

# REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM

## Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation (TPR) of Accreditation

University of Southern California

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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**

### **IA. Description of the Institution and its Accreditation History**

Founded in 1880, as the first institution of higher learning in Southern California, the University of Southern California (USC) is one of the world’s leading private research universities. As a modern “city university” connected to the world of human affairs and to advancing society, it provides diverse curricular offerings and interdisciplinary study in highly advanced learning environments for 19,500 undergraduates and 26,500 graduate and professional students (46,000 students total) and 4,700 full-time faculty. The university prides itself on a long tradition of bringing together discrete bodies of knowledge and fields of study to respond to emerging opportunities and to create new ventures that respond to the unscripted problems that characterize the modern world. Through a combination of a liberal arts college, professional units, and arts schools, USC is a leader in promoting interdisciplinary teaching and research to address societal needs.

Based in the heart of Los Angeles (LA), its University Park campus is part of the city’s Downtown Arts and Education Corridor and is home to the USC Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences and several professional schools. Northeast of downtown LA is the Keck School of Medicine of USC, the School of Pharmacy, three major teaching hospitals, and programs in Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy and in Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy. USC also has programs and centers in Sacramento, Alhambra, and other outposts. USC generates \$8 billion annually in economic impact for LA County and California. USC’s institutional composition and location in Los Angeles have fostered an institutional culture that rewards entrepreneurship, encourages global engagement, and values diversity.

USC is a popular college choice, with a highly competitive admission process and a 16% acceptance rate. Yet, the university has recently developed new initiatives to expand access and

affordability through support to about 22% of the incoming class who are first-generation college students, and to the 30% of the class of 2024 who are students of color. To make college more affordable for lower- and middle-income families, USC provides more than \$450 million in scholarships and aid and in 2020 USC made it possible for students from families earning \$80,000 or less each year to attend tuition-free. First-year student retention rates are high, customarily above 95%, and six-year graduation rates are about 92%. USC has an endowment of \$5.7 billion and in the 2018-19 fiscal year carried out about \$909 million in sponsored research (Source <https://about.usc.edu/facts/>).

In the decade since its last accreditation, USC has undergone significant growth and dramatic change. A serious set of ethical and legal transgressions in recent years that received widespread national attention led to revelations that resulted in governance changes across the institution and the launching of an extensive “Culture Journey” to explore institutional values, study the alignment between behaviors and values, and identify opportunities to improve institutional culture and systems. The effort was inclusive of the entire USC community, and included systematic inquiries with more than 4,400 students, faculty and staff and institutional stakeholders and hundreds of town hall forums and sessions to discuss culture. The effort resulted in the articulation of six unifying values to guide the institution moving forward. The six values – *integrity, excellence, diversity, well-being, open communication, and accountability* – provide unifying principles for the institution. These values are also aligned around four pillars of Access and Affordability, Sustainability, Environmental and Racial Equity, and Leading the Imagination Economy.

Over the past decade, nearly the entire leadership of the university has turned over. The current president, appointed in July 2019, succeeded an interim president, a Board of Trustee appointment, made when the former president resigned in 2018. More specifically, since its last accreditation, USC was named as one of several institutions under investigation for potential Title IX violations to protect

students from sexual assault. USC was also under the spotlight for inappropriate behavior by a dean, abuse by a gynecologist, and a college admissions bribery scandal, that all involved accusations of the institution's systematic failure to address complaints. Yet, despite these upheavals, USC remains an anchor institution in Los Angeles with strong academic programs, extensive public outreach, and longstanding community service partnerships.

USC has a long accreditation history. It was blanketed into membership in 1949, and approved in 1951. A standard series of reports, visits and reaccreditation ensued for the next five decades, with commendations for comprehensive evaluation in 1976, review and approval of master's degree and external programs and substantive change committee action to review and approve several new master's programs. Accreditation action beginning in the 2000's included more review of master's programs and Commission action in 2011. USC's last WSCUC accreditation, completed in 2011, included a Special Visit in 2014 to review progress on the following issues: a) assessment; b) undergraduate program review; c) student success; and d) breadth of learning, and in line with the then Commission requirements, a Mid-Cycle Review took place in spring 2016. In 2017, USC was approved to participate in the newly adopted Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation (TPR), which resulted in scheduling a single visit in spring 2021.

## **IB. Description of the Team's Review Process**

Members of the team began their evaluation work by reading the USC institutional report and a variety of documents linked in the documents provided by the institution. The team analyzed the materials available and everyone completed worksheets to summarize information including strengths, weaknesses, and specific questions for further inquiry relative to the WSCUC Components and Standards. Once compiled, these worksheets and meetings helped the whole team focus on critical elements of USC's institutional report in preparation for the team call and the virtual site review. The

team reviewed the visit schedule and assigned team members to specific interview sessions. A final draft visit schedule was prepared by USC's Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) and sent to the team prior to the remote visit. A confidential email account was established to allow for greater participation from the campus community and to receive any information that might be deemed sensitive. It was monitored by the assistant chair and, ultimately, shared with all of the team members. As part of the TPR process, the chair had separate discussions with the USC president prior to the remote review, and one of the team members visited the At Matteo campus. Another team member conducted a review of USC's distance education programs.

The remote Accreditation Visit began with a team executive planning session on Tuesday, March 2, 2021 at which the team reviewed the final visit schedule and identified specific questions to be pursued during each group or individual meeting. The campus virtual visit started on Wednesday, March 3, 2021. During the next two days, the team met via Zoom with a range of constituencies and individuals and learned a lot more about the institution, its organizational structure, its values, and the perspectives of faculty, staff and students who attended the sessions. The virtual visit ended on March 5, 2021 with a private meeting between the team chair and president followed by a public exit meeting during which the final commendations and recommendations were read. The team was grateful for USC's responsiveness to requests for additional materials and to organizing a smooth remote visit.

It was clear to the team that USC conducted a thorough and thoughtful internal review with input from key constituencies. The team recognizes and affirms the hard work that USC put into preparing a well-organized, well-written institutional report, quickly providing documents requested, and ensuring that the virtual visit was productive with very minimal technical glitches. As a result of this review and remote visit, the team has come to understand USC's mission, progress and future directions. Despite the challenges of the format and being in the middle of a pandemic, the team wants to express deep

appreciation to USC for hosting an excellent virtual visit. USC clearly dedicated substantial time and energy to this accreditation process, despite the pandemic distractions. The robust community participation was especially appreciated. The WSCUC team was treated with wonderful virtual hospitality and received outstanding support. All those involved in the visit were respectful of the accreditation process and candid in their answers to team questions.

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

USC's institutional report is a comprehensive and well-written document. The report was prepared based on the activities of the Accreditation Steering Committee, which included members from across the campus, who assembled data and provided evidence of WSCUC Standards and criteria, discussed program strength and depth, and undertook deep and reflective studies of two thematic areas. USC's approach to identifying themes for its participation in the WSCUC Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation (TPR) was to align the themes to the priorities in the most recent strategic plan. Initial options were debated with the provost's leadership team, and then with members of the executive vice provost's leadership team and other key campus stakeholders. After further revision, the themes were discussed by members of the executive committee of the academic senate. The final versions of the themes were discussed at two consecutive sessions of the president's leadership team where the themes were subsequently adopted.

USC's choice of themes for this TPR report grew out of its work to align the six unifying values and four pillars and to connect with the institution's history and aspirations. USC chose to undertake a deep look at the programs and practices that lead USC to embrace the "inclusive spirit." Programs that enhance inclusivity enable the institution to pursue excellence, ensure equity, and build prosperity. The second theme explored how the comprehensive programs at USC can be aligned to address current challenges. This theme is described as building a "convergent spirit." The theme of convergence

involves reimagining the curriculum, increasing the academic breadth of students' academic studies, fostering interdisciplinary teaching and research, enhancing collaborations within and beyond the academy, creating new knowledge, addressing intractable social challenges, and preparing graduates to face new challenges with optimism, creativity, and purpose.

In addition, USC was required to respond to two additional inquiries from WSCUC. These inquiries included changes in policies, complaint resolution procedures and culture and changes in USC Board of Trustee responsibilities, structure and training, to ensure compliance with WSCUC Governing Board Policy.

Overall, the quality and scope of evidence and the description of the institution's engagement with the review process were excellent.

## **SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS**

### **Component 1: Response to Previous Commission Actions**

USC's last WSCUC accreditation, completed in 2011, produced an action letter requesting a special visit in 2015, followed by a Mid-Cycle Review in 2016. Recommendations from the 2011 review focused on: 1) continuing development of assessment and program review 2) promoting student success and 3) studying interdisciplinary learning, general education and minors. USC presented evidence of its attention to these three recommendations, including conducting university-wide assessment of core competencies, posting of program learning outcomes across all USC school websites, launching a new program review process and expanding graduate program reviews. USC also shared evidence of increased attention to graduation rates and disaggregation by student characteristics and new approaches to support student success and a redesigned general education program implemented in 2015.



The special visit in 2015 emphasized enhancements to undergraduate program review, improvements to institutional research capacity, and the implementation of new general education requirements. Ways to share expertise of USC faculty engaged in the assessment of student learning were also described through actions taken by the USC Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET). USC also provided evidence of greater integration of assessment into the program review process and within discussions in academic units. USC also reduced barriers to interdisciplinary learning through additional grants and the establishment of several academies and societies and interschool research centers to foster interdisciplinary learning.

In response to the 2016 Mid-Cycle Review, USC made data about student achievement including measures of retention and graduation and evidence of student learning easily accessible on the website, and updated USC Fact and Figures webpage to include data on student success as well as links to external sites such as College Navigator and College Scorecard. This review also followed up on academic program review recommendations and concluded that all programs have been reviewed or are scheduled for review.

In sum, USC has made a good faith and effective effort to respond to requests made during the 2011 review, and the subsequent Mid-Cycle in 2016 and more recent WSCUC inquiries. USC has continued its commitment in these areas following the Mid-Cycle review. Recent dramatic change driven by a new administration, revelations that led to governance changes across the university, and deep reflection on USC aspirations, helped give rise to the TPR themes of inclusive and convergent spirit.

### **Component 2: Compliance: Review under WSCUC Standards and Compliance with Federal Requirements; Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators**

USC did a thorough job assessing compliance with the Standards and federal requirements and completing the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI). The IEEI is intended to

provide assurance that every degree program has in place a system for assessing, tracking, and improving the learning of its students. USC's comprehensive approach to completing the Standards Review, the Compliance worksheets and the IEEI forms demonstrate that the review was undertaken thoughtfully. Strong leadership within the Accreditation Steering Committee and expertise from the ALO, the Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET) and the University Committee on Academic Program Review effectively managed the comprehensive review. Findings in the IEEI worksheet were discussed to collectively determine what was learned and to identify common issues worthy of improving. The process itself seemed to sharpen compliance with policies and standards, and confirmed that USC has the resources necessary to carry out its mission. Statements and evidence provided by USC to complete the federal topic reports affirm that USC is compliant with all four federal requirements: credit hour policy and program length, marketing and recruitment, student complaints policy, and transfer credit policy (See appendix A). However, the highly publicized admission scandal involving athletic recruiting and the abuses involving the USC gynecologist provide evidence of highly concerning lapses in policies and procedures particularly regarding transparency in recruitment and the handling of student complaints. The sections below describe the results of the team's review of each Standard.

***Standard 1. Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives***

The University of Southern California (USC) is a comprehensive, private research university with a mission statement and scope of activities that enables it to conduct research and education in a range of disciplines, interdisciplinary programs and units, and professions spanning the humanities, engineering, arts, technology, and sciences (CFR 1.1). The teaching, research and support activities discussed in the institutional report reflect consistent dedication to mission fulfillment. During the virtual visit the team heard from all stakeholders—faculty, students, staff, and trustees—about the

commitment to academic rigor and the richness of the learning experience. Undergraduates the team spoke with had nothing but compliments for the quality of the educational experience; graduate and professional students from a variety of fields voiced a similar assessment. Faculty discussed the importance of working with students, and trustees indicated they had expanded opportunities to hear from faculty and students about the quality of the learning experiences. The Key Indicators report reveals more than 400 degree programs—351 masters programs, 182 undergraduate programs, 79 doctoral programs and 51 professional programs—offered. In addition, the IEEI details formal learning outcomes for each program area.

Given the size and scope of the institution, attention to student success can be seen in a number of areas. According to the Key Indicator report prepared by WSCUC, for the period 2013-2018, the second-year undergraduate retention rate averages 96 percent or higher. This retention rate came as the undergraduate headcount grew from 18,445 in 2013 to 19,907 students in 2018. For the period 2014-2019, the six-year graduation rate for USC undergraduates was basically 92 percent. And for the period 2016-2019, graduation rates did not vary greatly by race or nationality. During the period, rates ranged from a low of 85 percent for individuals from two or more races in 2016 to a high of 94 percent for Asian Americans in each of the years reported. The six-year graduation rate for Pell-eligible ranged between 90-91 percent for the years 2010-2013 (CFR 1.2).

The team found that USC has developed tools to capture learning outcomes and their quality in a standardized format for all programs. The Critical Thinking and Writing Project, which is a university-wide assessment, is explained in USC's institutional report Appendix 2.04; it provides substantial evidence of student learning. With a campus-wide approach, the university has adopted a process to involve units in improving writing for students and a mechanism for constant improvements. In addition to programmatic reviews in areas assessed by external professional accreditors, USC has upgraded its

Academic Program Review system. As an example, since 2013 every liberal arts program at the undergraduate level has had a program review (CFR 2.1).

With regard to integrity and transparency, documentation revealed ready access to policies on academic freedom and grievance processes (CFR 1.3). The USC catalog clearly presents policies regarding student conduct, human subjects research, disability, financial matters, degree requirements academic credits and grading (CFRs 1.6, 1.7). The institution has a demonstrated commitment to diversity as established in the WSCUC Diversity Policy and has focused on diversity as a part of its thematic focus for this reaffirmation of accreditation (CFR 1.4). The university by-laws, mission statement and code of ethics delineates provisions to ensure the institution does not experience interference in decisions or educational functions by various bodies. In addition, through a variety of digital portals and publications such as the financial aid budget, student handbook, student conduct code and registration and transcript policy, students can learn about policies and procedures related to grievances, complaints, research protocols, and refunds. Those same portals and publications show the institution exhibits integrity and transparency in its operations (CFR 1.5).

Finally, in a period that has brought additional review and oversight because of well publicized events involving institutional figures and leaders, it is clear that the institution is committed to open and honest communication (CFR 1.8). The board has reorganized and those changes have been published and shared with the community. A series of efforts have been presented to the community to minimize the likelihood of a reoccurrence, which faculty, staff and students acknowledged during the team's virtual visit. The team reviewed official explanations, met with senior university leaders and spoke to members of the board of trustees. The team concluded that the documents and views of the community aligned, even when individuals may desire more transparency or communication.

Conclusion. The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with Standard 1. However, the team recommends that as USC continues its efforts in inclusion, it is important to pay more attention to developmental organizational change and organizational structures. Given that the meaning and application of inclusion varies by age, generation, socioeconomic differences, nationality, and field of study, building that understanding into an inclusion framework will aid implementation and assessment (CFR 1.4).

***Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions***

USC has established educational objectives through core functions of teaching and learning, scholarship and creative activity, and support for student learning and success in a reflective and analytical way. As indicated above, USC's inclusive review process made extensive use of the Review under the Standards worksheet for considering evidence of achievement of standards and CFRs. USC's approach to involving staff from the Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET) to coordinate completion of the IEEI and to foster dialogue and crosschecking by the Accreditation Steering Committee against elements in the narrative of the institutional report offers assurance of a shared understanding of educational purposes and evaluation of effectiveness in teaching and learning (CFRs 2.1, 2.2, 2.4). Coherent curricular philosophy, and rigorous and meaningful university and school curricular reviews processes demonstrate that outcomes and standards of performance are developed by faculty and widely shared among faculty and staff (CFR 2.4), while professional accreditation reviews affirm that degree programs are tied to mission and meet the requirements set by their respective disciplines (CFRs 2.2b, 2.7. 2.11).

The team's review of a sample undergraduate and graduate syllabi demonstrate that student learning outcomes and standards of performance are clearly stated at the course and program level (CFR

2.3) and that academic programs actively involve students in learning, challenge students to meet high standards of performance, offer opportunities for students to practice, generalize, and apply what they have learned, and provide them with appropriate and ongoing feedback (CFR 2.5). Distinctive undergraduate programs built on excellent liberal arts and professional programs create unique opportunities that allow students to participate in basic and applied research, and develop broad expertise in diverse fields and for career preparation (CFR 2.2a).

Data on retention and the particularly high, and consistent graduation rates (92%) confirmed the success of USC students in completing their programs of study (CFRs 2.1, 2.10). Faculty, students and administrators were aware of these high student completion rates and students interviewed during the visit took pride in these rates and USC's rigorous standards for performance (CFR 2.10). Sample program review processes and assessment reports provided evidence of student achievement of stated learning and program outcomes (CFR 2.6), for example, the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences longitudinal study of critical thinking in student essays in lower and upper division writing courses demonstrate systematic and reflective program reviews and the use of evidence in continuous improvement in the USC Writing Program (CFRs 2.6, 2.7). The Academic Program Review process, overseen by the University Committee on Academic Review (UCAR) is thoroughly documented, with strong statements about the processes role in assessing and raising quality, and to provide guidance for administrative decisions in support of continued future improvement (CFR 2.7).

Expectations for scholarship and creative activity for students and faculty are articulated and promoted (CFRs 2.8, 2.9). Policies related to faculty evaluation, promotion and tenure are available in the Faculty Handbook, and faculty indicated that USC recognizes and promotes appropriate linkages among scholarship, teaching and service (CFR 2.9). USC's Discovery Scholar distinction is a noteworthy student scholar program intended to recognize and celebrate graduating seniors who have excelled

academically while making a meaningful contribution to their field of study through exceptional new scholarship or artistic work. Student support programs and clear and complete advising information are components of student services (CFRs 2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14). Learning support services and resources in residential education and tutoring seem to be robust and available to students. USC serves transfer students and information about transfer credit services, including the availability of the Transfer Credit Report (TCR) generated for all admitted undergraduate students to show unit and subject credit granted for college courses and relevant exams, and articulation agreements are accessible (CFR 2.14).

Students with whom the team met during the visit expressed no concerns about learning support services and programs. Yet, during the visit the team learned that while USC attracts students with strong interdisciplinary interests and many pursue double majors and minors to advance their educational goals, current advising approaches and technology systems may not be effectively serving students' convergent interests, particularly first-generation students with less experience navigating academic structures. The concern about assuring students are properly advised about their requirements and that they can achieve their interdisciplinary interests was expressed by faculty and students during the visit. As a result, the team recommends that USC develop advising practices and technology systems that will support goals for convergence, inclusion and timely degree completion (CFR 2.12). This finding aligns with USC's TPR theme to expand the convergent spirit and to stated expectations for mentoring and learning partnerships that empowers students to achieve their academic and professional goals. In sum, as in USC's candid self-appraisal, the team affirms that areas for growth include continued emphasis and assessment of support to students to understand and achieve interdisciplinarity in their degree programs. This demands proactive advising processes that plan for interdisciplinary degree programs, not just reactive or corrective steps to ensure accurate course selections and approvals.

Conclusion. The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with Standard 2. However, the team recommends that USC monitors advising processes and technology to ensure the efficient completion of interdisciplinary degrees and that advising practices and technology systems support goals for convergence, inclusion and timely degree completion (CFR 2.12).

***Standard 3. Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability***

USC supports the achievement of its educational objectives through investments in human, physical, fiscal, technological, and information resources and an effective set of organizational and decision-making structures. These elements help promote the achievement of institutional purpose and create a high-quality environment for learning. However, USC has recently made changes to both its organizational structure and high-level personnel to strengthen its commitment to quality and sustainability. Indications are that this is significant progress, though it's too early to see the complete impact.

USC has a world class faculty that is fully engaged at both the graduate and undergraduate level. The administration and faculty senate have well documented policies and practices for the hiring and ongoing evaluation of these faculty. Policies and procedures pertaining to employment relationships are documented including the Faculty Policy Manual or Handbook and the Staff Policy Manual or Handbook (CFRs 3.1, 3.2). The faculty have been able to increase both the breadth and depth of the educational offerings over the past years. USC has a strong Center for Excellence in Teaching and systems to recognize teaching faculty (CFR 3.3). The staff is at a high level of performance. There are appropriate professional development programs for both staff and faculty.

Fiscal, physical and information resources are in place and aligned with educational purposes and objectives (CFRs 3.4, 3.5). USC has developed good processes for managing its fiscal, physical and



information resources. Donor support has enabled significant expansions, and there are reasons to believe that will continue. USC's institutional report provides substantial evidence of their on-going stewardship and development processes, and the good results obtained.

Over the past few years, USC has made significant leadership changes and put in place a new approach to governance. This is working its way down into the schools and departments. The changeover is still in progress, but the team learned that most faculty staff and administrators are satisfied with how the shift is progressing. More work is still needed to clearly define faculty governance roles, rights and responsibilities and to make sure they are understood by the entire faculty to generate additional positive faculty involvement in shared governance (CFRs 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10). The institution's Task Force on Workplace Standards and Employee Wellness identified four objectives that the team affirmed to be important to positive change including checks on abuses of power, shared governance and transparency, USC community member well-being, and staff, faculty and students feeling safe expressing their concerns. In addition, during the visit, the problem of faculty fatigue surfaced and highlighted the need to grow the pool of faculty who are leading USC's culture change, especially in the area of inclusion. The team recommends targeted outreach to some of the less connected faculty or perhaps some who are disaffected, (for example, faculty associated with the group of "Concerned Faculty of USC" [see <https://concernedfacultyofusc.com/>]) so that their views are considered and that they can be engaged in the change processes (CFRs 3.6, 3.10). To ensure that the faculty exercises effective academic leadership, it is critically important to clearly define and enact shared governance roles, rights and responsibilities and to engage faculty in the shared governance process (CFR 3.10). The team recommends USC engage more faculty in the process of academic leadership and shared governance.

The independence of the USC governing board and its oversight over institutional integrity and ongoing operations have also been a subject of serious concern, particularly in relation to recent scandals including the abuse by a staff gynecologist in student health, the use of drugs and inappropriate behavior of the former dean of the Keck School of Medicine, and an admissions bribery scheme involving employees in Athletics. Although there is great optimism that the new governance structure of the Board of Trustees is thoughtfully designed to ensure greater oversight and that it will carry USC forward, the team recommends that the Board of Trustees consider whether adding more academic expertise will help amplify its effectiveness (CFR 3.9).

Conclusion. The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with Standard 3. However, the team recommends that USC ensures effective Board functioning and oversight (CFR 3.9 and WSCUC Governing Board Policy). In addition, it is essential for the university to assess shared governance roles, rights and responsibilities and engage more faculty in the shared governance process as the institution pursues its themes of inclusive and convergent spirits and addresses its commitment to change initiative and the objectives of the Task Force on Workplace Standards and Employee Wellness (CFRs 3.6, 3.10).

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

USC has a rigorous academic program review process that relies on on-going, high quality, peer reviews of all degree programs. USC is committed to having the standards used in assessment remain with the faculty in each program. At the same time the Office of the Provost provides resources to improve assessment and assure assessments are applied in a consistent and uniform manner. The University Committee on Academic Review oversees the academic program review process and ensures program deficiencies and concerns are followed up on and brought to the attention of the president and

provost. The centralized oversight of the program reviews is a best practice to ensure oversight of quality and follow up (CFRs 4.1, 4.3, 4.5).

USC's 2015 special visit report identified the need to better leverage institutional research (IR) capacity and the institutional report notes ongoing improvements over the last five years, including centralized reporting lines for IPEDs and other governmental reporting, and platforms such as Tableau to add capacity and tracking tools. During the visit the team affirmed added IR capacity, and confirmed that USC provides standard data definitions and longitudinal analyses of metrics important to the USC mission. However, some members of the Accreditation Steering Committee and department leadership described that the decentralized nature of the institution presents some challenges to data access and use. Getting staff and faculty to access data and use results more regularly in decision making for programs and student success, and to monitor and track progress on inclusion goals, requires a stronger data culture. Although the recent integration of research staff into a central office is important progress, along with the purchase of a Tableau server, the team strongly encourages USC to expand data use and strive for greater data integration. Notably, the additional capabilities of the institutional research office have been particularly valuable during the pandemic (CFR 4.2).

The move to online learning during the pandemic has highlighted the value of the USC Center for Excellence in Teaching. In the summer of 2020, over 1,000 faculty members participated in programs the Center ran that were designed to enhance online teaching for the fall semester. In addition to learning on-line tools, many faculty used this to improve teaching practices (CFR 4.4).

Finally, the team observed an institution undergoing very deliberate culture change as part of aligning the community with its values and future aspirations. The thoughtful process, starting with the culture commission and ongoing strategic planning efforts, and moving into implementation was

impressive. The team is optimistic that the institution will be successful in making the changes it needs to make. (CFRs 4.6, 4.7).

Conclusion. The team’s finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with Standard 4. Yet, the team identified two recommendations in relation to this standard, including a need for a coordinated and transparent system to record, track and measure the effectiveness of culture change initiatives across campus (CFR 4.6) and the need to pay more attention to developmental organizational change and organizational structures and an inclusion framework to aid implementation and assessment (CFRs 4.6, 4.7).

### **Component 8: Institution-specific Themes – Inclusion and Convergence, and WSCUC Inquiries**

The theme-based approach to reaffirmation of accreditation offered USC the opportunity for campus-wide engagement in a quality improvement process consistent with its mission and the achievement of WSCUC Standards. The institution elected two themes of great significance to its history and path forward. The first theme, “inclusive spirit” has been an element of USC identity since its founding and remains a strong commitment of the institution. The need to structure for greater equity and inclusion and to diversify the academic community through hiring and student enrollment are key goals of this improvement initiative. USC’s commitment to building a more inclusive campus is expansive and widespread and the team heard that the TPR has helped facilitate USC’s coordinated and action-oriented process. USC’s second theme, “convergent spirit” extends the institution’s commitments to interdisciplinarity, the need to address contemporary challenges that demand complex approaches and collaboration, and the belief in problem-based approaches and applied thinking to inspire students to cultivate broad curiosity and interests and ultimately, solutions.

These two themes and the WSCUC requested inquiries regarding culture change and governance are strongly interrelated topics for USC. The themes align with several WSCUC Standards including

Standard 1, Defining Institutional Purpose and Ensuring Educational Objectives, specifically criterion about diversity policies, programs and practices (CFR 1.4), and Standard 3, Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability, in particular criteria about organizational structures to operate with integrity and accountability (CFR 3.6), independent governing board and appropriate oversight (CFR 3.6), and effective academic leadership by faculty (CFR 3.10). This section discusses USC's progress on these interconnected and critical themes and documents evidence of compliance with standards for quality assurance.

### **Inclusive Spirit**

The team observed that the inclusive spirit—diversity, equity and inclusion—has been part of USC's sense of self since its founding in 1880. Its first valedictorian was a female student, Minnie Miltimore in 1884. Today, it has one of the largest international student bodies of any American institution of higher education. In recent years it has come to note that diversity by the numbers, may not fully result in inclusion much less equity. As a result, USC has engaged in policy changes as well as symbolic acts such as the renaming of buildings to ensure that diversity, equity and inclusion is a central part of the institution's future identity.

The university restructured equity and inclusion in several ways. At the institutional level, with board support, the university hired the first senior vice president for human resources. It created a new Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) to handle policies and procedures related to reports of protected class discrimination and harassment. The work of this new organization, the team learned during the virtual visit, is underway.

The plan to develop the inclusive spirit rests on growing and continuing to diversify the faculty ranks. To date, the university has pledged an additional \$50 million dollars to add faculty in a variety of schools and ranks, the team learned from senior administrators and deans. Beginning in 2018, the Office

of the Provost pledged funds to hire new faculty. At the time of the virtual visit, data showed 36 faculty across 13 school and colleges and three divisions had been hired. At the same time, the size of the overall faculty nearly doubled between 2010 and 2020. As a result, even with the plan to diversify, the percentage of tenure track faculty of color either grew modestly or has remained flat over the last ten years. For example, in 2010 female faculty identified as Latina set at 4.40 percent of the total; by 2020 the percent was 6.42 percent. During that period Latinos went from 2.61 percent to 4.17 percent. By contrast, African American women declined from 4.66 percent in 2010 to 4.28 percent in 2020. Black men during the same period went from 2.05 percent to 2.52 percent. Much of the growth in faculty diversity occurred in the research, teaching, practitioners and clinician ranks. Faculty in those areas grew across the board, including the numbers of faculty of color.

As the university has sought to develop and sustain the inclusion theme, it decided to hire a chief inclusion and diversity officer (CIDO) who is a part of the senior institutional leadership team. The team learned that the CIDO will have access to leaders across the campus, will work with diversity leads at the unit levels, and will play a role in defining and refining the institution's plans and priorities. The CIDO joins a relatively new senior vice president for human resources in guiding institutional plans for implementing and monitoring adherence to institutional plans for diversity, equity and inclusion. These central personnel join a new generation of deans who understand they have responsibility for inclusion as well. From the board through the students the team met during the virtual visit there is optimism about the staffing changes, and the sense of an aligned commitment to advancing inclusion across campus. In meetings with staff, there was hope that a focus on diversity would fully include them as well.

Diversity is a priority for faculty, staff and students. Documents the team reviewed showed that USC had developed programs to provide support for students from a variety of backgrounds. Among

private institutions, USC has a higher percentage of first-generation and Pell-eligible students than many peers. It recently announced a new plan to reduce tuition costs for students from low-to-moderate income families. The Affordability Initiative coupled with a growth in the undergraduate student body characterized by flat growth in the White student body and growth in other areas has aided the overall diversification of the student body. As important, the team heard during the virtual visit, and which the materials shared also illustrated, that curricular and extra-curricular efforts were important to the inclusion theme. The efforts ranged from pipeline programs for local youth, to school-based programs that placed USC students in classrooms with 3,000 underserved schoolchildren, and a broad number of service learning and community outreach opportunities. The team learned that opportunities for broad engagement with the surrounding neighborhoods and residents included students at the undergraduate as well as the graduate and professional levels; in addition, some staff welcomed an opportunity to do even more.

During the virtual visit, and in supporting documentation, community members referenced the “Trojan Family.” The inclusion theme implicitly recognizes the dynamic relationship between the idea of a singular version of family and the increasing heterogeneity of the university community. During meetings with faculty, staff and students, observations were offered about appreciating and validating the many cultures that comprise USC, even as the notion of a shared culture continues to evolve. With twenty-two schools and colleges, variations on culture were acknowledged, even as shared characteristics were highlighted. For example, data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) found that first-time students enrolling in 2015 and 2016 had a tolerance for others at or above the national average. At the same time, according to data USC tracks from the Consortium on Financing Higher Education (COFHE), 87 percent of students said their sexual orientation was respected on campus, 77 percent said the same about religious beliefs, gender (74 percent), political beliefs (70

percent), race and ethnicity (67 percent) and socio-economic status (64 percent). Students in particular populations reported feeling less respected on campus than the general population. Differences emerged, crosscut by sexual identity, racial identity, and socioeconomic status, and has led the university, through student cultural centers, to develop strategies for respect and belonging.

Aware that the task of inclusion is both an individual and institutional responsibility, the institution's leadership issued a "Call to Action" after the national events of the summer of 2020. Those steps included a clear statement from the president about responsibilities and obligations, the hiring of the first Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer, mandatory unconscious bias training, the renaming of programs, public forums and listening tours with neighbors, a new community advisory board for the Department of Public Safety, and a series of surveys to better identify opportunities and issues. These steps build on an understanding expressed by many the team spoke with that diversity is often about the numbers, but inclusion requires attention to how numerical diversity requires the institution to change and not just the individual. This means an ongoing attention to how diversity, equity and inclusion is owned by all community stakeholders. As the 'inclusive spirit' evolves, the team recommends that USC pay more attention to developmental organizational change and organizational structures. Given that the meaning and application of inclusion varies by age, generation, socioeconomic differences, nationality, and field of study, building that understanding into an inclusion framework will aid implementation and assessment (CFRs 1.4, 4.6, 4.7).

### **Convergent Spirit**

Traditionally, interdisciplinary programs have evolved in the interstices between academic fields, combining their several approaches. USC's "convergent spirit" effort starts with a commitment to these forms of interdisciplinary inquiry, and then extends them to address the big challenges facing society: medical, environmental, social, economic, etc. These complex problems require collaboration across a



number of fields and specialties; at the same time, their importance motivates those people to collaborate. USC further believes that, with time, this convergent work “becomes a form of applied thinking, a habit of mind, and means of inspiring students to cultivate broad curiosity and interests” (USC institutional report).

USC has a history of attracting both faculty and students committed to working across disciplines and on significant questions. New programs have arisen from both student and faculty interest. Strong partnerships have been developed with outside organizations and particularly with the local communities. The “convergent spirit” effort is intended to move USC toward making this a part of the entire campus’s common experience. Although it will take time and effort, this is a very valuable outcome.

The convergent theme already has strong roots. There is currently an impressive degree of faculty collaborative engagement around this effort. Many of USC’s students combine multiple majors and minors to address questions to which they’re deeply committed. How best to extend that from the early enthusiasts to the majority of the students and faculty remains an open question, though. Particularly for undergraduate students, there is a concern that the advising structures have not adopted to convergence fast enough. In addition to a desire for additional access to academic advising, students perceive silos persisting in the overall approach to academic advising. The campus technology systems around advising and enrollment do not appear to have been updated to facilitate convergence. Together, these result in some student concerns around timely degree completion (CFR 2.12).

Although there is enthusiasm at the faculty level, there is also indications of change fatigue. The changes to leadership and the evolution of faculty shared governance have caused some uncertainty about directions and priorities; inability of individual faculty to get answers about these has sometimes manifested as concerns about “transparency.” Some faculty are uncertain: will the emphasis on

convergence last? Will the incentives for that kind of activity really empower additional faculty effort in this area? There is a desire for better two-way communication, particularly with faculty leadership, so that faculty understand what possibilities will be supported as priorities long-term. What will the life-cycle of these efforts look like? Will they be supported long term, and will there be a clear process for the difficult task of winding down academic projects when they need to be? There is a lot of history around these kinds of questions, and faculty tend to go back to those histories (with some emphasis on the unfortunate parts) when they cannot get answers about the present and future. Better communication about the present and future from faculty leadership and administration is desired, even when there are uncertainties (CFRs 3.6, 3.10).

Overall, the emphasis on convergence is taking hold and building on the existing roots in specific areas. The team expects that the next few years will be critical to spreading convergence broadly across the campus to reach the majority of the students and faculty. Success will be very valuable, both to USC and the communities it serves.

### **WSCUC Requested Themes: Culture Change and Governance**

WSCUC requested that USC further address concerns related to three WSCUC inquiries between 2017 and 2019 regarding events involving the dean of Keck School of Medicine, sexual assaults by a former campus gynecologist, and fraudulent admissions applications. WSCUC requested and received specific responses to these issues in separate correspondence with USC and also asked that steps taken and updates be discussed in USC's institutional report. WSCUC asked the review team to look carefully at the steps USC has taken to change the conditions that led to these scandals. These changes correspond to significant shifts and changes in procedures, policies, practices, and outcomes to complaints related to cultural dynamics, leadership and governance which is described by USC as their "Culture Journey."

As part of the review of USC journey's to date, the team review included analyzing updates on the ongoing work of the USC Commitment to Change initiative, President's Campus Culture Commission, Wellness Council, and Campus Culture Values. Significant resources have been invested in these areas as USC reflected and acted on ensuring that community values, devotion to mission, accountability, and commitment to the USC community, including students, patients, faculty and staff, are reflected across the institution. This section discusses updates to seven culture change topics: President's Culture Commission, Culture Change in Leadership, Culture Change in Administrative Operations, Change and Wellness, Culture Change and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access (DEIA), Culture Change for Students, Faculty, and Staff, and finally, Community Cultural Engagement.

*President's Culture Commission.* The President's Culture Commission, formed in November 2018, has been charged to oversee efforts to assess and improve campus culture as it related to USC's "Culture Journey." The new "Culture Journey" is informed by the President's Culture Commission and the Working Group on University Culture. This work is extremely comprehensive and brings together stakeholders from across all areas of USC to investigate, re-imagine, and innovate USC's cultural growth opportunities that will continue to improve interaction across departments, units and positions. There is also a focus on reimagining the university's systems, processes and services that shape those interactions among them to ensure equity for all members of the USC community. The institution has gone about this work by engaging stakeholders across all areas and identifying shared values. The leadership continues to transmit the commitment to the six cultural values (integrity, excellence, diversity, well-being, open communication, accountability) by hosting town halls, discussion sessions, and disseminating poll, data and survey information. Additionally, USC has instituted new training, learning, and development programs for facilitators and others to guide discussion series (CFRs 1.6, 1.7, 1.8).

Members of the USC community continue to work on and address several key themes:

- How to create a university where all are committed to respect, equity and the inclusion of diverse identities, voices and experiences at the personal and institutional levels.
- How to ensure leaders at every level are held accountable for their decisions and the resulting outcomes.
- How to ensure that there are a clear tie and alignment between mission and individual and institutional ethical principles and behaviors.
- How to create processes that continue to assess performance across systems governance, policy implementation, and practices at all levels.
- How to increase open communication, transparency and inclusive decision-making processes that provide pathways for escalating and addressing institutional and/or leadership issues without fear of retaliation.
- How to develop professional opportunities for managers and leaders tied to clearly defined career paths, mentorship, and feedback and performance evaluations.

The “Culture Journey” is ongoing and continues to focus on activities aimed at accountability for behaviors and interactions and aligning systems and processes with values as outlined by the Culture Commission and the ongoing work across the USC community (CFRs 1.6, 1.7, 1.8).

*Culture Change in Leadership.* USC leadership has outlined that central to the “Culture Journey” work is taking action with integrity in the pursuit of excellence; embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion and promoting institutional and individual well-being; engaging in open communication and, being accountable to one another across the USC community. The six values that were outlined and referenced throughout conversation with members of the USC community are:

- Integrity: To do the right thing
- Excellence: Bring best selves
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Emphasis on belonging
- Well-being: Individual and institutional
- Open Communication: Transparency, flow, and tiered
- Accountability: Responsibility, action, and follow up

USC leaders spoke at length about how they are embracing these values as a community in their efforts to build a culture that instills trust, reinforces ethical decision-making, and provides a strong foundation for the future. Senior leadership's commitment to these values was consistently espoused and examples were provided of how they are trying to integrate these values into their university-wide systems, actions, and processes. Some examples that were referenced included:

- Developing tools that reflect USC values in assessment and performance metrics in systems governing recognition, rewards, and incentives;
- Assessing and providing resources to build the professional skill sets of USC leaders, faculty, staff, and students tied to ethical and values-based behaviors, mentorship, and feedback;
- Embedding values into student, faculty, and staff recruiting, hiring, onboarding, and mentorship and professional development opportunities;
- Demonstrating opportunities for community members to raise concerns and take action without fear of retaliation;
- Aligning DEIA work with values and focus on well-being and institutional wellness; and

- Launching a reimagined Code of Ethics that is aligned with values and wellness.

A number of institutional changes have been implemented as a result of these efforts. Strengthened reporting and support services have been put in place including a reorganization of the Board of Trustees; integration of the USC student health systems into Keck Medicine of USC; new personnel hires including women gynecologists and new counselors for students; and institutional centralization of complaint collection and investigations. While much of these efforts are still in process, including the restructuring of the Office of Conduct, Accountability, and Professionalism (OCAP), the new structures have been realigned to allow for greater transparency and shift the cultural practices that were historically problematic. The university leadership has also hired a new Senior Vice President for Human Resources, Equity and Compliance (SVP-HR). This has contributed to the centralization, transparency, alignment and coherence that is helping to increase accountability and trust in many areas (CFR 1.6).

*Culture Change in Administrative Operations.* In this new structure, the Office of Professionalism and Ethics (OPE) is under the supervision of the SVP-HR. It is important to note that the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) and the Title IX Office have been reorganized into the Office of Equity, Equal Opportunity & Title IX (EEO-TIX Office). Most recently, in July 2020, USC announced the appointment of a Vice President of Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX, who assumed her position in September 2020. A new leader has been appointed as the Title IX Officer, with primary responsibility to prevent and address misconduct and discrimination through an emphasis on community, equity, and inclusion. In addition, and as part of the alignment efforts, a healthcare-focused deputy coordinator was appointed within the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity and Title IX. That role is to ensure compliance with federal, state and local anti-discrimination laws. (CFRs 3.2, 4.7)

*Culture Change and Wellness.* The focus on culture as it pertains to workplace standards and employee wellness has focused on key areas and instituted checks and balances, and accountability measures to identify abuses of power and associated toxic leadership and managerial practices; to improve transparency, accountability, shared governance, and strengthen a shared sense of ownership; to bring attention to the well-being and healthy functioning of all members, units, and departments within the USC community; and to develop spaces for students, faculty and staff to express instances of bias, concerns, and abuses of power that are not retaliatory, but are instead trustworthy and action-oriented. (CFRs 1.6, 1.7, 1.8).

The subject of standards and employee wellness has been reimagined with the creation of the relatively new Office of Campus Wellbeing and Crisis Intervention. This office has a number of offices included in its umbrella -- Campus Support and Intervention, Campus Wellbeing and Intervention, and Threat Assessment and Management. There has also been the creation of a new role -- Senior Vice President of Health Affairs (SVP-HA). This position reports directly to USC's President and oversees the Keck Health System and the Keck School of Medicine. The SVP-HA position was developed to better integrate education, research, and clinical activities and to build a collaboration cycle where research and education lead to better clinical outcomes. The team learned that this alignment has not only allowed for greater coherence in how the university approaches wellness and crisis intervention, but also prompted more coordinated follow-up, enhanced availability of support, and provided developmental opportunities to promote individual and campus wellness. Some of the work in this area includes the creation of emergency funds, and surveys and data collection on climate campus inclusion and safety. The Healthy Minds survey found disparate perceptions of campus climate, inclusion, or safety across intersecting identities and as the data were examined by race, student race, gender, and first-generation college status, the sense of belonging was lower than mean scores of those students who

identified with only one of these groupings alone. Committees and leadership bodies continue to investigate these findings and develop concrete actions, recommendations, and proposals to address historical and contemporary concerns. One example is the development of a new first-year course called Thrive and this has been introduced to assist students with maintaining healthy relationships, time and resource management, and taking steps to ensure overall well-being (CFR 4.5).

In addition, the team inquired about the establishment of an Office of the Ombudsperson with two ombudspersons to serve the University Park Campus and the Health Sciences Campus. This was reported as a very positive outcome and even though conversations with ombudspersons are informal and remain confidential because ombudspersons are trained to remain impartial, they provide a safe place on both campuses for faculty, students, and staff to navigate policies, issues, concerns, and conflicts without fear of reprisal or judgment. Their work is integrated into the overall approach to preventative actions as they serve as advisors to leaders as appropriate while maintaining confidentiality about specific cases and/or information. Additionally, Ombudspersons are trained to direct individuals to the appropriate campus reporting unit as necessary. According to many, the Ombudspersons appointments have been crucial to promoting and embodying an ethical, empathic, and engaged culture that is committed to problem-solving, dispute resolution and workplace wellness and to ensuring all members of the community have increased access to resources that advance this commitment.

In addition, to address issues of culture as it pertains to institutional wellness, ethics, and previous scandal and issues, USC has implemented a number of specific changes related to athletics and admissions including:

- All student-athlete candidate files are now reviewed on three levels: head coach, senior sports administrator and Office of Athletic Compliance. Reviews take place prior to the Office of Admissions review processes.



- USC head coaches must provide written certification that students are recruited because of their athletic ability.
- All applicants are required to sign an attestation. This is in addition to the attestation required by the Common App, which must affirm they submitted their own application, and that all information is truthful and accurate. Should there be any misrepresentation found, it would be grounds for immediate revocation of admission to USC.
- Leadership has instituted town halls, open forums, and office hours to increase communication and transparency in relation to all changes
- Officers of the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Government, the Academic Senate, Deans and the Staff Assembly attest to being consistently engaged in the process and made aware of changes as they emerge (CFR 1.6)

*Culture Change and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access (DEIA)*. An experienced leader and advocate for diversity in higher education has been appointed USC's first chief inclusion and diversity officer (CIDO). As part of the President's senior leadership team, the CIDO is charged with building a framework for strategies, programs and initiatives to reinforce USC's values, commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity and belonging, and to address the ongoing challenges of discrimination and bias. His experience is already proving helpful to USC's "Culture Journey" in relation to DEIA (CFRs 1.4, 3.1). As part of the senior leadership team, the CIDO has been given numerous supports and the resources to build initiatives. The CIDO is responsible for the university's Diversity and Inclusion Council and works collaboratively with faculty, staff and student leaders across USC to deliver sustained, measurable improvements in educational and organizational environments. He is already taking an active role in several of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives, including the President and Provost's

Taskforce on Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and the Department of Public Safety Community Advisory Board. The CIDO will work with the community as they continue to develop workshops, discussions, etc. on implicit bias in hiring, navigating difficult conversations about race in the classroom, microaggressions and diversifying new hires and a host of other areas (CFR 4.5).

The CIDO has just begun some of the responsibilities outlined and is working with the SVP-HR, the Provost, VP of Student Affairs and others to concretize the work across USC. The CIDO is responsible for helping to evaluate the campus climate, identifying barriers to student success and the retention of diverse faculty and creating practices to promote inclusion by seeking input from students, faculty and staff (CFRs 3.1, 3.2, 3.6).

During the visit, USC's numerous student cultural and identity centers were discussed. The recent launch of the First Generation Plus Success Center now serves several populations, including first-generation, transfer, and DACA and undocumented students, with added programming space for Black, Asian Pacific American, Latinx/Chicanx, Veteran, LGBTQ+, Native American and Middle Eastern students, Former Foster Youth, and students needing accessibility services. There is also the Latinx Chicanx Center for Advocacy and Student Affairs (LA CASA), the Center for Black Cultural and Student Affairs, the Asian Pacific American Student Services, the LGBTQ+ Resource Center, the Veterans Resource Center, and Disability Service and Programs. Collectively, these centers engage thousands of students in leadership development, cultural-based programming, mentorship, and advocacy every year and are now a part of the responsibility of the CIDO to help with cultural values alignment, as well as collaboration across these programs and centers (CFR 4.5). Again, the CIDO was just beginning his role and the team was able to converse with him and other leaders who indicated great support for the role and the resulting culture shifts.

*Culture Change for Students, Faculty, and Staff.* USC has successfully established new administrative positions and structures, and in the process of diversifying its academic community, supported new students, staff, and faculty, and created pipelines within the university and in the community to address cultural change. The university has invested in residential colleges, student support services, wellness including telehealth and mindfulness, technology during the pandemic to foster culture and community connections and Basic Needs Student Equity and Inclusion Programs which include a food pantry and case management for housing insecure students, and also helps distribute emergency aid.

Students (undergraduate and graduate) reported that because of the pandemic there have challenges, but that they feel connected. The emphasis on culture change is evident to them in terms of leadership shifts, advising resources, program creation, curricular shifts and increased opportunities for community engagement through the new At Matteo site development by the Roski School of Art and Design.

Many of the students mentioned efforts to collaborate across school and silos and are interested in this work continuing as it underscores cultural growth and development in the area of intersectionality and support for transdisciplinary/interdisciplinary work. UCS has made extensive investments in creating opportunities for cross-disciplinary work and the students are appreciative. Students did express some interest in more attention to financial aid, but also voiced that this was something they knew the institution was consistently working to address (CFRs 1.6., 2.13, 2.2, 2.2b, 2.5).

Faculty expressed concern about information, new processes and transparency. The team believed that this was primarily related to faculty fatigue. The problem of faculty fatigue that surfaced draws attention to the need to continue to grow the faculty pools that are understood to be leading the culture change, especially in the area of inclusion and equity. Again, as indicated in the discussion about

Standard 3, the team recommends targeted outreach to less connected faculty, so that they can be engaged in the change processes (CFR 3.10).

Staff consistently expressed that cultural shifts are happening and are rapid. HR and related areas in some cases have been completely overhauled and in others areas there is a process in place. While there have been inconsistencies, this is mostly expressed as a result of moving from decentralization to centralization, which takes time and effort across an institution the size of USC (CFR 3.2). Leadership across all levels expressed confidence in realignment and restructuring processes and highlighted the increased transparency that has come about with recent leadership changes (CFR 3.6).

*Community Cultural Engagement.* Supporting underserved local schools and strengthening the college-going culture has also been central to the culture change work of USC. The university funds three specific types of pathway/pipeline programs to support college access and completion: for middle school students, at high schools, and through further support midway through the postsecondary educational process. The purpose of USC's investment in these young people, in the LA neighborhood, is to uplift peoples' lives, support underserved schoolchildren, and strengthen the college-going culture within those families, high schools, and neighborhoods proximate to the campus. Over decades, these efforts have helped build networks of mutual support. There are currently numerous Pipeline Programs for Local Youth. The range of programs includes but is not limited to neighborhoods, parent involvement, health sciences, STEM, arts and culture, and links with fellowship scholars' programs such as McNair. This work allows USC to broaden its focus on culture and inclusivity with partners locally and globally. The programs exemplify how the university leadership, faculty, staff and students are operationalizing cultural change, equity, and community engagement. This work continues to demonstrate USC's commitment to changing internal and external cultural practices by engaging partnerships that are focused on growth that is essential to strengthening the region and state (CFR 2.11).

The “Culture Journey” is an ongoing process and is evolving. Cultural changes were attested to from all areas and constituents. USC is in the process of restructuring the overall cultural, educational, pedagogical, community experiences of undergraduates, faculty and staff. This includes the ways in which they deliver services, review programs and departments, and approve new curricula. This is a massive effort, and the size and complexity of the university is both a strength and a challenge. Heretofore, size allowed for multiple cultures without the lift from an integrated approach to culture. The team recommends a system (beyond auditing) to record, track and measure the effectiveness of culture change initiatives across campus. This system needs accountability and coordination, as well as transparency to the entire USC community (CFR 4.6). Currently, USC structures, policies, practices and pedagogy are undergoing rapid change as new approaches to diversity, equity, and inclusion are built and changes to admitting, hiring and retaining faculty and staff, students are undertaken. USC’s ongoing efforts demonstrate a great deal of progress to address the cultural issues identified and this cultural change has already benefited a range of constituencies, departments and divisions.

*Governance.* The USC Board of Trustees had been organized in much the same way for 30 years, and in that time USC had grown dramatically. There was recognition that as USC had changed, so too must the Board. In order to reform the board structure, the Board of Trustees established a special committee on Governance Reform that, starting in 2018, sought input from administrators, deans, faculty, staff, alumni and external experts to develop recommendations that would best position USC for the coming decades.

On November 5, 2019, the USC Trustees announced a series of significant changes to its governance structure in order to modernize the Board’s structure and operations. The major changes adopted were:

- Reduce the overall size of the Board to 35 members within the next few years;
- Commit to a future Board composition that reflects the diversity of the USC community;

- Implement term and age limits for all current and future Trustees;
- Reduce the number of Board committees from eleven to nine;
- Restructure the Executive Committee membership to be comprised of the Board Chair, immediate past Board Chair, University President, and Committee Chairs;
- Strengthen requirements for Board membership;
- Establish new criteria and role requirements for future Life and Honorary Trustees;
- Publish all committee memberships to the USC website for community reference.

The team was impressed at how quickly and effectively these changes were being implemented. As of the team's visit, the Board size had already been reduced from 56 to 44 with a goal to reach 35 in the next few years. Some further best practices adopted are that Board members do not vote on questions before the Board that might create a conflict of interest or otherwise benefit them financially, Board members do not receive compensation for their service, other than the Chair of the Board who may receive some compensation, and no Board member may be compensated as an employee. The team concluded that the USC Board of Trustees is in compliance with the WSCUC Governing Board Policy.

The team was impressed with the rapid reframing of the Board and the enthusiasm with which the Board has embraced its new governance role as was evidenced in the team's conversation with the Board. The strong desire of the Board to support the new leadership team at USC was also evident. There is great optimism that the new governance structure of the Board is thoughtfully designed to ensure greater oversight and it will carry USC forward. The team recommends that the Board consider whether adding more academic expertise could amplify its effectiveness. (CFR 3.9)

All universities operate with a form of shared governance. The team observed that the inclusion theme is resulting in much more robust stakeholder engagement in the functioning of the Institution, and

the team believes this is a very good trend. Within this stakeholder engagement, it is important to articulate the special role that faculty have in the shared governance relationship with the university administration. In order to ensure that the faculty exercises effective academic leadership, it is critically important to clearly define and understand shared governance roles, rights and responsibilities. It is also critically important that faculty robustly engage in the shared governance process. The team recommends that the faculty and the administration at USC undertake an effort to clearly define and document the shared governance roles, rights and responsibilities of the faculty. (CFR 3.10)

### **Component 9: Reflection and Plans for Improvement**

USC is the first institution of higher learning to open in Southern California and it serves a diverse and dynamic region. The institution has a long history of combining a traditional education in arts and letters with applied and professional programs that are both unique and of outstanding quality. In addition, USC has a longstanding commitment to the public good, and invests in extensive public outreach and community service partnerships with a goal of advancing society and elevating humanity.

The themes that USC chose to highlight for this thematic review, “Fostering the Inclusive Spirit” and “Fostering the Convergent Spirit,” were found to permeate every aspect of the USC teaching and research missions, as well as university operations. The alignment of the entire leadership team around these themes and the strategic focus that they provided for the new administration deeply impressed the team.

USC faced unprecedented challenges in 2017-2019, and the thoughtfulness with which the institution is embracing the need to change its culture, along with changes to governance structures and processes, is truly impressive. Even more impressive is how the articulated themes are providing the guideposts to the future for the culture and governance changes that are taking place. There is no part of the institution that is untouched. Perhaps most striking, is the clarity with which the USC community

articulates that there is much “Culture Journey” work left to do. The review team was left with no doubt that the USC community is committed to completing that work.

As USC looks to its future, the team saw an impressive degree of creativity and collaboration and a shared sense of values that can inform improvements. Starting from the newly articulated six values, USC is taking very deliberate steps to build a culture, grounded in solid values, that will support its ambitions for inclusivity and convergence. Efforts on these fronts are moving forward with remarkable speed.

USC has outlined next steps on its journey. These include increasing access and affordability, efforts to make sustainability central to university operations, deepening public partnerships, and pursuing bold ideas and leading the imagination economy. Each of these initiatives is grounded in the core values and is being implemented in alignment with the identified thematic pathways. The team is confident that the next accreditation team will have the opportunity to review and document an institution grounded in values, inspired by its mission, and confident in its ability to make the world better.

### **SECTION III – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TEAM REVIEW**

USC has conducted a thorough internal review and examination of its chosen themes to fulfill the intended outcomes of the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation. The team recognizes the challenges of the pandemic disruption, this new remote review process, and the TPR. The institution’s comprehensive approach to produce an institutional report, to provide the team additional evidence, and to ensure a wide range of faculty, staff and student participation in the remote visit, reflects the institution’s commitment to standards and more importantly, to strengthening educational effectiveness. This closing section discusses the team’s commendations and recommendations.



## Commendations

The team commends the University of Southern California for the following:

1. Commitment, energy, approachability, clarity of purpose, and fearlessness, of the new USC leadership team, which is the most diverse in the history of the university. The team observed excellent alignment across the senior leadership team and believes this is the leadership that USC needs at this moment of its history.
2. Consistency of understanding throughout the institution that there is much “Culture Journey” work left to do and that the community is committed to doing it.
3. Greater inclusion of faculty, staff and students in all important university committees.
4. Strong articulation of the six values and robust discussions of what those values mean in day-to-day interactions among all members of the USC community.
5. Alignment of the six values into the strong “Trojan Family” identity.
6. The “Inclusive Spirit” theme that is embedded and embraced broadly throughout the institution.
7. The “Convergent Spirit” theme that has a solid foundation and a strong commitment to extend and improve interdisciplinary study and new program development.
8. Impressive degrees of creativity and collaboration on the institution’s two TPR themes and the opportunity the work provided to create productive spaces for addressing the urgent accountability and transparency issues confronting the university.
9. The strong partnerships (both long term and emerging opportunities) that have been formed with the local LA community.

10. Improving the structure and clarifying the governance roles of the Board of Trustees resulting in the new senior leadership team gaining the Board's unqualified support.
11. Ensuring that the leading edge of change at USC is moving with remarkable speed.

Recommendations:

The team has identified the following six recommendations to focus USC's ongoing efforts:

1. There is great optimism that the new governance structure of the Board of Trustees is thoughtfully designed to ensure greater oversight and that it will carry USC forward. The team recommends that the Board consider whether adding more academic expertise could amplify its effectiveness (CFR 3.9; WSCUC Governing Board Policy and WSCUC Governing Board Policy Implementation Guide).
2. The problem of faculty fatigue surfaced, which highlighted the need to grow the pool of faculty understood to be leading the culture change, especially in the area of inclusion. The team recommends targeted outreach to the less connected faculty so that they can be effectively engaged in the change processes (CFR 3.6, 3.10).
3. In order to ensure that the faculty exercises effective academic leadership, the team recommends that shared governance be clearly defined, including respective roles, rights, and responsibilities. It is also critically important that faculty engage in the shared governance process (CFR 3.10).
4. The size and complexity of the university is a strength and a challenge. Heretofore, size allowed for multiple cultures without the lift from an integrated approach to culture. The team recommends that a system (beyond auditing) be developed to record, track and measure the

effectiveness of culture change initiatives across campus. This system needs accountability and coordination, as well as transparency to the entire USC community (CFR 4.6).

5. As the “Inclusive Spirit” theme evolves, the team recommends that USC pay more attention to developmental organizational change and organizational structures. Given that the meaning and application of inclusion varies by age, generation, socioeconomic differences, nationality, and field of study, building that understanding into an inclusion framework will aid implementation and assessment (CFRs 1.4, 4.6, 4.7).
6. USC generally attracts students with strong interdisciplinary interests and many pursue double majors and minors to advance their educational goals. However, students and some faculty expressed concern that current advising approaches and technology systems may not be effectively serving students' convergent interests, particularly first-generation students with less experience navigating academic structures. The team recommends that USC develop advising practices and technology systems that will support goals for convergence, inclusion and timely degree completion (CFR 2.12).

## Appendix A: Federal Compliance Forms

**OVERVIEW** There are four forms that WSCUC uses to address institutional compliance with some of the federal regulations affecting institutions and accrediting agencies:

- 1 – Credit Hour and Program Length Review Form
- 2 – Marketing and Recruitment Review Form
- 3 – Student Complaints Form
- 4 – Transfer Credit Policy Form

During the visit, teams complete these four forms and add them as an appendix to the Team Report. Teams are not required to include a narrative about any of these matters in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings, Commendations, and Recommendations section of the team report.

### 1 - CREDIT HOUR AND PROGRAM LENGTH REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulations, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's credit hour policy and processes as well as the lengths of its programs.

#### **Credit Hour - §602.24(f)**

The accrediting agency, as part of its review of an institution for renewal of accreditation, must conduct an effective review and evaluation of the reliability and accuracy of the institution's assignment of credit hours.

(1)The accrediting agency meets this requirement if-

(i)It reviews the institution's-

(A)Policies and procedures for determining the credit hours, as defined in 34 CFR 600.2, that the institution awards for courses and programs; and

(B)The application of the institution's policies and procedures to its programs and coursework; and

(ii)Makes a reasonable determination of whether the institution's assignment of credit hours conforms to commonly accepted practice in higher education.

(2)In reviewing and evaluating an institution's policies and procedures for determining credit hour assignments, an accrediting agency may use sampling or other methods in the evaluation.

**Credit hour** is defined by the Department of Education as follows:

A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than—

(1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or (2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

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

**Program Length - §602.16(a)(1)(viii)**

Program length may be seen as one of several measures of quality and as a proxy measure for scope of the objectives of degrees or credentials offered. Traditionally offered degree programs are generally approximately 120 semester credit hours for a bachelor’s degree, and 30 semester credit hours for a master's degree; there is greater variation at the doctoral level depending on the type of program. For programs offered in non-traditional formats, for which program length is not a relevant and/or reliable quality measure, reviewers should ensure that available information clearly defines desired program outcomes and graduation requirements, that institutions are ensuring that program outcomes are achieved, and that there is a reasonable correlation between the scope of these outcomes and requirements and those typically found in traditionally offered degrees or programs tied to program length.

Rev 03/2015

**1 - Credit Hour and Program Length Review Form**

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Policy on credit hour	Is this policy easily accessible? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, where is the policy located? <a href="https://arr.usc.edu/services/classroomscheduling/contacthours.html">https://arr.usc.edu/services/classroomscheduling/contacthours.html</a>
	Comments: Easily accessible, bold and upfront on how it is calculated. Other links (PDF form) with duplicate information: <a href="https://arr.usc.edu/forms/ContactHourPolicy.pdf">https://arr.usc.edu/forms/ContactHourPolicy.pdf</a> <a href="https://arr.usc.edu/forms/ContactHoursReference.pdf">https://arr.usc.edu/forms/ContactHoursReference.pdf</a>
Process(es)/ periodic review of credit hour	Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: Policy, Process, & Guidelines on Periodic Review, New Course Development/Approval Process, Etc: <a href="https://arr.usc.edu/forms/Curriculum%20Handbook%202020.pdf">https://arr.usc.edu/forms/Curriculum%20Handbook%202020.pdf</a>  Featured on Page 16: G. University Committee on Curriculum (UCOC) The University Committee on Curriculum (UCOC) meets monthly, usually on the first Wednesday of the month from September through May. It considers larger questions of policy. It also acts on proposals in the following situations: • Subcommittee refers the decision to UCOC. • Subcommittee denies the proposal, and the department asks UCOC to review. • Department asks UCOC to review a proposal after the department responds to the subcommittee’s request (when a proposal was deferred to the chair) and the chair has not responded within a reasonable time frame. UCOC membership includes UCOC chair and all five subcommittee and panel chairs. Exofficio members are included from the following departments: Provost’s Office, Registrar, Financial Aid and Libraries. A member with expertise in online offerings also sometimes serves as an ex-officio member. The CCO representative serves the committee and records and communicates the decisions made by UCOC.
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: The Schedule of Classes shows when all classes meet and also differentiates the “location” of classes as synchronous online, asynchronous online, mixed online, hybrid, (blank = on-campus), or off campus.
	Schedule of Classes: <a href="https://classes.usc.edu/">https://classes.usc.edu/</a>

	<p>Example of meeting schedule: <a href="https://web-app.usc.edu/ws/soc_archive/soc/term-20193/classes/acct/">https://web-app.usc.edu/ws/soc_archive/soc/term-20193/classes/acct/</a></p> <p>Example Syllabi: BA/BS level: <a href="https://web-app.usc.edu/soc/syllabus/20193/37816.pdf">https://web-app.usc.edu/soc/syllabus/20193/37816.pdf</a></p>
<p>Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i></p>	<p>How many syllabi were reviewed? 2</p>
	<p>What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? BOTH</p>
	<p>What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral</p>
	<p>What discipline(s)? Business Entrepreneurship-Bachelor; Spatial Sciences-Master;</p>
	<p>Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>
	<p>Comments: Resource consulted: Syllabi: <a href="https://web-app.usc.edu/soc/syllabus/20203/14379.pdf">https://web-app.usc.edu/soc/syllabus/20203/14379.pdf</a> (online - Bachelor) <a href="https://web-app.usc.edu/soc/syllabus/20203/35729.pdf">https://web-app.usc.edu/soc/syllabus/20203/35729.pdf</a> (hybrid - Master)</p> <p>Sample Syllabi doc: <a href="https://arr.usc.edu/forms/USC-Syllabus-Template.docx">https://arr.usc.edu/forms/USC-Syllabus-Template.docx</a> Academic Conduct &amp; Support Systems (attached to every syllabus): <a href="https://arr.usc.edu/forms/USCStatementAcademicConductSupportSystems.docx">https://arr.usc.edu/forms/USCStatementAcademicConductSupportSystems.docx</a> Syllabus Errors to Avoid: <a href="https://arr.usc.edu/forms/ChecklistTop10SyllabusErrorstoAvoid.pdf">https://arr.usc.edu/forms/ChecklistTop10SyllabusErrorstoAvoid.pdf</a> Contact Hour Policy: <a href="https://arr.usc.edu/forms/ContactHourPolicy.pdf">https://arr.usc.edu/forms/ContactHourPolicy.pdf</a> Other resources &amp; considerations for Syllabi/Course Development: <a href="https://arr.usc.edu/services/curriculum/resources.html">https://arr.usc.edu/services/curriculum/resources.html</a></p>

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
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) <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	How many syllabi were reviewed? 4
	What kinds of courses? Independent study, clinical
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA - Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Spatial Sciences-Bachelor, Cinematic Arts-Bachelor, Management & Organization-Master, Nursing-Master
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: Comments: Internship for credit: <a href="https://web-app.usc.edu/soc/syllabus/20203/35626.pdf">https://web-app.usc.edu/soc/syllabus/20203/35626.pdf</a> (Bachelor - Spatial Sciences)  Consulting project: <a href="https://web-app.usc.edu/soc/syllabus/20211/16739.doc">https://web-app.usc.edu/soc/syllabus/20211/16739.doc</a> (Master - Management & Organization)  Practicum: <a href="https://web-app.usc.edu/soc/syllabus/20211/18528.pdf">https://web-app.usc.edu/soc/syllabus/20211/18528.pdf</a> (Bachelor - Television Production Cinematic Arts) <a href="https://web-app.usc.edu/soc/syllabus/20202/69050.doc">https://web-app.usc.edu/soc/syllabus/20202/69050.doc</a> (Master - Nursing Clinical)
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	How many programs were reviewed? 3
	What kinds of programs were reviewed? BA/BS, Master, Doctoral <a href="https://rossier.usc.edu/programs/doctoral/">https://rossier.usc.edu/programs/doctoral/</a> (Education Doctoral) <a href="https://viterbigradadmission.usc.edu/programs/masters/msprograms/">https://viterbigradadmission.usc.edu/programs/masters/msprograms/</a> (Engineering Master) <a href="https://dornsife.usc.edu/fren-ital/why-french/">https://dornsife.usc.edu/fren-ital/why-french/</a> (French Bachelor)
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Education-Doctoral, Engineering-Master, French-Bachelor
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: Reviewed, <a href="https://rossier.usc.edu/programs/doctoral/">https://rossier.usc.edu/programs/doctoral/</a> (Education Doctoral) <a href="https://viterbigradadmission.usc.edu/programs/masters/msprograms/">https://viterbigradadmission.usc.edu/programs/masters/msprograms/</a> (Engineering Master) <a href="https://dornsife.usc.edu/fren-ital/why-french/">https://dornsife.usc.edu/fren-ital/why-french/</a>

Review Completed By: Jillian Kinzie Date: March 30, 2021

## 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	<p>Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments:  <a href="https://policy.usc.edu/conflict-of-interest/">https://policy.usc.edu/conflict-of-interest/</a>  <a href="https://about.usc.edu/policies/">https://about.usc.edu/policies/</a>  <a href="https://policy.usc.edu/ethics/">https://policy.usc.edu/ethics/</a></p> <p>Policies are clearly stated, but the highly publicized admission scandal "Varsity Blues" demonstrates abuses at USC.</p>												
Degree completion and cost	<p>Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>A four-year degree is average for an undergraduate degree, although it really depends on the course of study, degree type, unit requirements, General Education, and other requirements. The Catalogue explains the graduation requirements here: <a href="https://catalogue.usc.edu/content.php?catoid=12&amp;navoid=3976">https://catalogue.usc.edu/content.php?catoid=12&amp;navoid=3976</a></p> <p>From <a href="https://about.usc.edu/facts">https://about.usc.edu/facts</a></p> <p>Six-Year Graduation Rate (Student Right-to-Know*)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>2020 (Fall 2013 freshman class)</td> <td>92%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019 (Fall 2013 freshman class)</td> <td>91%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2018 (Fall 2012 freshman class)</td> <td>92%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2017 (Fall 2011 freshman class)</td> <td>92%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016 (Fall 2010 freshman class)</td> <td>92%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015 (Fall 2009 freshman class)</td> <td>92%</td> </tr> </table> <p>*Student Right-to-Know refers to a federally mandated disclosure of a college's graduation rate. Its intent is to provide prospective students and their parents with a statistic of comparable effectiveness that can be used in determining college choice. USC's current graduation rate is based on full-time, first-time, degree-seeking undergraduates who entered the university in the fall semester and graduated within six years of attendance (150% of the normal completion time). Graduation rates do not include students who left school to serve in the armed forces or on official church missions or with a foreign aid service of the federal government, or students who died or were totally and permanently disabled.</p> <p>Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments:            How much will my education cost? <a href="https://financialaid.usc.edu/undergraduates/admitted/how-much-will-my-education-cost.html">https://financialaid.usc.edu/undergraduates/admitted/how-much-will-my-education-cost.html</a>            UCan Profile: <a href="http://members.ucan-network.org/usc">http://members.ucan-network.org/usc</a>            College Navigator Multi Year Expense: <a href="https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?id=123961#expenses">https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?id=123961#expenses</a></p>	2020 (Fall 2013 freshman class)	92%	2019 (Fall 2013 freshman class)	91%	2018 (Fall 2012 freshman class)	92%	2017 (Fall 2011 freshman class)	92%	2016 (Fall 2010 freshman class)	92%	2015 (Fall 2009 freshman class)	92%
2020 (Fall 2013 freshman class)	92%												
2019 (Fall 2013 freshman class)	91%												
2018 (Fall 2012 freshman class)	92%												
2017 (Fall 2011 freshman class)	92%												
2016 (Fall 2010 freshman class)	92%												
2015 (Fall 2009 freshman class)	92%												
Careers and employment	<p>Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><a href="https://careers.usc.edu/students/explore-careers/">https://careers.usc.edu/students/explore-careers/</a></p>												



	Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: <a href="https://viterbicareers.usc.edu/firstdestination/">https://viterbicareers.usc.edu/firstdestination/</a> <a href="https://www.marshall.usc.edu/sites/default/files/2017-03/USCM_MBA-CSC_Employment-Data_SP_110216_v07-3.pdf">https://www.marshall.usc.edu/sites/default/files/2017-03/USCM_MBA-CSC_Employment-Data_SP_110216_v07-3.pdf</a> <a href="https://pharmacyschool.usc.edu/programs/pharmd/pharmdprogram/graduation-and-post-graduation-data/">https://pharmacyschool.usc.edu/programs/pharmd/pharmdprogram/graduation-and-post-graduation-data/</a> <a href="https://annenberglaw.usc.edu/current-students/career-development/placement-report">https://annenberglaw.usc.edu/current-students/career-development/placement-report</a> <a href="https://gould.usc.edu/careers/jd/students/statistics/">https://gould.usc.edu/careers/jd/students/statistics/</a> <a href="https://careers.usc.edu/files/2019/08/Executive-Summary-2019_v7.pdf">https://careers.usc.edu/files/2019/08/Executive-Summary-2019_v7.pdf</a>

\*§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: Jillian Kinzie Date: March 30, 2021

### 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	<p>Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If so, is the policy or procedure easily accessible? <u>YES</u> If so, where?</p> <p>USC Centralized office for complaints – Office of Professionalism &amp; Ethics:  <a href="https://report.usc.edu/">https://report.usc.edu/</a></p> <p>Title IX/Office of Equity and Diversity:  <a href="https://eotix.usc.edu/policy/">https://eotix.usc.edu/policy/</a>  <a href="https://policy.usc.edu/files/2020/08/Policy-on-Prohibited-Discrimination-Harassment-and-Retaliation-8.14.204.pdf">https://policy.usc.edu/files/2020/08/Policy-on-Prohibited-Discrimination-Harassment-and-Retaliation-8.14.204.pdf</a></p> <p>Report compliance issues:  <a href="https://app.mycompliancereport.com/report.aspx?cid=uosc">https://app.mycompliancereport.com/report.aspx?cid=uosc</a></p> <p>Research &amp; Scholarship Misconduct: <a href="https://policy.usc.edu/research-and-scholarship-misconduct/">https://policy.usc.edu/research-and-scholarship-misconduct/</a></p> <p>Scientific Misconduct: <a href="https://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/">https://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/</a></p> <p>SCampus:            See Part A(<a href="https://policy.usc.edu/files/2020/07/SCampus-Part-A-1.pdf">https://policy.usc.edu/files/2020/07/SCampus-Part-A-1.pdf</a>), Section 4, for concerns related to equal opportunity, affirmative action, and discrimination. • See Part C for concerns related to disputed academic evaluations. • See Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation for concerns related to sexual, interpersonal and protected class misconduct.</p> <p>Ferpa complaint:  <a href="https://arr.usc.edu/records/ferpa/#complaints">https://arr.usc.edu/records/ferpa/#complaints</a></p> <p>Correction of grade/removal of incomplete process:  <a href="https://arr.usc.edu/services/grades/gradinghandbook.html">https://arr.usc.edu/services/grades/gradinghandbook.html</a></p> <p>Disability (DSP) concerns:  <a href="https://dsp.usc.edu/about-dsp/resolving-concerns/">https://dsp.usc.edu/about-dsp/resolving-concerns/</a></p>
Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Process(es)/ procedure	<p>Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If so, please describe briefly:            The central way would be to start with “Who do I call if” which addresses complaints for a myriad of out of compliance topics, including research funds, Title IX, Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, FERPA, etc.</p> <p>If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>

	<p>Comments: Place to start is: <a href="https://report.usc.edu/">https://report.usc.edu/</a></p> <p>“Who do I call if...”: <a href="https://ooc.usc.edu/who-do-i-call-if/">https://ooc.usc.edu/who-do-i-call-if/</a> Contact Help and Hotline by phone at (213) 740-2500.</p> <p>Student-based: <a href="https://sjacs.usc.edu/students/report/">https://sjacs.usc.edu/students/report/</a></p> <p>Title IX/Office of Equity and Diversity: <a href="https://eeotix.usc.edu/report/">https://eeotix.usc.edu/report/</a></p> <p>Report compliance issues anonymously. Hotline also listed: <a href="https://app.mycompliancereport.com/report.aspx?cid=uosc">https://app.mycompliancereport.com/report.aspx?cid=uosc</a></p> <p>Scientific Misconduct Allegations: <a href="https://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/">https://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/</a> 4.1 Receipt of an Allegation 4.1.1 Making an Allegation. An individual with an allegation of research misconduct involving a USC faculty member, staff, or student employee may make an allegation orally or in writing, and must bring the allegation to either the <a href="#">Vice President of Research</a> or the <a href="#">University Compliance Officer</a>.</p> <p>Ferpa complaint: <a href="https://arr.usc.edu/records/ferpa/#complaints">https://arr.usc.edu/records/ferpa/#complaints</a></p> <p>Disability (DSP) filing a reconsideration request or an intervention request: <a href="https://dsp.usc.edu/about-dsp/resolving-concerns/#request-for-dsp-review">https://dsp.usc.edu/about-dsp/resolving-concerns/#request-for-dsp-review</a></p> <p>Sexual Assault: <a href="https://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault/">https://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault/</a></p> <p>Trojans Care 4 Trojans (Anonymous reporting): <a href="https://usc-advocate.symphlicity.com/care_report/index.php/pid450159?">https://usc-advocate.symphlicity.com/care_report/index.php/pid450159?</a></p> <p>Report an Environmental Health safety concern: <a href="https://ehs.usc.edu/report-a-safety-concern-form/">https://ehs.usc.edu/report-a-safety-concern-form/</a></p> <p>Student Health complaint/concern: <a href="https://uscstudentaffairs.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dbZ8pP8Y1teFI8J?Q_JFE=qdg">https://uscstudentaffairs.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dbZ8pP8Y1teFI8J?Q_JFE=qdg</a></p> <p>Anonymous reporting for all &amp; other subject matter (including Athletics, Culture, Professionalism, &amp; Ethics): <a href="https://report.usc.edu/how-to-report/">https://report.usc.edu/how-to-report/</a></p>
Records	<p>Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where? Policy: <a href="https://policy.usc.edu/record-management/">https://policy.usc.edu/record-management/</a> Official repositories have been established for the following types of records:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employment and Payroll</li> <li>▪ Business and Financial</li> <li>▪ Student</li> <li>▪ Research</li> <li>▪ Donor</li> <li>▪ Archival</li> </ul> <p>President and Provost Offices: Complaints are maintained in Outlook folders if the complaint originated to a Provost or President email account or was copied in.</p>

<p>Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If so, please describe briefly:  The Office of Professionalism and Ethics (OPE) serves as a centralized clearinghouse for complaints and the subsequent tracking of those complaints at USC for both campuses and all university programs and affiliates. The office also provides oversight of investigations.</p>
<p>Comments:</p> <p>Individuals are encouraged to report complaints directly to OPE through this website 24-hours a day, by emailing <a href="mailto:ope@usc.edu">ope@usc.edu</a> or by calling (213) 740-5755. When OPE receives a complaint, the staff reviews the information provided and assigns it to the appropriate investigative office (such as the Office of Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX, Human Resources and Faculty Affairs), ensuring a timely resolution is reached in accordance with established procedures.</p>

\*§602-16(1)(1)(ix)

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

Review Completed By: Jillian Kinzie Date: March 30, 2021

#### 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? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, is the policy publicly available? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where?
	<a href="https://admission.usc.edu/apply/transfer-students/#/credit-policies">https://admission.usc.edu/apply/transfer-students/#/credit-policies</a>
	Undergraduate Transfer Credit: <a href="https://arr.usc.edu/services/articulation/generalinfo.html">https://arr.usc.edu/services/articulation/generalinfo.html</a> Graduate Transfer Credit: <a href="https://arr.usc.edu/services/degree-progress/graduatetransfercredit.html">https://arr.usc.edu/services/degree-progress/graduatetransfercredit.html</a>
	Multiple Articulation Officers are in charge of reviewing transfer courses.
	Does the policy(s) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	<p>Comments:</p> <p>For undergraduate policies, general criteria are listed here: <a href="https://admission.usc.edu/apply/transfer-students/#/credit-policies">https://admission.usc.edu/apply/transfer-students/#/credit-policies</a> Specific criteria are listed at the bottom of each reciprocal Articulation Agreement with various 2- and 4-year institutions: <a href="https://camel2.usc.edu/articagrmnt/artic.aspx">https://camel2.usc.edu/articagrmnt/artic.aspx</a> The Transfer Planning Guide also details which units will/might transfer: <a href="https://camel2.usc.edu/TPG/default.aspx">https://camel2.usc.edu/TPG/default.aspx</a></p> <p>For graduate policies, criteria are listed here: <a href="https://arr.usc.edu/services/degree-progress/graduatetransfercredit.html">https://arr.usc.edu/services/degree-progress/graduatetransfercredit.html</a></p> <p>Petition of Transfer Credit: <a href="https://arr.usc.edu/services/articulation/petition_procedures.html">https://arr.usc.edu/services/articulation/petition_procedures.html</a></p>

\*§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: Jillian Kinzie Date: March 30, 2021

## Appendix B: Off-Campus Locations Review

Institution: University of Southern California

Type of Visit: Virtual Visit to Review Additional Location or Branch Campus

Name of reviewer/s: Lisa Coleman

Date/s of review:

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report for all visits in which off-campus sites were reviewed<sup>1</sup>. One form should be used for each site visited. Teams are not required to include a narrative about this matter in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings and Recommendations section of the team report.

1. Site Name and Address

**USC Gayle Garner Roski School of Art and Design, Graduate Programs**

Mateo Campus (location is 5.5 miles from University Park Campus)

USC Roski School of Art and Design

1262 Palmetto, Suite 515

Los Angeles, CA 90013

2. Background Information (number of programs offered at this site; degree levels; FTE of faculty and enrollment; brief history at this site; designation as a branch campus standalone location, or satellite location by WSCUC)

**Master of Fine Arts, Design**

2 year / 5-semester program (including summer) / 56-units

40 students

**Master of Fine Arts, Art**

2 year / 5-semester program (including summer) / 48-units

11 students

**Master of Art, Curatorial Practices and the Public Sphere**

2 year/ 39-units

12 students

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

***Onsite Academic Administration***

Dean Haven Lin-Kirk

Vice Dean Amelia Jones, Robert A. Day Professor of Art and Design

Nao Bustamante, MFA Art Director, Professor

Karen Moss, MA Curatorial Practices and the Public Sphere Director, Professor of Teaching

Ewa Wojciak, MFA Design Director, Associate Professor of Practice

***Onsite Faculty***

April Greiman, Visiting Professor of Design

Mary Kelly, Judge Widney Professor of Art

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<sup>1</sup> See Protocol for Review of Off-Campus Sites to determine whether and how many sites will be visited.

Suzanne Lacy, Professor of Art  
 Jenny Lin, Associate Professor of Critical Studies

**Onsite Staff**

Antonio Bartolome, Student Services Manager  
 Timmy Chen, Mateo Makerspace Manager  
 Nazeli Hosik, Graduate Program Specialist  
 Juan Morales, Facilities Technician

**Offsite Faculty (50% or less – UPC campus)**

Edgar Arceneaux, Associate Professor, Art  
 Laurie Burruss, Adjunct Faculty, Design  
 Andrew Campbell, Assistant Professor, Critical Studies  
 Patty Chang, Professor, Art  
 Penny Collins, Adjunct Faculty, Design  
 Alice Fung, Associate Professor of Practice, Design  
 Sherin Guirguis, Associate Professor of Practice of Art and Design  
 David Kelley, Associate Professor of Practice of Art and Design  
 Keith Mayerson, Professor, Art  
 Thomas Müller, Associate Professor of Teaching, Art  
 Ruben Ochoa, Associate Professor of Practice, Art  
 Brian O’Connell, Assistant Professor of Teaching, Design  
 Anuradha Vikram, Adjunct Faculty of Critical Studies  
 Jennifer West, Associate Professor of Practice, Art  
 Alexis Zoto, Assistant Professor of Teaching, Design

**Offsite Administrative/Staff Support (50% or less)**

Yvette Guangorena, HR / Payroll Coordinator  
 Jean Lee, Special Project Manager, Interim Development Director  
 Kirsten Schmidt, Communications Manager  
 Lissa Sanders, Senior Budget Analyst  
 Cindy Tsukamoto, Dean’s Assistant  
 Raquel Yarber, University Shared Services Senior Business Officer

**Offsite Staff Studio / Lab Access / IT Support (50% or less)**

Hayk Avetisyan, IT Manager  
 Raymond Marquez, Facilities Manager  
 Juan Morales, Facilities Technician  
 Oscar Yustman, Woodshop Technician  
 Nikhil Murthy, Lead Lab Technician  
 Michael Schroads, Arts Lab Technician

Lines of Inquiry	Observations and Findings	Follow-up Required (identify the issues)
<p><i>For a recently approved site.</i> Has the institution followed up on the recommendations</p>	<p>Additional Location or Branch Campus report was submitted on 2018 with minimal changes suggested.</p> <p>In 2020, the campus was expanded to include an additional 10,000 square feet bringing all USC Roski graduate programs onto one location/facility.</p>	

<p>from the substantive change committee that approved this new site?</p>		
<p><i>Fit with Mission.</i> How does the institution conceive of this and other off-campus sites relative to its mission, operations, and administrative structure? How is the site planned and operationalized? (CFRs 1.2, 3.1, 3.5, 4.1)</p>	<p>There clearly has been a great deal of work in this area and the physical location has very clearly been helpful in bringing arts programs together in one space. The open spaces help to facilitate collaboration and are located in the heart of the arts district.</p>	
<p><i>Connection to the Institution.</i> How visible and deep is the presence of the institution at the off-campus site? In what ways does the institution integrate off-campus students into the life and culture of the institution? (CFRs 1.2, 2.10)</p>	<p>The Mateo Campus has three graduate directors (MFA Design, MFA Art, and MA), dedicated graduate staff members all housed on the Mateo campus. USC Roski personnel are available Monday-Friday from 9am to 6 pm (twice a week until 9pm). The Dean of the USC Roski School, holds regular office hours and director meetings onsite and has a permanent office in the Mateo building. Additional administrative support is available on an as-needed basis, with increased office hours during registration, thesis reviews, and during end of the year reviews. Additional USC Roski and university services (such as fabrication labs and USC Libraries) are also available to students at the USC campus during regular business hours and by appointment. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in museum and gallery exhibitions, Visions &amp; Voices programming and other university events.</p> <p>These types of programs and events were very well described by the community members and were clearly highly engaged.</p> <p>Students have access to enter the Mateo Campus studio and makerspace areas through card access and during COVID, the program has allowed “one-off” requests to students with health and safety protocols in place. <a href="https://we-are.usc.edu">https://we-are.usc.edu</a></p> <p>Onsite security is available at the Mateo site 24/7. Specific equipment use is limited to regular business hours (e.g., laser-cutter and select hand tools). The students have access to all current full-time design faculty, program directors and the Vice Dean of Research, through individual studies and appointments at either the Mateo Campus or the University Park Campus. MFA Art students are given individual locked studio workspaces with key card access. During COVID, hours have been limited from 8am to 10pm, Mon – Sun, with social distancing restrictions enforced.</p>	



	<p>The Mateo Campus is subject to all institutional policies and procedures related to faculty and staff recruitment, hiring, promotion, etc. The graduate students will be subject to the same policies and procedures as University Park Campus (UPC) students, as described in the <i>Student Handbook</i>. And the Mateo Campus is subject to all academic policies and procedures as outlined in the <i>USC Catalogue</i>.</p> <p>There was also discussion of value integration and the importance of ensuring that the six values of the “Culture Journey” are embedded within all of the work of the Roski campus.</p>	
<p><i>Quality of the Learning Site.</i> How does the physical environment foster learning and faculty-student contact? What kind of oversight ensures that the off-campus site is well managed? (CFRs 1.8, 2.1, 2.5, 3.1, 3.5)</p>	<p>All of USC Roski Graduate Programs are located in the newly renovated Mateo complex, centrally placed in the Arts District of Los Angeles. Located in one of the most vibrant and dynamic art districts in Southern California, the expansion enabled the school to present arts programming and public events within a vibrant art hub. The exhibitions, workshops, and events contribute to the existing creative community and have brought added visibility to the growing USC Roski School programs.</p> <p>The 25,000-square-foot campus features a graduate gallery, 16 private MFA Art studios, open concept studios for the MFA Design students, the Philion Roundtable (project space) for MA students, a makerspace, classrooms, a dedicated artist/designer in resident studio area, and conference and collaboration spaces all outfitted with state-of-the-art equipment and technologies.</p> <p>The reception area sets the tone for the entirety of the space with natural elements and clean lines complemented by a neutral color palette which establishes the backdrop for professional-quality exhibitions showcasing Roski’s emerging artists and curators. Directly adjacent to the main lobby area is the 2,000 sq. foot gallery which is designed to showcase the students’ talent and reinforces the purpose of the space as well as provide a viewing from the street view.</p> <p>The two dedicated classrooms that support graduate programs are modular and designed to have the flexibility to convert into one large classroom or meeting room. One of the hallmarks of the graduate school is the Roski Talks lecture series, which is open to the public (and will resume post-pandemic) and brings in residents from the community. They have experimented with remote opportunities this year.</p> <p>Students described these spaces as very important to collaboration and learning. Additionally, there are opportunities for new innovation with community, public and peers.</p> <p>The classrooms are equipped with a Multi-Format Matrix Switcher, laser projectors and retractable projection screens, microphones, and JBL pedestal speakers. The system is controlled via touch panels offering wireless or wired connections for presentations. The classroom and audiovisual technology can be split into two separate spaces or combined for larger events. The classroom walls are designed all be usable as</p>	

writable Idea paint or projection walls and the large retractable divider wall has a blackboard surface. Workable walls are found throughout the building.

Another dedicated instruction area is the Makerspace, a fabrication room designed for both digital and traditional creation. The Makerspace is equipped with state-of-the-art output and fabrication equipment, including a 3D Systems ProJet CJP 360 3D Powder Printer, Stratasys Fortus 250mc 3D Printer, Makerbot Replicator Desktop 3D Printer, RISO SF9450 Printer, Cameo Silhouette, as well as a Roland CAMM-1 Large Format Vinyl Cutter and a Boss LS-3655 Industrial Laser. In addition, there is an equipment check out area, allowing students to utilize multiple technological resources in their artistic process.

The Makerspace is also equipped with workspace tables, Apple iMacs, guillotine and rotary paper trimmers, heat-set machine and an equipment checkout cage where students can checkout various A/V gear and tools.

The two conference rooms are designed to be used as meeting rooms or project spaces. The main conference room is equipped with a Matrix Switcher, touch screen controller, 82-inch monitor, PTZ wide angle lens conference camera, in ceiling JBL speakers and a conference phone. The conference room is configured for BYOD wired or wireless connectivity for conference calls or presentations.

The Pillion Round Table conference room is reserved for the MA program and its students. It is equipped with a Matrix Switcher, touch screen controller, 75-inch monitor, and PTZ wide angle lens conference camera. The conference room is configured for BYOD wired or wireless connectivity for conference calls or presentations. Both conference rooms have usable whiteboard (Idea paint) and blackboard wall surfaces.

Design faculty offices are located around the central open floor studio areas. Art faculty offices are located near the students' art studios and the faculty offices for the MA are located directly surrounding the Pillion Round Table. All faculty offices are designed with large windows facing towards student areas and the open floor plan for easy access and to encourage community access.

Throughout the space, natural elements such as continual concrete floors are conducive to the school's artistic environment. The open concept floor plan throughout the building has 18' ceilings and vast lighting fixtures which transforms the space into a spacious and bright environment and aesthetically lends itself to collaboration and inspiration.

Due to the sensitive nature of the art inhabiting the space, proper lighting and heat control are crucial to keeping the integrity of the students' work with sensors and controllable thermostats in individual zones. The workspace includes generously sized 4' x 8' Herman Miller desks and Eames chairs; reflecting historical and important advances in the design

field. The student dedicated (assigned studios/open studio area) is also adjacent to community areas to enrich the learning experience (computer landing area, student lounge, open kitchen area, “dirty” workspace, soundproof media editing room), and gallery.

The site has seven dedicated full-time faculty (including a director for each graduate program and three dedicated full-time staff permanently housed onsite. Dean Haven Lin-Kirk and Vice-Dean Amelia Jones also hold regularly scheduled meetings and office hours onsite. In addition, twelve full-time faculty, housed offsite, also teach through rotation and serve on graduate committees and nine offsite staff members support the programs. There are bi-monthly meetings with the graduate directors, Mateo staff members and the dean (during COVID these meetings have been virtual but increased to every other week or as needed). The directors also attend a monthly dean’s leadership meeting on UPC campus.

Community engagement with local artists and the Los Angeles artistic community is central to the location and the work of the students, staff, and faculty. Numerous examples were showcased during the virtual site visit in terms of student learning and collaborations including but not limited to programs focused on the homeless and arts, policing and arts, neighborhood revitalization, and much more.

*Student Support Services.* What is the site's capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services and other appropriate student services? Or how are these otherwise provided? What do data show about the effectiveness of these services? (CFRs 2.11-2.13, 3.6, 3.7)

### ***Academic Advising***

Academic advising and academic support by USC Roski Student Services office are available on the UPC, WAH 104 and USC ATM between M-F 9am-6pm for student appointments including walk-ins.

Ongoing advisement is provided through the directors, the Graduate Program Specialist, and through appointment by Student Services Manager, Antonio Bartolome.

When they reopen Mateo Campus' Business hours will be M-F 9am to 5pm onsite. Appointments are recommended and remote advisement is available where needed. Whenever convenient for students, advisement is also available at the UPC office in WAH 104 by appointment.

### ***Financial Aid Advising***

As is the case with all USC Roski students, MFA Design students will have full access to Title IV federal financial aid and advisement available through the USC.edu website and access to advisors on the UPC campus.

<https://financialaid.usc.edu/graduates/graduate-professionals.html>

### ***Career Placement Services***

All USC Roski students, have access to all of Career Placement services and resources, including [connectSC](#), [Career Advising appointments](#), workshops and [career events](#). Professional events and conferences are also offered throughout the year.

<https://careers.usc.edu/students/discover-resources/graduate-and-doctoral-student-resources/>

### ***Library and Access to Research Materials***

Library accounts are automatically created for all enrolled students. In addition, students have access to University Park Campus library systems (5.5 miles away). Complete information about USC Libraries is available here: <https://libraries.usc.edu/libraries-overview>.

USC Libraries play an integral role in the scholarly and artistic enterprises of the USC community. The libraries actively contribute to the development of knowledge and advancement of the global human community. All Roski students have access to the following libraries: Accounting, Architecture and Fine Arts Library, Cinematic Arts, Doheny Memorial, East Asian, Gaughan & Tiberti, Hoose Library of Philosophy, Leavey, Music, ONE Archives, Science & Engineering, Social Work Randall Information Center, USC's Special Collections, VKC, and others.

Libraries with collections with specific interest to USC Roski students include:

THE HELEN TOPING ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY  
<https://libraries.usc.edu/locations/architecture-and-fine-arts-library>

#### Location:

Watt Hall

*Faculty.* Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? In what ways does the institution ensure that off-campus faculty is involved in the academic oversight of the programs at this site? How do these faculty members participate in curriculum development and assessment of student learning? (CFRs 2.4, 3.1-3.4, 4.6)

All full-time USC Roski faculty are invited to participate in the graduate programs. Students routinely invite faculty for studio visits, to review exhibitions and to participate as committees. Graduate courses are taught primarily by full-time faculty with the exception of special topics/skills courses and by adjunct specialists.

The Roski Talks Lecture Series housed at Mateo, is open to the broader USC community and to the general public. In addition, Mateo offers many outside guest studio visits and lectures through a speaker series, which is designed to reflect the cohort’s interests.

The MFA Art program has a rotation cycle to include all Art faculty. It is a prized assignment and there is a great deal of interest by faculty to work with the graduate students. The size of each cohort is limited which enables direct feedback from the students. This allows the program to be designed in the most effective ways to meet the guidelines. There are several Roski faculty who currently teach in this area.

The MA Program has five full-time faculty that are all affiliated and regularly teach in the program . The Critical Studies faculty also develop and oversee thesis guidelines for the other graduate programs.

Graduate candidates in all three programs may invite any full-time faculty member to serve on their thesis committees with the Director’s approval.

[\(2020-2021 Course Catalogue\)](#)

[MFA Art Handbook](#)

[MFA Design Handbook](#)

[MA Curatorial Practices and the Public Sphere Handbook](#)

*Curriculum and Delivery.* Who designs the programs and courses at this site? How are they approved and evaluated? Are the programs and courses comparable in content, outcomes and quality to those on the main campus? (CFR 2.1-2.3, 4.6)

The Mateo Campus now houses all of the USC Roski School graduate programs. This has been crucial for not only centralizing, but allowing the curriculum development and school review to be under the guidance of the dean and graduate directors. Proposals are first made at the program level and opened to comment by all full-time Roski faculty. Revisions and new course and/or program changes are then reviewed by the Roski curriculum committee, Dean’s Leadership Cabinet and the Student Services Manager. Upon school approval, the proposal is then reviewed by the Office of the Provost and forwarded to the University Committee on Curriculum (UCOC) for university-wide faculty review. On the recommendation of the UCOC, the Provost approves program changes. Deadlines for program and course revisions are December and new courses in February for the following year.

<p><i>Retention and Graduation.</i> What data on retention and graduation are collected on students enrolled at this off-campus site? What do these data show? What disparities are evident? Are rates comparable to programs at the main campus? If any concerns exist, how are these being addressed? (CFRs 2.6, 2.10)</p>	<p>The USC Office of Institutional Research (OIR) actively collects data on retention and graduation. They track data related to time to complete degree, enrollment over time, number of degrees awarded, and persistence of enrolled students. This is in addition to data gathering collected on the departmental level. The MFA Art degree is long-standing and has gone through some curricular revisions. The MA degree (launched in 2015) is a new version of the former Public Art Studies program. The MFA Design degree had an inaugural class in 2018. Based on the recent data provided by the OIR, the graduate programs are on an upward trend in terms of integration of programs, community building, and retention. This supports the efforts to grow the programs. Leaders reflected that the use of data is crucial to all of the work they are doing to ensure persistence to graduation.</p>	
<p><i>Student Learning.</i> How does the institution assess student learning at off-campus sites? Is this process comparable to that used on the main campus? What are the results of student learning assessment? How do these compare with learning results from the main campus? (CFRs 2.6, 4.6, 4.7)</p>	<p>Student learning is assessed through grade performance in classes, faculty thesis committees and individual student reviews. All USC Roski graduate programs require a culminating project (exhibition, publication, or completed project) at the program’s end along with a written thesis. These are submitted to the USC Graduate School and found in the USC library database.</p> <p>The Mateo Campus is subject to and abides by all institutional policies and procedures as outlined by USC’s Graduate School and falls under the guidelines of all USC graduate programs. <a href="http://graduateschool.usc.edu">http://graduateschool.usc.edu</a></p> <p>The USC Roski graduate students are subject to the same policies and procedures as University Park Campus students, as described in the <i>SCAMPUS Student Handbook</i>. The Mateo Campus is beholden to all academic policies and procedures as outlined in the <i>USC Catalogue</i> and the USC Roski School does not distinguish the Mateo campus as a separate entity thus all academic and business operations fall under USC’s authority regardless of location.</p> <p>Many collaborations for students have been able to flourish with museums and community organizations.</p>	
<p><i>Quality Assurance Processes:</i> How are the institution’s quality assurance processes designed or modified to cover off-campus sites? What evidence is provided that off-campus programs and courses are educationally</p>	<p>Educational effectiveness is evaluated based on student learning, student success, and institutional learning and improvement. The faculty devised program-level learning objectives. Assessments are made through the review of student work (mid-program and final review) and assessment through in-class visits, teaching evaluations, and peer assessments, which are reviewed every year. These reviews occur once a term and are open to all USC Roski faculty. In addition to program-level learning objectives, each course has clearly stated goals and learning outcomes. Courses are evaluated according to faculty evaluations, class reviews, and student reviews. Results of all assessments are reviewed by the program director and discussed regularly with respective faculty. Student success is assessed by retention and graduation rates, but also extends to post-</p>	

effective? (CFRs 4.4-4.8)	graduate employment and career accomplishments, as the program keeps in close touch with, and receives feedback through surveys, focus groups, etc. from, alumni and the professional art/design communities. It is the intention to utilize this information to continue to build programs Finally, the program will be regularly reviewed through USC's program review process under the auspices of the University Committee on Academic Review (UCAR).	
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## Appendix C: Distance Education Review

Institution: USC

Type of Visit: Virtual Distance Education review

Name of reviewer/s: Bob Jacobsen, UC Berkeley

Date/s of review: Feb 23 – March 3 2021

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report for all comprehensive visits to institutions that offer distance education programs<sup>2</sup> and for other visits as applicable. Teams can use the institutional report to begin their investigation, then, use the visit to confirm claims and further surface possible concerns. Teams are not required to include a narrative about this in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings and Recommendations section of the team report. (If the institution offers only online courses, the team may use this form for reference but need not submit it as the team report is expected to cover distance education in depth in the body of the report.)

1. Programs and courses reviewed (please list)

Master of Science in Financial Engineering

Master of Business Taxation for Working Professionals

Master of Communications Management

Master of Science in Electrical Engineering

Master of Science in Electrical Engineering (Electric Power)

Doctorate of Physical Therapy

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

USC has 14 Schools, a total of 27 academic units, that are offering 114 online programs. Several more are being developed through a strong faculty-led approval process. These programs are at the doctoral, masters and certificate levels.

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

Programs and courses were reviewed through their web pages, course documentation (syllabi and representative assignments), and enrollment data. Discussion with:

Office of the Provost

- Michael B. Nichol, Professor of Public Policy and Pharmacy & Associate Vice Provost for Online Education

- Donna Garcia, Director of Academic Affairs

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<sup>2</sup> See Distance Education Review Guide to determine whether programs are subject to this process. In general only programs that are more than 50% online require review and reporting.



Annenberg School of Communication

- Rebecca Weintraub, Clinical Professor of Communication & Director, Communication Management Program
- Courtney Pade, Clinical Assistant Professor of Communication & Assistant Director, Communication Management Program, Annenberg Distance Learning
- Brad Shipley, Clinical Associate Professor of Communication
- Jessica Neff, Clinical Assistant Professor of Communication
- Nithya Muthuswamy, Clinical Assistant Professor of Communication
- Neil Teixeira, Director, Online Learning
- Tracy Smith, Student, M.C.M. online program

Marshall School of Business

- Patricia Mills, Vice Dean for Teaching and Innovation & Professor of Clinical Accounting
- Miriam Burgos, Academic Director, USC Marshall Online MBA Program & Associate Professor of Clinical Marketing
- Peter Cardon, Professor of Clinical Business Communication
- James Fynes, current OMBA student graduating in May 2021

Viterbi School of Engineering

- Binh Tran, Associate Dean & Executive Director of DEN

Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy, Ostrow School of Dentistry

- Julie Tilson, Professor of Clinical Physical Therapy & Hybrid DPT Program Director and Professor of Clinical Therapy
- Dan Kirages, Associate Professor of Clinical Physical Therapy

Observations and Findings

Lines of Inquiry (refer to relevant CFRs to assure comprehensive consideration)	Observations and Findings	Follow-up Required (identify the issues)
<i>Fit with Mission.</i> How does the institution conceive of distance learning relative to its mission, operations, and administrative structure? How are distance	USC leadership believes that online degree and certificate programs are directly on-mission for the engaged Schools. They consider this a “one program, two pathways” approach here the online and on-campus programs are developed and delivered in parallel. The online effort is led centrally by an Associate Vice Provost and Vice Deans /	Campus leadership and governance is evolving; at next visit, recheck the alignment of

<p>education offerings planned, funded, and operationalized?</p>	<p>Associate Deans in the involved schools. This is an appropriate administrative structure which ensures proper oversight. An Online Learning Council includes every School and meets once a month to share experiences and develop synergies. A Data Analytics Committee across several schools is engaged in analysis and evaluation with emphasis on the many joint programs. The Center for Excellence in teaching provides course level support for both on-line and on-campus forms of courses. Online and on-campus advising are both addressed by the faculty and staff Council of Academic Advisors.</p>	<p>online and on-campus structures.</p>
<p><i>Connection to the Institution.</i> How are distance education students integrated into the life and culture of the institution?</p>	<p>USC's "Trojan family" concept is important to both the on-campus and on-line student bodies. Similar levels of academic advising support are provided to both populations; several programs even have a better student-advisor ratio for online students than on campus students. "Digital Lounges" are used to build communities in many programs. Student contact is fostered with alumni and faculty i.e. when traveling to a conference in a city with online students. Anecdotal and survey feedback indicates a good level of student satisfaction.</p>	
<p><i>Quality of the DE Infrastructure.</i> Are the learning platform and academic infrastructure of the site conducive to learning and interaction between faculty and students and among students? Is the technology adequately supported? Are there back-ups?</p>	<p>USC is in the process of transitioning to internal infrastructure for online course delivery. USC believes that in the long run this will provide a higher quality experience for both students and instructors. They plan to proceed as existing contracts reach their end/renewal points.</p>	<p>Revisit the status of the transition to internal support at the next review.</p>
<p><i>Student Support Services:</i> What is the institution's capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services, academic support and other services appropriate to distance modality? What do data show about the effectiveness of the services?</p>	<p>Similar levels of support (writing coaches, career center, library access) are provided to both populations. Anecdotal and survey feedback indicates a good level of student satisfaction.</p>	
<p><i>Faculty.</i> Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? Do they teach only online courses? In what ways does the institution ensure that distance learning faculty are oriented, supported, and integrated appropriately into the</p>	<p>Generally, courses are taught in both on-line and on-campus forms by a similar mix of tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty. Some online programs have a larger mix of adjunct faculty with specific experience and backgrounds; this is generally considered a good thing. The great majority of instructors don't feel "siloesd" into the online format.</p>	

<p>academic life of the institution? How are faculty involved in curriculum development and assessment of student learning? How are faculty trained and supported to teach in this modality?</p>		
<p><i>Curriculum and Delivery.</i> Who designs the distance education programs and courses? How are they approved and evaluated? Are the programs and courses comparable in content, outcomes and quality to on-ground offerings? (Submit credit hour report.)</p>	<p>Courses and programs are designed by regular faculty. In addition to engagement with the online organization, new and updated courses and programs are run through the regular approval process used by their on-campus analogs. This includes departmental and campus levels of review.</p>	
<p><i>Retention and Graduation.</i> What data on retention and graduation are collected on students taking online courses and programs? What do these data show? What disparities are evident? Are rates comparable to on-ground programs and to other institutions' online offerings? If any concerns exist, how are these being addressed?</p>	<p>Retention and graduation are addressed through the Academic Program Review process at the program level. Although there are variations, the results are general very good. In some cases, concerns are being addressed in programs at the School level with oversight from the general review process.</p>	
<p><i>Student Learning.</i> How does the institution assess student learning for online programs and courses? Is this process comparable to that used in on-ground courses? What are the results of student learning assessment? How do these compare with learning results of on-ground students, if applicable, or with other online offerings?</p>	<p>Assessment is done by faculty at both the course and program level. Large involvement by main-campus faculty ensures a comparable evaluation. After a small allowance for student cohorts, the faculty generally judge these to be equivalent to on-campus courses.</p>	
<p><i>Contracts with Vendors.</i> Are there any arrangements with outside vendors concerning the infrastructure, delivery, development, or instruction of courses? If so, do these comport with the policy on <i>Contracts with Unaccredited Organizations</i>?</p>	<p>All existing contracts have clauses that ensure appropriate academic control. USC is moving these all functions internally, and toward that has ended several contracts.</p>	

<p><i>Quality Assurance Processes:</i> How are the institution's quality assurance processes designed or modified to cover distance education? What evidence is provided that distance education programs and courses are educationally effective?</p>	<p>Faculty engagement is essentially the same between on-campus and on-line courses and programs, including both at the teaching and review level. The processes for evaluating on-line and on-campus are the same, with perhaps a bit more emphasis on frequency of evaluation for online.</p>	
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