.

*§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: Stephanie Bowlin

Date: March 21, 2018