WASC | Senior College and University Commission

July 18, 2024

Hernan Diaz Alonso
Director
Southern California Institute of Architecture
960 East Third Street
Los Angeles, CA 90013-1822

Dear Director Diaz Alonso:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc)] by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 28, 2024. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Accreditation Visit to the Southern California Institute of Architecture March 27-29, 2024 using the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by Southern California Institute of Architecture prior to the Offsite Review (OSR), the supplemental materials requested by the team after the OSR, and the institution's May 28, 2024 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Paul Holliday, Chief Administrative Officer and ALO; John Enright, Vice Director, Chief Academic Officer; and Erik Ghenoiu, Learning Assessment Coordinator. Your comments were very helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations. The date of this action constitutes the effective date of the institution's new status with WSCUC.

Actions

1. Receive the Accreditation Visit team report
2. Reaffirm accreditation for a period of eight years
3. Schedule the next reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in fall 2031 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2032
4. Schedule an Interim Report to be submitted March 1, 2027 to address all requirements of this letter

Commendations

The Commission commends the institution for:

1. The institution's clear mission that guides all activities, and its history of a high level of innovation in the field of architecture.
2. Its dedication to an innovative studio pedagogy and new ways of learning through new and advanced industry practices and tools.

3. The creative culture of SCI-Arc, which emphasizes an extensive public review of student work, the collaborative spirit of the faculty, and nimble responses to past challenges.
4. Enthusiastic efforts to create community on campus through the peer mentorship program, the affinity groups, and the advancement of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.
5. The institutional research function at SCI-Arc for its impressive progress with data resources and reporting tools achieved since the last visit, its responsiveness to campus needs, and its dedication to collaborative support for decision making.

Areas for Development

The Commission requires the institution to respond to the following areas for development:

1. Continue to build on its investment in student services and support resources and policies, by expanding efficiency and transparency surrounding admissions, transfer credit, scholarship application, and awards, with an emphasis on additional academic advising, international student support, student health and wellness, and career counseling and placement. (CFR 2.13)
2. Formalize program learning outcome assessment in the student review processes by documenting the criteria used to assess student work, evaluating how individual students performed based on those criteria, and using that information to pursue continuous improvement of teaching and learning. (CFR 2.4)
3. Finalize a consistent program review process to be applied to all degree programs and general education, including the examination of student learning outcome attainment. Complete the pending program reviews for the MS degree programs and the general studies/liberal arts curriculum. (CFR 2.7)
4. Devise and implement a strategic enrollment management plan that encompasses the collaboration of recruitment, retention, communication, and financial aid, and that contributes to the institution's financial stability. (CFR 3.4)

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirmed that the Southern California Institute of Architecture successfully completed the two-stage institutional review process conducted under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. In keeping with WSCUC values, the Southern California Institute of Architecture should strive for ongoing improvement with adherence to all Standards of Accreditation and their associated CFRs to foster a learning environment that continuously strives for educational excellence and operational effectiveness.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter is being sent to the chair of the Southern California Institute of Architecture's governing board. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the the Southern California Institute of Architecture website and widely distributed throughout the institution to promote further engagement and improvement and to support the institution's response to the specific issues identified in these

documents. The team report and the Commission's action letter will also be posted on the WSCUC website. If the institution wishes to respond to the Commission action on its own website, WSCUC will post a link to that response on the WSCUC website.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that the Southern California Institute of Architecture undertook in preparing for and supporting this accreditation review. WSCUC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while contributing to public accountability, and we thank you for your continued support of this process. Please contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,

Jamienne S. Studley
President

JSS/mbg

Cc: Tracy Poon Tambascia, Commission Chair
     Paul Holliday, Chief Academic Officer and ALO
     Tom Strickler, Board Chair
     Members of the Accreditation Visit Team
     Mark B. Goor, Vice President

REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM
For Reaffirmation of Accreditation

To the Southern California Institute of Architecture

March 27 to 29, 2024

Team Roster

Fred Fehlau, Chair
Provost, retired
ArtCenter College of Design

Kelly Wahl, Assistant Chair
Assistant Dean, Summer Sessions and Strategic Initiatives
UCLA

Michael Angotti
Provost and Chief Academic Officer
AMDA College of the Performing Arts

Bree Howard
Associate Provost for Academic Affairs Planning & Operations
California Institute of the Arts

Tammi Jackson
Vice President for Business and Finance
Meredith College

Mark Goor
Vice President
WSCUC Staff Liaison

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Section I – Overview and Context

A. Description of the Institution and its Accreditation History (CFRs 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.8, 2.2, 4.7)

The Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc) was founded in 1972 as "The New School" [of Architecture], one of the world's few stand-alone, private and independent schools of architecture. Led by Architect Ray Kappe (chair of the architecture department at Cal Poly Pomona), the school, initially located in Santa Monica, sought to establish an experimental and critically relevant counterpoint to more conventional architecture programs, initially eschewing fixed curricula, grades, and tenure. It was renamed Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc) shortly thereafter.

In 1975, the BArch and MArch programs were accredited by the National Architectural Association Board (NAAB). In 2018, SCI-Arc received an eight-year reaffirmation of accreditation from NAAB, with an Interim Report submitted in 2021 and 2023. SCI-Arc's next NAAB review was scheduled for 2026.

In 1995, SCI-Arc received initial regional accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). In 2016, SCI-Arc was granted an eight-year reaffirmation of accreditation from WSCUC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC). In 2020, SCI-Arc submitted to WSCUC an Interim Report and in 2021, a Progress Report.

SCI-Arc had five directors, including its original founder. It was home to Pritzker Prize winners, Rome Prize scholars, Fellows, and Gold Medalists of the American Institute of Architects. At the time of the 2024 WSCUC visit, the institution and its board were planning to open a search for a sixth director, scheduled to begin in Summer 2024.

SCI-Arc offered Bachelor of Architecture and Master of Architecture degrees (both of which allowed students the opportunity to apply for licensure). At the time of the visit, it offered one-year, three-semester postgraduate MS degrees in Architectural Technologies, Fiction + Entertainment,

Design Theory + Pedagogy, and Synthetic Landscapes (with three MS programs new since 2016 following plan approval from WSCUC and NAAB). It also held a summer "Making+Meaning" workshop open to current college students and graduates, active professionals, and newly admitted MArch 1 students. "Design Immersion Days" were offered for high school students.

In fall 2023, SCI-Arc had an undergraduate enrollment of 244 (255 in 2016), a graduate enrollment of 202 (227 in 2016), and 53 (21 in 2016) students enrolled in their four postgraduate MS programs, for an overall total of 499 undergraduate and graduate students. It identified an overall enrollment goal of 485 FTE students as an optimum number for quality and capacity reasons and structured its business plan to accommodate that number (the 2016 enrollment goal was 500-520).

In addition to the three new WSCUC-approved MS degrees launched since the 2016 visit, in Spring 2024, WSCUC approved a four-year nonprofessional liberal arts-based BS degree program that focused on careers in film, gaming, and data environments, using architecture as a basis of the curriculum and pedagogy.

Physical Infrastructure

In 2000, the school moved to downtown Los Angeles, occupying the Santa Fe Freight Depot building. SCI-Arc purchased it in 2011 as a permanent campus with the support of its Board of Trustees and other financial supporters of the institution. The building's 90,000+ square foot, quarter-mile-long, narrow structure allowed the institution to conduct most of its classes in an open studio environment; all crits, panels, and presentations were held in open spaces, accessible to the full community.

SCI-Arc fabrication shops included the "Magic Box," housing advanced digital 2D and 3D printing, and "Robot House," an experimental facility bringing robotics and time-based

technologies to students and faculty advanced design research. The addition of the "Magic Box" and the "Robot House" allowed SCI-Arc to differentiate the institution and the degree programs and to provide further leadership in the profession aligning with the mission of the institution.

Off-Campus Locations or Distance Education Programs

SCI-Arc did not offer distance education programs. All students were matriculated at the Los Angeles site. During the COVID pandemic, the institution implemented online tools to allow for virtual instruction. Those classroom tools continued to be utilized for in-person instruction, with virtual student attendance on a case-by-case basis. These tools were also used to hold lectures by international speakers and project-specific outside partners.

Mission

SCI-Arc's Mission "teaches architects to engage, speculate, and innovate; to take the lead in reimagining the limits of architecture." (CFR 1.1) SCI-Arc's website further described its educational and pedagogical program:

> Our students and faculty critically examine the rich possibilities of the built environment. From design and materials to culture and experience, SCI-Arc asks questions regarding new theoretical constructs and designed realities to constitute possible futures. We contribute an imaginative, rigorous, and forward-thinking approach to help shape the future of the architectural profession.

SCI-Arc's pedagogical model was studio- and critic-based, in which students worked together in shared workspaces and engaged with each other and their teachers in open discussions of their projects. Student work was judged based upon its intellectual rigor, and visual and verbal presentation. General studies/liberal arts, applied studies, visual studies, and history/theory courses complemented the studio courses, providing context and research tools.

Organizational Structures, Governance, and Decision Making

With the help of an as-yet chosen search firm, SCI-Arc and its board planned an international search for a new director during 2024-25, with a leadership transition anticipated in September 2025. A search committee comprised of board members, staff, faculty, alumni, and students was formed, with an attention to diversity and collegiality. SCI-Arc's director, who held the directorship for ten years from 2015 to the time of the visit, led the institution through a period of educational diversification (new postgraduate MS programs and a new undergraduate program, as well as the redesign of the general studies/liberal arts curriculum); COVID-19-related faculty, staff, and facility changes; an increased commitment to student scholarship support, including the addition of $900K annually for DEI scholarships; and advancements in institutional research, student resources, and support, with the establishment of new positions for student professional and wellness counseling; and DEI best practices and staff.

The vice director/chief academic officer (VD/CAO) planned to remain in his present position during this transition and has announced his intention to return to faculty after a new director is firmly in place. The position of chief advancement officer was unfilled, although the institution previously staffed this position; two co-directors managed advancement. Also reporting to the director were the chief financial officer, the communications director, the SCI-Arc Channel producer and director, and the new position of director of diversity, equity, and inclusion. In conversations with the board, the plan was to find a new director and then allow the executive cabinets' design to complement that individual's goals and competencies. Work on a new strategic plan would also begin after the new director is in place. Conversations amongst the community about the new director's role and responsibilities would provide a starting point for future strategic planning.

Other significant hires since the last WSCUC visit were a new chair of postgraduate programs and two new co-chairs for the undergraduate programs, all reporting to the VD/CAO. Also reporting to the VD/CAO was a chief administrative officer, who oversaw functions such as academic affairs, admissions, educational facilities (shops, maker spaces), IT, and student services.

The governance structure of SCI-Arc appeared to be clear and effective. The twenty-four-member board of trustees included leaders in architectural design, art, finance, real estate, construction, law, entertainment industry, and philanthropy. Current committees were executive, governance, finance, audit, advancement, building + grounds, investment, and a committee on trustees. The director search committee was convened ad hoc. Board non-voting representation included SCI-Arc faculty, students, and alumni. The director/CEO reported to the board of trustees. The board focused its responsibilities on a set of board bylaws that were reviewed annually and revised as needed.

In addition to the board of trustees and executive leadership, various other governance groups included:

- Academic Council (faculty, students, staff, and leadership)

- Faculty Council (faculty)

- Student Union (students)

- Alumni Council (alumni, staff)

- Curriculum Committees, Undergraduate, Graduate, Postgraduate (faculty and academic leadership)

- Academic Coordinators (faculty)

- Equity and Inclusion Committee (faculty, staff, administration, students)

- Enrollment Management Committee (administration, staff)

- Admissions Committees

- Peer Review Committee

- Portfolio Committees (undergraduate and graduate);

- Scholarship Committees

- Studio Culture Review Committee

- Community Engagement Steering Committee

- Technology Committee

The above-listed committees provided the institution with many opportunities to discuss and provide recommendations for decision making. Although some members sat on multiple committees, the institution appeared to be able to focus on the task at hand and avoid repetitive or redundant work. (CFR 2.6)

Challenges Since the 2016 Visit

As did all institutions in March 2020, SCI-Arc had to adjust to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Having a studio-based instructional model, this adjustment required additional attention: the physical production of student projects, the viewing and critique of visual materials, and the complexities of living/working habits without the opportunity to work together in the same spaces. The school transitioned to a hybrid instruction model during the 2021-2022 academic year and returned to fully in-person instruction in 2022-2023.

Enrollment Management

Because of its small size and relatively nimble operating structure, SCI-Arc was able to adjust to COVID-related enrollment fluctuations. The 2023-2024 incoming class was 12% lower than expected, which required reassessing the current three-year budget forecast. Future possible

dips in international student enrollment (primarily Chinese) could add additional pressure. The board and senior staff appeared to be fully aware of these issues and monitored them daily. That said, the institution would have benefited from more effective enrollment management, including a plan with accurate data and financial analysis. (CFR 3.4, see team recommendation 4 below)

B. Description of Team's Review Process

During the offsite review, the team identified five (5) lines of inquiry for the Accreditation Visit, as follows:

1. Institutional Research and Data-Driven Decision Making

2. Assessment and Program Review

3. Faculty and Faculty Development

4. Education and Student Experience

5. Financial Performance and Strategic Planning

The team was presented with additional documentation addressing these lines of inquiry before and during its onsite visit. Many of these questions were answered and/or addressed. Some concerns have been carried forward in other sections of this team report and emphasized in the recommendations, mainly those surrounding:

1. Student Services and Support, Resources, and Policies

2. Program Learning Outcome Assessment

3. Program Review Process and Schedule

4. Strategic Enrollment Management

5. Campus Climate

The team met with various members of the SCI-Arc community, including board members, senior staff, general staff, faculty, and students; participated in specific meetings addressing

education and student experience, finances, strategic planning, faculty development, student learning, program review, and institutional research; and had the opportunity to tour the facility and observe classes/critiques in session.

Everyone with whom the team met understood the institution's mission and values and expressed enthusiasm for the learning environment and the success of its students and alumni. Except for some campus climate issues (CFR 4.1, see team recommendation 5 below) concerning management and faculty/staff dynamics and certain student support concerns (CFR 2.13, see team recommendation 1 below), the institution appeared to have an effective and collegial working/learning environment.

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

The institutional report and accompanying documentation were thorough and well-organized and indicated an appreciation of the accreditation process. SCI-Arc appeared to have made advances on many of the Commission's recommendations from 2016; however, further work must be done in some areas. The team had adequate time in the team room and was provided with all the documentation needed to complete this report. The team believes the institutional report and the accompanying materials accurately represented the institution.

Section II – Evaluation of Institutional Essays
A. Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions

The Commission Action Letter of July 8, 2016, outlined several areas for the institution to address at the time of its next review. Following are the team's findings as to the institution's response to the Commission's concerns:

Recommendation 1: SCI-Arc should develop and document shared expectations for student learning that account for standards of performance at different levels of the curriculum; these expectations should be aligned from course to program to institution; representative examples of student work should be collected, aggregated and analyzed towards a reliable understanding of student progress and educational effectiveness at SCI-Arc; and plans for improvement should be made and actions taken based on these findings. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7)

Standards of performance were defined through SCI-Arc's Educational Goals (EGs), which aligned with WSCUC institution-level learning outcomes (ILOs). A revised set of EGs was implemented by the program chairs, coordinator of learning assessment, and the VD/CAO in September 2023. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) were also developed for each degree program and published on the institution's website.

The September 2023 review focused upon individual course learning outcomes (CLOs) to ensure alignment with PLOs, and the syllabus template was updated to reflect these new CLOs. The program chairs and the coordinator of learning assessment worked with the Departmental Curriculum Committees and coordinators of the General Studies/Liberal Arts, History+Theory, Applied Studies, and Visual Studies Curricular Areas to determine these shared learning outcomes and communicate them to faculty and students.

The review of student work and subsequent analysis of educational effectiveness (performed for both WSCUC and NAAB program review requirements) and changes to the curriculum took place during the Annual Faculty Retreat and Departmental Curriculum Committees for each academic department. Formal changes to the curriculum or programs were reviewed and approved by the program chairs, the coordinator of learning assessment, and the VD/CAO for final approval.

Following the 2016 Commission actions, the 2020 Interim Report Committee recommended that SCI-Arc "[d]evelop shared expectations of student performance on learning outcomes including core competencies at the institutional and program levels (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.6,

2.7)" and "[c]ontinue with and document assessment processes and findings at the institutional and program levels that show evidence of closing the loop (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7)." Progress made since the 2016 review includes several developments. In 2017, SCI-Arc established an assessment coordinator position to assist faculty in assessing student learning. As mentioned above, PLOs were defined for each degree program and are listed on the SCI-Arc website. The general studies/liberal arts requirements were aligned with the BArch PLOs within the degree's curriculum map. The PLOs were mapped to the Educational Goals (EGs), SCI-Arc's version of institutional learning goals. The EGs were revised in September 2023, with each EG listing mechanisms for delivery and assessment tools. The institutional syllabus template was updated to include instructions on crafting course learning outcomes.

Within the professional degree programs (BArch, MArch 1, MArch 2), student work was collected, aggregated, and analyzed as part of the National Architecture Accrediting Board (NAAB) requirements. Still, this process remained separate from the assessment of program learning outcomes for the non-professional degree programs, the postgraduate MS programs, and general studies/liberal arts. The team did not find evidence of assessment plans, annual assessment reports, documentation of the criteria for assessment, or data-informed discussions on trends or gaps in student learning, followed by action plans.

The team did not find evidence that SCI-Arc completed all aspects of addressing the 2016 and 2020 recommendations. After the visit and review of all materials provided by SCI-Arc, the extent to which this recommendation was not completely addressed has led the team to emphasize that further attention be paid to this effort. The team's report provides a deeper exploration of the evidence. (See Components 4 and 6 and team recommendation 2 below)

> **Recommendation 2**: With regard to both General Studies and the Core Competencies, SCI-Arc should: 1) develop holistic learning outcomes for the General Studies Program that directly express expectations for students completing these requirements; 2) consider the relationship between learning outcomes and WSCUC-defined Core Competencies by

locating those competencies within both the General Studies and studio curriculums; 3) further develop authentic tools for the summative assessment of General Studies Learning Outcomes and Core Competencies. (CFRs 2.2, 2.3, 4.4)

The General Studies/Liberal Arts Program at SCI-Arc underwent a redesign that blended elements of the former curriculum with new additions. The course sequence was adjusted to offer a deeper engagement with ancient civilization literature later in students' undergraduate journey. A broader representation of diverse authors was incorporated into the curriculum as well. Syllabi and reading lists were provided to the team.

While faculty and administrators believed these changes fortified the general studies/liberal arts curriculum, the team did not find evidence of the assessment of learning outcomes or the WSCUC Core Competencies. The team was provided with an undergraduate program learning outcome curriculum map showing where the general studies/liberal arts requirements were linked; however, the team was not presented with a set of general studies/liberal arts learning outcomes.

Upon examination, the team found no documented relationship between the program learning outcomes and the WSCUC Core Competencies within both general studies/liberal arts and major requirements. Although elements of written and oral communication and critical thinking were present in the EGs and PLOs, the team identified gaps in aligning courses with all five Core Competencies and found no evidence of assessment activities in this regard.

Assessment tools were suggested to be in development for their use when the entire curriculum has been pursued by a cohort of undergraduates, such that a summative assessment of learning could occur. (See institutional report, pages 23-24; Components 4 and 6 and team recommendation 2 below).

Recommendation 3: SCI-Arc needs to develop a rigorous form of program review for General Studies, the other non-degree-granting programs, and the post-professional degree programs. (CFR 2.7)

Similar to Commission Recommendation 1, the 2020 Interim Report Committee had a

subsequent recommendation related to Recommendation 3 to "Develop an overarching program

review process for the institution with a program review schedule that includes all programs and

guidelines that include a list of revised requirements and an external review process." The team

found that although a schedule had been established for the program review process and a set of

program self-study instructions, the implementation of a program review for general studies/liberal

arts and the postgraduate (MS) degree programs did not occur before the time of the visit. Two

non-degree-granting activities had undergone a review process that included the consideration of

indirect assessment information: the Design Immersion Days program (for high school students)

and the Making+Meaning workshops.

After the visit and the team's review of all materials provided by SCI-Arc, the team

prioritizes that further attention be paid to this effort in response to the extent to which this

previous recommendation was not addressed. The team's report provides a deeper exploration of

the evidence. (See institutional report, pages 24-25; Component 6 and team recommendation 3

below).

Recommendation 4: SCI-Arc should increase its support of faculty and staff in developing knowledge of current practices in the assessment of student learning, and in student-centered teaching approaches as they have evolved in higher education. (CFRs 2.8, 3.3)

Faculty and staff attended national and regional academic conferences, training sessions,

and workshops. SCI-Arc also provided support for professional faculty, administrative, and staff

professional development, including travel, through annual budgeted funds.

Since the 2016 WSCUC visit, faculty, chairs, and academic leadership have attended the

annual WSCUC Academic Resource Conference and several WSCUC-hosted assessment

workshops. SCI-Arc leadership, faculty, and staff also attended conferences hosted by the

Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA), the American Institute of Architects (AIA),

the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB), the Council for Higher Education Assessment (CHEA), the National Association of Academic Advisors (NACADA), and Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA). Workshops on campus covered topics such as student mental health support, sexual harassment laws, Title IX Requirements, and the utilization of tools such as IZENDA, Jenzabar EX, and CourseEval.

While the faculty appeared familiar with teaching and learning best practices, as evidenced by syllabi and other educational documents, faculty development for teaching and learning remained somewhat unstructured and ad-hoc despite the 2016 recommendation to establish a more rigorous set of resources. This was most likely due to the overall size of the faculty and staff and the degree to which they worked together on an ongoing basis. The institutional report indicated that future resources and annual funding were planned to support current assessment practices for student learning and student-centered teaching approaches. (See institutional report, pages 25-26; team recommendation 2 below).

> **Recommendation 5**: In the absence of a dedicated office of Institutional Research, SCI-Arc should further develop its ability to analyze and interpret data in order to gain deeper understanding of student success, communicate that understanding to all stakeholders, and integrate that data analysis into short- and long-term institutional planning. (CFRs 4.3, 4.5)

SCI-Arc improved its data-gathering capabilities since the last review, evidenced by the expansion of its data resources (a web-based Izenda program augmenting Jenzabar) and the addition of an institutional research analyst position. More recently, they implemented Power BI to create interactive dashboards and dynamic reports. Jenzabar, Izenda, and Power BI help to track student retention and GPA and report on trends in real-time for more informed institutional data-informed decision making. Data were analyzed continuously, and historical data were maintained and distributed to the community, including the board. SCI-Arc collected data from the following areas:

- ADMISSIONS: application tracking, demographics of applicants, locations, domestic/international, gender, test scores, acceptance rates, yield rates

- GRADUATION AND RETENTION RATES: aggregated by demographic group, gender, entry status, and program

- STUDENT ENROLLMENT: diversity, ethnicity, gender, domestic/international, entry status

- GPA: aggregated by diversity, program, level, and citizenship

- THIRD PARTY REQUIRED REPORTING: accrediting agencies WSCUC and NAAB, IPEDS, S+P reports for finance

- REGISTRATION: leaves of absence, course registrations

- VERTICAL LOTTERY: advanced design studio student placement algorithm

- HUMAN RESOURCES: staff directories, diversity, educational history, compensation

Data published on SCI-Arc's website included the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) Architecture Program Report, National Council of Architectural Licensing Boards (NCARB) Architect Registration Examination (ARE) pass rates, SCI-Arc graduation rates, and WSCUC team reports. (See institutional report, pages 26-28; Standard 4 and Component 5 below).

B. Component 2: Compliance: Review under WSCUC Standards and compliance with federal requirements

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Education Objectives

As described in Section I of this report, SCI-Arc's statement of its mission was clear and communicated the nature of the institution and its academic offerings. Additional policy documents, including those describing SCI-Arc's commitment to academic freedom, were both readily available and appropriate. The handbooks for faculty, staff, and students provided explanations of the necessary policies as they related to grievances and complaint processes, as

well as relevant financial aid policies and the community's equity, diversity, and inclusion policies. (CFRs 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.7)

Communication of student success information to the public and the institution's internal community was detailed and accessible on the institution's website. Materials prepared for students to specify required courses and course-taking patterns – accompanied by the comprehensive student success statistics published on the website – described how the programs could be completed in a timely fashion. (CFRs 1.2, 1.6)

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to determine compliance with the Standard.

Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions

SCI-Arc's innovative approach offered students a cutting-edge design-studio architecture education with hands-on, project-based courses that aligned well with their mission and values. At the undergraduate level, design-studio education was supported by a series of seminars in Applied Studies, History + Theory, Liberal Arts (general education), and Visual Studies. Co-curricular programs such as a lecture series featuring professionals across multiple disciplines, formal faculty presentations about their professional work, gallery exhibitions, workshops, study abroad and exchange programs, internships, and more complemented the degrees.

Leveraging its proximity to the Los Angeles architecture industry and international connections, SCI-Arc primarily recruited working professionals globally to teach coursework, providing students with a highly relevant education that prepared them to work within the architecture and design fields. The institution maintained a commitment to support faculty professional development by providing funding to attend external opportunities. Internal offerings included unconscious bias training and using current technologies within the classroom.

It was clear that SCI-Arc dedicated significant effort to revise its EGs and establish course and program learning outcomes, but formalized and documented assessment processes were lacking. The institution needed to document assessment criteria, assess individual student performance based on these criteria, compile the information, and then utilize it for the continuous improvement of teaching and learning.

As noted in the institutional report, SCI-Arc needed to build and execute the program review process for its non-professional degrees and the general studies/liberal arts curriculum. Program review self-study instructions and a schedule for future reviews were created; however, the institution needed to finalize and formalize a consistent program review process applicable to all degree programs, including general studies/liberal arts, that incorporated the evaluation of student learning outcome achievement.

SCI-Arc expanded its student support services by introducing several new positions, including a student services specialist, career advisor, health and safety coordinator, and a director of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Additionally, academic advising was provided by a director and advisor, while the registrar also serves as the international advisor. Furthermore, the institution collaborated with a downtown Los Angeles organization to offer mental health services for students. This partnership included professional development for faculty and staff on identifying and supporting struggling students, as well as an on-campus therapist twice a week. Through various faculty and staff meetings, the team heard about the ongoing demand for additional support for student health and wellness. Moreover, students expressed the need for improved efficiency and transparency regarding the timing and awarding of financial aid and scholarships, timing and communication about registration, international student support, and career counseling and placement. SCI-Arc should continue expanding its investment within student services, support resources, and policies. The team recommends that SCI-Arc continue to

build on its investment in student services and support resources and policies, by expanding efficiency and transparency surrounding admissions, transfer credit, scholarship application, and awards, and placing additional emphasis on academic advising, international student support, student health and wellness, and career counseling and placement. (CFR 2.13)

Several Criteria for Review demanded that SCI-Arc engage in continued growth for strong compliance with the Standard, particularly those around student services and assisting students to completion. These included CFRs 2.13, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, and 4.1, as elaborated further in this report.

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to determine compliance with the Standard.

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

SCI-Arc demonstrated adherence to Standard 3. SCI-Arc provided evidence of faculty alignment with the institution's objectives, faculty and staff's adequacy and professional qualifications to deliver quality education, and the clarity and effectiveness of organizational structures and decision-making processes. (CFRs 3.1, 3.3, 3.7)

SCI-Arc's institutional report provides information related to the institution's framework for the recruitment, employment, and organizational structures of faculty and staff aimed at ensuring educational quality and institutional sustainability. The institution was committed to employing faculty and staff with a substantial and ongoing commitment to their field, evidenced by a faculty comprised mainly of practicing architects (CFR 3.1). This approach not only enriched the academic environment with real-world insights but also worked to ensure that the faculty's professional qualifications met the educational objectives. The diversity of perspectives brought by

international faculty and the structure of faculty designations demonstrated a thoughtful approach to academic staffing, providing varied ideas and teaching methodologies that enriched students' educational experiences.

The institution's commitment to faculty and staff development (CFR 3.3) was marked by the allocation of budget resources for ongoing training and professional growth opportunities. This investment equipped faculty with contemporary, progressive, and effective educational tools and methodologies, emphasizing the institution's commitment to professional development and continuous learning. Additionally, there were budget resources allocated to the provision of staff development opportunities, inclusive of training related to: sexual harassment laws or Title IX Requirements, use of administrative tools such as Jenzabar EX, SLATE, and CourseEval, as well as diversity, equity and inclusion training.

SCI-Arc demonstrated a clear and effective organizational structure that supported decision making and placed a priority on educational effectiveness (CFR 3.7). The structured organizational chart, including a diverse Board of Trustees and various committees, helped to ensure robust governance and strategic oversight, contributing to a governance model that was both efficient and aligned with the institution's mission.

In the institutional report and during the visit, SCI-Arc provided evidence related to its dedication to creating student-centered learning environments. This was demonstrated through the institution's commitment to maintaining small class sizes and diverse student-faculty interaction modalities. Through these approaches, faculty members could address individual student needs, which in turn helped to foster nurturing and effective educational experiences.

Evidence pertaining to CFR 3.7 was observed in the informal yet frequent communication channels between administration and faculty. Such interactions facilitated swift and effective

decision-making processes, supported organizational effectiveness, and contributed to a collaborative work environment.

The institution's strategic resource allocation and planning efforts (CFR 3.4) underscored a forward-thinking approach to sustainability and adaptability. Proactive measures in faculty staffing, technology integration, and responsiveness to demographic shifts demonstrated the institution's capacity for strategic planning and resource management.

To further enhance teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes (CFR 3.2), the team suggests refining the faculty performance evaluation system by integrating data-driven considerations of pedagogical impact and student achievement, supported by an expansion of multisource feedback mechanisms for a rounded assessment of faculty performance. This approach would leverage the existing team-teaching framework, incorporating peer feedback and student engagement analysis to further promote a culture of innovative and highly effective teaching and learning practices. Linking evaluation outcomes with professional development opportunities would work to ensure targeted growth. Systematic documentation and regular updates to evaluation criteria — reflecting the latest in educational technology and pedagogical research — will help to further align faculty efforts with institutional goals by enhancing transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in teaching practices.

The institution's dedication to developing and applying resources and organizational structures to ensure quality and sustainability was evident across its practices. By focusing on areas such as staff development, student-centered learning environments, and strategic organizational governance, the institution met the Standards set forth by WSCUC. The suggestions for continuous improvement, particularly in refining the faculty evaluation process, aim to further enhance the institution's capacity to support teaching and learning practices among instructors. This ongoing commitment to excellence and improvement will contribute to the institution's

overarching mission of delivering high-quality, sustainable education, which was in alignment with WSCUC's Standards.

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to determine compliance with the Standard.

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

Quality assurance processes at SCI-Arc, which focused on new curriculum and program approval, program review, assessment, and evaluation, exhibited various stages of maturity and levels of institutionalization at SCI-Arc. A serious commitment to those processes that will benefit from full implementation is described at greater length elsewhere in this report. To appreciate the institution's compliance with Standard 4, the team reviewed the progress that had been made, future timelines, and processes that were discussed during the visit. SCI-Arc would benefit from a program review of the general studies/liberal arts curriculum before the end of its first cycle of implementation. Improving new general studies/liberal arts courses after their initial offering was described by the chair of this program, and informal processes were used to leverage student evaluation data in refining the pedagogy. A systematic and documented review process would expedite the course-correction measures more efficiently than an ad hoc analysis that proceeded without the benefits of peer review.

There remained a need for evaluation processes to support the institution's recovery from the social disconnection of the pandemic and to improve the quality of communication throughout the institution. In meetings with the team, SCI-Arc staff members spoke about how

their collaboration among offices and their dedication to their work was a highlight of their experience; however, they noted that the tenor of email messages and comments exchanged between management and staff and between faculty and staff could suffer from an insensitivity that impeded collegiality. The director of equity, diversity, and inclusion provided an account of how she had intervened following a town hall using community building and communication training to address issues that had arisen. The team commends this approach, and further, the team recommends that SCI-Arc administer a campus climate survey to the faculty and staff, present its findings to the campus, and pursue action plans in response. (CFRs 2.1, 4.1, 4.3)

An established culture of evidence existed at SCI-Arc, embodied in the ongoing informal contact and meeting work that evaluated student attainment of learning outcomes. In the Component 4 review in this report, the team evaluates the assessment of learning and the impact of this on the institution's continuous improvement efforts. Faculty committed to the curriculum and the students' learning, with evidence of the expectations met by the students and with teaching evaluations used to support the curriculum via discussion including instructors, course coordinators, the academic program chairs, and the curriculum committee. Reporting systems, such as the dashboards that described student degree completion, provided data for these discussions. The team heard numerous narratives of the kind of change that occurred as a consequence of this dialogue, not only to assist individual students but also to improve the academic offerings. (CFRs 4.3, 4.4)

Assessment Data

As discussed elsewhere, a substantial and rich qualitative assessment of student performance was offered during studio reviews and the portfolio reviews (both formative and summative). This feedback delivered to the students was discussed in faculty retreats and in committee meetings; however, a methodical record of this evidence of outcome attainment was not being archived. Although this information was generated by the student work assessment process, it was only recorded in a summary fashion through the submission of faculty questionnaires. These data-collection instruments captured a description of the extent to which a given course offering attained the learning outcomes instead of identifying the achievement of individual students. The most granular individual student assessment data was neither stored nor analyzed statistically. (CFRs 4.1, 4.3, 4.4)

Other Statistical Data

Dashboard tools reported student data that was captured by SCI-Arc's student information system. These reporting tools drilled down to the intersection of multiple demographic categories. In the team's meeting to discuss the institutional research function at SCI-Arc, it was noted the capacity for fulfilling this work was supported by dedicated staff in information technology and institutional research, accompanied by managers of administrative and student support areas conducting survey research, such as academic advising and career services. The ability and willingness of so many staff to undertake survey research to evaluate and to support their programming contributed to the institution's culture of evidence. The team observed the accomplishments of these efforts to serve improvement purposes, decision making, and planning, and the team considered next steps. With the

institutional research facility at SCI-Arc able to connect data from separate sources in the creation of dashboard reporting tools, this effort will advance further through statistical analysis of the data depicted, with appropriate research methods used to ascertain relationships among student characteristics and their success. The team suggests initial efforts to pursue multivariate analysis – even to model outcomes in the relatively small student population – will extend the current effort toward greater achievements. (CFR 4.2)

The strategic plan in place at the time of the visit is referenced below in the team's report section for Component 9. At the time of the visit, the institution was at the end of its last strategic plan cycle, and the institution was poised to change leadership and engage in a new planning process. The implementation of new strategic initiatives will require progress to be monitored, and a judicious use of the web presentation capacity developed by institutional research and IT should serve that purpose well. The team suggests exploring dashboards to present the future strategic plan's key indicators and progress toward each initiative's accomplishment. (CFR 4.6)

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to determine compliance with the Standard. Final determination of compliance with the Standards rests with the Commission.

Federal Compliance Forms

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to determine compliance with the Federal Compliance Forms.

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

The meaning of a SCI-Arc degree resided in critically examining the rich possibilities of the built environment. Anchored in this vision, the institution's mission was: "to teach architects and designers to engage, speculate, and innovate; to take the lead in reimaging the limits of architecture" (CFRs 1.1, 1.2). Central to this mission were SCI-Arc's array of facilities, encompassing over 12,000-square feet dedicated to fabrication. Notable among these were the Robot House, Magic Box, and the SCI-Arc Shop, equipped with cutting-edge technologies, advanced manufacturing machinery, and six state-of-the-art Stäubli robots. These spaces were emblematic of the institution's unwavering dedication to embracing technological advances and empowering students to conceptualize and realize visionary architectural solutions. (CFR 3.5)

Integral to the SCI-Arc experience was the design studio, serving as the cornerstone of the curriculum. Here, students cultivate their architectural design prowess and technical acumen, harnessing advanced tools and technologies to bring their projects to fruition. The design studio was a collaborative endeavor, typically led by a team of three to five faculty members who collectively shaped syllabi and engaged with students through individualized and small group interactions. (CFRs 2.4, 2.5)

SCI-Arc offered architecture programs at the bachelor's, master's, and postgraduate levels. At the undergraduate level, students could pursue a Bachelor of Architecture (BArch) and, commencing in fall 2024, a Bachelor of Science in Design. Graduate offerings included two distinct Master of Architecture programs – MArch 1 tailored for students from non-architecture backgrounds, and MArch 2 designed for those seeking to advance their prior architectural education. SCI-Arc also offered four postgraduate MS degrees specializing in emerging architectural territories such as architectural technologies, fiction and entertainment, design theory and pedagogy, and synthetic landscapes.

The undergraduate curriculum centered on a design-studio approach complemented by seminars covering Applied Studies, History + Theory, Liberal Arts, and Visual Studies, culminating in the development of a portfolio suitable for professional pursuits. Notably, beginning in the fall of 2021, SCI-Arc initiated a multi-year review of its general studies/liberal arts curriculum, with objectives including addressing issues of equity and inclusion within course content, enhancing writing instruction, and featuring a wider array of disciplines in the required courses. (CFR 2.2a)

The Alumni Council served as a vital bridge between SCI-Arc, the alumni, and the professional sphere, comprising representatives from various decades and academic backgrounds. They communicated to the team the significant impact of a SCI-Arc degree on each of their professional trajectories.

Quality and Integrity of the Degree

The quality and integrity of the BArch and MArch degrees at SCI-Arc was supported through the accreditation requirements of the National Architecture Accrediting Board (NAAB). Meeting these standards served as external validation of the significance, quality, and integrity of these academic programs. The four postgraduate MS degrees, the BS in Design and general studies/liberal arts curriculum will undergo program review as they were not a part of the NAAB reviews.

The degrees were complemented by a series of co-curricular programs including a lecture series featuring architects, artists, filmmakers, and engineers; faculty conversations where selected individuals spoke about their professional work; gallery exhibitions where students could elect to assist in the fabrication and installation/de-installation of the work via a workshop; specialized workshops on topics such as tectonics and robotics or environmental systems; study abroad opportunities in Mexico City and exchange programs; internships with professional

architects or designers; and public programs previews, special focus discussions, and more were published weekly on the SCI-Arc Channel and Media Archive.

Course learning outcomes were delineated in course syllabi. Program learning outcomes were articulated for each degree program and listed on SCI-Arc's website. A matrix was developed for the BArch and MArch programs to illustrate the alignment between the required courses and the NAAB Program and Student Criteria, and it was also posted on the website. The general studies/liberal arts courses aligned with the program learning outcomes as visualized in the BArch curriculum map. (CFR 2.3)

The general studies/liberal arts curriculum went through a revision in 2021. Although the general studies/liberal arts curriculum was in its third year of a five-year rollout, assessment activities within the curriculum had not yet been implemented. Plans for assessment including exit interviews for graduating students, were outlined; however, an organized assessment process, incorporating a review of archived student work, was not slated to commence until 2026. While the coordinator of general studies/liberal arts was integrating course evaluation feedback into subsequent course offerings, the team suggests that SCI-Arc conduct an initial assessment of student learning to provide faculty with insights on potential areas for improvement and to gauge the effectiveness of the new curriculum in meeting its objectives. (CFR 2.4)

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

SCI-Arc was aligned with the WSCUC Standards related to student learning, core competencies, and performance standards at graduation (CFRs 2.2-2.7, 4.1, 4.3). This alignment was demonstrated through the institution's curricular focus on architectural design, history, theory, and liberal arts studies, as well as its engagement with technological advancements that

together provided a comprehensive and rigorous educational experience. The institution demonstrated a strong commitment to enhancing student learning through diverse pedagogical strategies and actively involved faculty in developing and refining learning approaches and outcomes.

SCI-Arc actively engaged in the consistent evaluation and enhancement of student learning outcomes, with faculty taking on the responsibility for their ongoing development and review (CFRs 2.4, 2.7). The performance standards for SCI-Arc's architecture degrees were aligned with external requirements from the National Architectural Accreditation Board (NAAB) and the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) licensure exams, as well as SCI-Arc's own pedagogical goals and higher-order EGs, which were detailed on the institution's website. These goals emphasized the development of architectural, design, and critical thinking skills, as well as competencies in written, oral, and design communication, reflecting a commitment to active participation in both the discipline and broader public discourse. Additionally, SCI-Arc's curriculum fostered a forward-thinking approach to technology and design, ethical action, and environmental stewardship, incorporating both global perspectives and diverse intellectual traditions.

SCI-Arc conducted semi-annual Departmental Curriculum Committee Meetings and Curricular Area Meetings to evaluate and integrate educational goals into the curriculum (CFRs 4.1, 4.3, 4.4). These collaborative meetings assessed student needs and learning outcomes, and helped to facilitate changes to enhance student-centered learning, with recommendations implemented by leadership. Annual Faculty Retreats and the Academic Council, including student representatives, supported this process by reviewing goals, outcomes, and student feedback. This process led to curricular adjustments and the introduction of new resources.

With its updated general studies/liberal arts curriculum and core architectural coursework, SCI-Arc integrated WSCUC Core Competencies into its undergraduate curriculum (CFRs 2.2, 2.2a, 2.4). The institution adopted innovative approaches to teaching these skills, including co-teaching models and oral defense sessions for design projects. SCI-Arc had long embraced cutting-edge technological advancements in the field of architecture, as well as digital instructional tools and advanced modes of model production. These approaches helped to prepare students to graduate industry-ready, as they not only had the opportunity to develop a deep understanding of architectural principles, but also worked to critically engage with complex problems, contribute original ideas to their field, and work effectively with the tools currently being used in their sector.

The team suggests that SCI-Arc enhance its approach to assessing student learning at the institutional level (CFRs 2.3, 2.7) and that the institution systematically collect and disaggregate assessment data to identify variations and trends in student achievement, as related to learning outcomes. This approach will allow for the potential identification of achievement gaps among different student groupings within the larger student population. From the disaggregated data analysis, the team suggests that the institution develop targeted instructional interventions and/or curricular changes aimed at supporting effective teaching and learning across the entire student population, thereby working to ensure that all students benefit from an equitable and inclusive educational environment.

E. **Component 5: Student Success: Student learning, retention, and graduation**

SCI-Arc enrolled small cohorts of first-time freshmen entrants, with the last three calculated freshman to sophomore retention rates as follows: fall 2019 cohort, 93% (n=30); fall 2020 cohort, 93% (n=27); fall 2021 cohort, 77% (n=30). The graduation rates for first-time freshmen and transfer entrants were published on their website and distributed to the institution to support

decision making. They described the cohorts for which a 150% graduation rate could be calculated at the time of the visit. The most-recent three first-time freshman cohorts graduated at the following rates: fall 2015 cohort, on-time rate of 58%, 150% rate of 71% (n=31); fall 2016 cohort, on-time rate of 81%, 150% rate of 81% (n=21); fall 2017 cohort, on-time rate of 59%, 150% rate of 63% (n=32). Incoming transfer cohorts graduated at the following rates: fall 2015 cohort, on-time rate of 67%, 150% rate of 74% (n=27); fall 2016 cohort, on-time rate of 78%, 150% rate of 78% (n=46); fall 2017 cohort, on-time rate of 73%, 150% rate of 73% (n=30). The team consulted the WSCUC Key Indicators Dashboard and observed how the rates reported above for the years depicted on that tool, SCI-Arc surpassed both the WSCUC average and the national average six-year first-time full-time student graduation rates.

The most recent graduation rates for the MArch 1 program were 66% for on-time and 77% for 150% (fall 2018 entering cohort; n=35), and 72% for both on-time and 150% (fall 2019 entering cohort; n=32). The comparable rates for the MArch 1 program were 95% for on-time and 98% for 150% (fall 2018 entering cohort; n=56) and 92% for on-time and 95% for 150% (fall 2019 entering cohort; n=61). The MS degree programs reported the following rates for the most-recent completion cohorts: MS in Fiction and Entertainment, on-time and 150% rates at 94% (n=18); MS in Architectural Technologies, on-time and 150% rates at 100% (n=8); MS in Design Theory and Pedagogy, on-time and 150% rates at 100% (n=3); and MS in Synthetic Landscapes, on-time and 150% rates at 100% (n=5).

SCI-Arc's dashboards that report these student success statistics sliced the data into disaggregated rates by gender, race/ethnicity, and domestic/international status. For the programs large enough to create comparison categories populated by at least 10 students in each group, parity in performance across groups could be found. When considering achievement gaps to close, fewer than three additional students within a cohort completing on-time or at 150% time

created an equal performance across groups. To enable the institution to identify performance differences among groups, the team suggests combining at least three years of cohorts, calculating graduation rates for this combined cohort, and then disaggregating by demographic categories, such that a sufficient count of students will occur in each category and patterns of performance can be identified more readily.

The institution defined student success in its context to mean "that students are holistically prepared for success in their personal, civic, and professional lives in architecture and in the many other fields where their work may lead them." Towards attaining this success, SCI-Arc dedicated resources in areas of student services and orientation, academic advising, and both academic and social support. During the orientation of new students, professional development in the field was also discussed, with information provided regarding the Architectural Experience Program and representatives from the field's professional and licensure organizations present on campus during the year. Also during orientation, specific academic requirements to be completed by individual students were articulated on the degree curriculum chart for the students. Such communication characterized the academic advising process, which promoted students' informed decision making and provided guidance about academic requirements, transfer units, and course sequences. Throughout the year, academic support came through the academic advisor monitoring student performance and having direct contact with faculty to discuss student progress. The team notes that academic advising used data to monitor the impact of academic policy changes relating to student success. The threshold for academic warning was lowered without decreasing the overall GPA calculated for undergraduate students. (CFRs 2.12, 2.13)

Meeting the needs of the institution's students and promoting their success, SCI-Arc accounted for the preparatory academic work of its transfer students, who comprised approximately half the undergraduate population. A public webpage articulated undergraduate

transfer credit and placement as well as articulation agreements with partnering community colleges. By regularly reviewing the articulations with these colleges, the academic advising unit contributed to student success through establishing relationships with the faculty, staff, and administration at the community colleges. The transfer of credit process allowed students to progress through SCI-Arc's BArch program with an appropriate placement and progress toward degree. Further, academic advising also served as the office that worked with students to arrange reasonable accommodations for disabilities. (CFRs 2.12, 2.13)

For academic support, preparatory workshops were provided to incoming students needing additional ESL instruction, preparation to use the software required for their graduate study in the MArch 2 program, and support when transferring into SCI-Arc at a 1B studio placement or higher. Social support efforts enhanced the development of the institution's community for students through the creation of programs offering peer mentorship and the formation of affinity groups. The direct contact among students, as conceived in the peer mentorship program, fostered a community of support for SCI-Arc's undergraduate students. Further, the affinity groups – in both their numbers and the diversity they represented – included the participation of faculty and staff. The team commends SCI-Arc's enthusiastic efforts to create community on campus through the peer mentorship program, the affinity groups, and the advancement of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

Additional student support was directed toward students' health and well-being. Counseling resources offered to students underscored the need to ensure students maintained their mental and physical health during their studies at SCI-Arc. A career services unit was established as a new area at the institution that connected students with resources directed at their professional careers ahead. In support of the considerable international student population, the career services area had reached out to employers not only to establish a successful network

for future jobs but also to develop a deeper understanding of the process for hiring alumni of SCI-Arch who will be working on a visa. The team commends the proactive effort of the career services unit and suggests an even deeper engagement of this area with alumni, the industry, and students about to launch their careers.

The team met with students in an open discussion to confirm their experiences with these academic and social support offerings. As described earlier in this report, a variety of points of view were represented in the students' response, with an emphasis on the volume of their needs and the necessarily limited number of personnel positioned to assist them in so many ways. Amplifying the effective work of student services and support staff as the team recommended in Section 2 of this report will further promote student success and match the capacity of these resources with the current needs.

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

Program Review & Assessment (CFRs 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5)

SCI-Arc's three professional degree programs (BArch, MArch 1, MArch 2) underwent program review as a function of its accreditation from the National Architecture Accreditation Board (NAAB). Notably, the institution received four separate "Conditions Met with Distinction" including "Learning Culture," "Architectural Design Skills," "Environmental Systems," and "Integrative Design." While NAAB accreditation served as the primary review for the professional degree programs, the team suggests SCI-Arc create a crosswalk between the NAAB requirements and best practice for program review to ensure alignment.

Assessment within the liberal arts curriculum had not taken place. With the general studies/liberal arts program in year three of a five-year rollout, SCI-Arc had plans for assessment,

including exit interviews for students completing the curriculum, but an organized self-assessment with a review of archived student work was not expected to begin until 2026. While the coordinator of general studies/liberal arts was incorporating course evaluation feedback into courses, the team suggests that SCI-Arc conduct initial assessment of student work so that the faculty have student learning information to determine how they might improve courses and determine if the new curriculum is on the right path for meetings its goals.

There were multiple opportunities for assessment of program learning outcomes at SCI-Arc through design reviews, thesis exhibitions and reviews, spring shows, and portfolio reviews, where student work was viewed and evaluated. The gateway portfolio and final thesis reviews were natural points to fully build out assessment since that was where a comprehensive review is occurring for all students within their degree program. These reviews and critiques provided faculty with firsthand insights into student learning, often through oral presentations, written arguments, and design showcases, offering ample opportunities to assess various program learning outcomes and, at the undergraduate level, the WSCUC Core Competencies. Additionally, samples of student work were routinely collected, aggregated, and archived each semester, aligning with the accreditation expectations of the National Architecture Accrediting Board (NAAB). These practices, as stated in the 2016 team report, indicated that the institution was well-positioned to further develop components of student learning assessment.

Despite the valuable insights provided by these mechanisms, the current processes still lacked articulation of the qualitative review process and fall short of outcomes-based assessment, as noted in the 2016 team report. The reviews focused on evaluating each individual student and – to comprehensively assess student work – required the articulation and implementation of a few more steps. Additionally, student learning was not then going through a data-informed analysis that linked to teaching and/or curricular change and planning. It is imperative for SCI-Arc to define

and document the qualitative evaluation criteria to refine their assessment tools, collect, analyze, and interpret data about how students are learning for each program learning outcome. (CFR 2.4)

Furthermore, post-review discussions among faculty, held during semi-annual departmental curriculum committee meetings, curricular area meetings, and annual faculty retreats, were current institutional mechanisms for reviewing student learning assessment information and making subsequent changes to teaching and learning. This process, though, still fell short of what WSCUC understands as outcomes-based assessment in that the evaluation of student work did not have evaluation criteria laid out, faculty noting how students performed, analyzing the information, and then making changes to teaching and learning. When asked for an example of how observed student learning in the reviews moved into discussion within the faculty meetings and retreats and consequently led to curricular change, the team received the same answer as noted in the 2016 team report: The undergraduate thesis work was becoming increasingly abstract leading to project refinement. While this example did showcase connection between the reviews and curricular change, the focus was on clarification of the assignment rather than on student learning. That being said, these institutional mechanisms held great promise as part of an effective assessment process and the team suggests that SCI-Arc ensure the faculty retreats focus directly on learning assessment and develop the capacity to capture this assessment data to guide teaching and learning improvements. Thus, the team recommends that SCI-Arc formalize program learning outcome assessment in the student review processes by documenting the criteria used to assess student work, evaluating how individual students performed based on that criterion, and using that information to pursue the ongoing improvement of teaching and learning.

For programs not covered by NAAB, SCI-Arc desired to create a program review process to complement the rigorous process undergone through NAAB. SCI-Arc created self-study

instructions and a schedule for reviews. The team suggests that SCI-Arc review these self-study instructions to ensure adherence to program review best practices using an evidence-based approach to describing, analyzing, and reflecting on the program's work to date, results of student learning assessment, and how this informs future plans.

The non-professional degree programs did not currently undergo program review. The team observed a program review schedule for the postgraduate programs, general studies/liberal arts, and the new BS in Design program. The program review schedule did not include the non-degree granting programs.

For the MS degrees, the postgraduate programs were re-structured in 2016-2017. Since that time, the number of postgraduate programs has increased from two to a peak of five independent three-semester programs, with the fifth program established in 2020-2021 and one of the programs discontinued before the time of the visit, to leave four postgraduate programs enrolling students. When asked why the programs had not undergone program review, the team received the answer that this was due to three reasons: 1) One of the programs is only in its second year of operation, 2) Program enrollment was small and needed to grow, 3) The program wanted to emphasize long-term outcomes of its alumni and, thus, needed a larger number of graduates. The MS programs were currently undergoing a one-year self-study phase with external reviewers' visits scheduled for fall 2024.

The general studies/liberal arts curriculum had undergone revision and was currently in year three out of a five-year implementation. The self-study phase for the general studies/liberal arts program was slated to commence in fall 2026, with external reviewers' visits scheduled for fall 2027.

For any degree (or the general studies/liberal arts curriculum) that undergoes revision or is newly created, SCI-Arc should consider a shorter timeframe in which programs undergo program

review. This would provide programs with the opportunity to reflect on the program's effectiveness, its curricular offerings, faculty expertise, student learning and program outcomes, and the strengths and challenges facing the program. It provides an opportunity for the program and institution to pause and collect information about how the program is going thus far enabling it to course correct, if needed.

It is crucial for SCI-Arc to adhere to a program review schedule to offer evidence and support for curricular restructuring and/or overhauls. Given the institution's tradition of continually evolving its curriculum to remain at the forefront of architecture, there will never be a time when these programs remain status quo for an extended period. Thus, program review should actively contribute to the assessment and development of these curricula. (CFR 2.7)

Additionally, for forthcoming programs, like the soon-to-be-launched BS degree, or newly revised curricula, SCI-Arc should consider accelerating the timeframe for program reviews. This strategy offers programs a significant opportunity to gather insights into their progress and evaluate effectiveness, curriculum, faculty expertise, student learning, as well as assess strengths and challenges prior to multiple cohorts graduating.

Due to the 2016 Commission recommendation about program review and the institution's slow progress in fulfilling that recommendation, the team recommends that SCI-Arc finalize a consistent program review process to be applied to all degree programs and general education, including the examination of student learning outcome attainment. Complete the pending program reviews for the MS degree programs and the general studies/liberal arts curriculum. (CFR 2.7)

Data Collection and Analysis (CFR 1.2, 2.10, 4.1)

SCI-Arc dedicated resources to bolster its institutional research capabilities, including the establishment of an institutional research analyst. Izenda, a web-based reporting solution, was

added to augment Jenzabar EX, the school's Student Information System (SIS). Microsoft Power BI was introduced to generate interactive dashboards and reports featuring customized visualizations, along with the ability to consolidate data from diverse sources into a single report. Leaders and department heads expressed to the team enthusiasm for the insights garnered through these reports and dashboards, recognizing the valuable contributions of the IT and IR staff in facilitating data access. An illustrative example provided to the team involved the creation of a report for academic affairs to project elective course seat availability, including details on low-enrolled courses, popular elective categories, and faculty popularity. This resource was pivotal in facilitating informed decision making and guiding leaders and chairs to selecting and determining the quantity of elective offerings. (CFR 4.2)

Assessment of the program learning outcomes and program review were not currently supported by institutional research. However, as SCI-Arc formalizes and finalizes its assessment and program review processes, institutional research should play a role in actively supporting the programs in establishing collection mechanisms, visualizing data, and providing education on how to interpret and analyze student success data. Moreover, institutional research can provide indirect data on student learning for assessment and insights into the student experience and success for program review through surveys. Surveys currently used were all locally developed. To diversify the survey repertoire, SCI-Arc should consider participating in specific national or consortia published surveys as relying solely on locally developed surveys means missing out on the advantages offered by benchmarking results.

Although progress has been made, the team observed that data analysis was left up to the individual end-users, potentially hindering a deeper understanding of trends about student success. To address this, SCI-Arc should continue to invest in the professional development of its

institutional research staff to enhance the skillset and knowledge related to best practices. (CFR 4.2)

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

As higher education adapts to post-pandemic changes, institutions must remain true to their mission while being ready to pivot. Colleges and universities are still recovering from the pandemic's impact, with shifts in regulations and funding affecting the sector. SCI-Arc, a top architectural school, must address enrollment and financial challenges caused by the pandemic. To ensure a better financial future, SCI-Arc needs a collaborative, transparent, and strategic approach that reimagines and transforms the institution. (CFR 3.4)

The Impact of Enrollment Management on Financial Planning

SCI-Arc's financial viability was underpinned by its ability to enroll and retain students. According to the FY23-24 approved budget, the largest revenue source for the institution was tuition, which comprised 91% of gross revenue. Contributions (which included grants) and other revenue (which included student fees) account for the remaining revenue sources: 5.6% and 3.4%, respectively. While S&P Global assessed one of SCI-Arc's strengths as sound financial resources relative to operating expenses and debt for the rating level (as of September 2023), an area of concern expressed by S&P was the modest enrollment declines over the recent past, and that future stress on the institution's demand could ultimately jeopardize their BBB+/stable rating. In addition, S&P cited small total enrollment, including more than 60% international students, and niche programming lending itself to market fluctuations.

While SCI-Arc acknowledged that the AY23-24 incoming class was 12% lower than expected, management attributed this decline to the challenges in the increasing cost of tuition and attendance, a dip in international students from China due to economic and political issues, and visa constraints. However, during the site visit, it was not clearly articulated how SCI-Arc would address these issues. Management shared that SCI-Arc hired consultant Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) in AY22-23 to help assess admissions and recruiting, as well as admissions scholarship awards. While some RNL recommendations were implemented (e.g., use of new Slate software and changes to the website), SCI-Arc did not receive the full benefit of RNL due to its small size and in how scholarships and financial aid were not strategically leveraged in recruitment efforts. Students voiced their concerns about how scholarships were distributed. Although management discussed increasing the discount rate to attract more students, a strategic plan did not establish how to undertake such an effort. There was no evidence to suggest collaboration between admissions and the financial aid office. It appears that both areas functioned in silos. Management acknowledged that additional financial literacy was needed to discuss value propositions to students debating if a college degree is necessary as well as to explain the cost of attendance to combat 'sticker shock.' During the visit the team heard how SCI-Arc marketed to new students through staff and faculty visiting international areas for recruitment outreach, and evidence reviewed in this report's appendices indicated that SCI-Arc engaged in other recruitment and marketing approaches as well. Although the institutional report stated that academic leadership, academic affairs, admissions, financial aid, and communications worked to respond and improve the admission process, this was not evidenced during the site visit.

The team recommends that SCI-Arc devise and implement a strategic enrollment management plan encompassing the collaboration of recruitment, retention, communication, and financial aid that contributes to the institution's financial resource stability. (CFR 3.4)

Short- and long-term plans for increasing non-tuition revenue and financial support, such as fundraising campaigns and endowment management

With a tuition dependency of 91% and total student-driven revenue of 95%, SCI-Arc enrollment management was critical to the financial viability of the institution. Management discussed the accordion landscape of enrollment, with enrollment being unpredictable over the next five years. As such, SCI-Arc acknowledged that fundraising could assist with diversifying its revenue pool. While SCI-Arc did not have an Advancement team, the institution had astute trustees who outlined the four prongs of fundraising that could benefit the institution: 1) efforts to galvanize the board (with 100% board participation to giving), 2) alumni outreach, 3) traditional fundraising (expanding friends and family of the institution) and 4) corporate giving and foundation grants. SCI-Arc must not only instill a culture of philanthropy/fundraising but also reimagine what fundraising is to the institution.

SCI-Arc's investments are managed by an outside investment organization that was subject to oversight by the SCI-Arc's Investment Committee. (CFR 3.9) S&P cited that SCI-Arc's financial resources were solid for the rating category and credit strength. While SCI-Arc's cash and investments declined from $62.1M in 2021 to $54.9M in 2022 due to market volatility, SCI-Arc's cash and investments increased to $56.5M in 2023. The institution had a modest draw of 4% of each endowment fund's average investment balance over the last 36 months. The institution used $1M of non-endowed funds to fund DEI scholarships for the operating budget. The evidence reflected that SCI-Arc was prudent in its use of its endowment investment. (CFR 3.4)

The relationship of academic program development and the institution's financial planning

The academic offerings and academic rigor are critical to the future of any educational institution. SCI-Arc was no different in that regard to other institutions of higher education. The types of programs offered have been what attracts a student to the institution. SCI-Arc offered undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate degrees as well as non-degree programming. The relationship between academic program development had a direct impact on the institution's financial planning.

SCI-Arc engages in cost/financial analysis when deciding to start a new program. Per program costs with net tuition revenue were the economic and academic data that determined the decision to move forward with a new program. Management stated that net tuition revenue for undergraduate programs were positive, graduate programs provided a break-even for the institution, while postgraduate programs were subsided. An example was provided that such analysis could yield different results. While the BS in Design's cost analysis determined that there was a market for this degree and the costs to start the program would be reduced as the program did not require hiring new faculty, the Design of Cities program's analysis determined that from a financial and student interest perspective, the degree was no longer viable and was discontinued. Management was able to articulate and demonstrate that academic program development and sunset were viewed with a financial lens such that programs were not a strain on the operating budget. For those programs that were no longer serving the interest of the students or the industry, those programs' resources could be reallocated.

The impact of recent investments in infrastructure, personnel, and technology on the student experience

In the institutional report, it was noted that SCI-Arc invested in infrastructure, personnel, and technology. New personnel were added to the community: student services specialist, director of diversity, equity and inclusion, community engagement coordinator, career services advisor, academic advisor, environmental health and safety coordinator, coordinator of learning assessment, and postgraduate programs chair. During the visit, the team learned that Admissions hired a new counselor who has background in CRM/Slate. (CFR 3.1)

As observed during the visit, the students were engaged and vibrant. The educational setting, with the recent investments in technology and facilities, lent to the creativity and innovative thought inside and outside of the classroom. It was evident in the creation of these new positions and offices that SCI-Arc was driven by student-focused priorities. As they noted during the visit, the students enjoyed an enriched experience at SCI-Arc, although they voiced concerns about timely communication regarding course registration and timeliness in services related to financial aid and registration. Another concern was about the location of the financial aid office. Students sought a one-stop shop for their student services; however, the financial aid office was located in a building separate from the institution's main facility.

Plans for multi-year technology replacements, and facilities deferred maintenance, upgrades, and future development

During the site visit, it was demonstrated that significant investments in remote learning software and renovated state of the art hybrid-flexible classrooms were made during the pandemic to augment student learning experience. The investments of technology in the classrooms were impressive and enhanced the delivery of instruction and the quality of the program. It appeared

that SCI-Arc was current in their technology needs, replacing faculty and staff computers every three years, student labs every three to five years, infrastructure every eight to ten years, and security and firewall upgrades every five years. These replacement cycles were within industry standards. Also, it was discussed that the Technology Committee met three times per year to discuss what technology should be implemented for curricular needs. (CFR 3.5)

Since 2016, SCI-Arc invested in the physical facilities of the campus with a new Robot Annex, new café, improved studio lighting, updated classrooms, relocated student store and print center, and student leisure areas. It was stated during the visit that improvements to the facilities were determined by the immediate needs (i.e. repairing of concrete, installing HVAC units) and student requests (i.e. for recreational fitness: a new basketball court, a pickleball court, and more green space). Management noted that roof maintenance will be needed, and they were exploring the use of solar panels; however, funding for the solar panels had not been identified. In addition, the Robot Annex was funded with a grant, yet the continued maintenance must be funded with the capital expenditure budget.

While meeting the needs of the students was a top priority when deciding the allocation of resources, management could not clearly articulate criteria how the operating budget was allocated or how capital projects were prioritized. It was reported that SCI-Arc had a capital expenditure budget between $900k -$1M – and would often exceed the budget if necessary. Management and the Trustees stated that the list of deferred maintenance was limited since SCI-Arc owns the building unencumbered. While budget prioritization wasn't clearly articulated, management provided an example of how they had two computer labs and upon the explosion of students with personal computers decided to decrease the number of computer labs to one.

SCI-Arc made significant progress in the updating and upgrading of technology and facilities improvements. While such improvements were enjoyed by the community, the team

notes that long-term plans and processes for how the deferred maintenance will be addressed or considered were being held for future strategic planning.

The status of the institution's current strategic plan and the new strategic plan development process

With the director/CEO's ten-year term set to end in August 2025, the strategic plan process was on hold until a new director was in place (CFR 4.6). The board acknowledged that the first step in the strategic plan process was to select the next CEO who would not only be able to make an impression on the plan but also fully embrace it, which would outline the future of the institution.

It should be noted that during the visit, the SCI-Arc community valued the contributions of the current CEO and all of the accomplishments made during his tenure (CFR 3.6). There was a sense of excitement for the search of a new leader who could take SCI-Arc to new places.

H. Component 8: Optional essay on institution-specific themes

No institution-specific themes were pursued in this review.

I. Component 9: Reflection and plans for improvement

SCI-Arc took several steps to enhance its educational offerings since the last WSCUC visit, with an aim to diversify the school's income stream. The institution introduced new MS and BS degrees, revised its curriculum, added new student services, and introduced diversity scholarships. The administration remained committed to managing enrollment, which will be crucial for the school's success due to its small size. Although SCI-Arc coped well with the challenges posed by COVID-19, it continued to struggle with international student recruitment, mainly from China. The administration's short-term goals were to "continue to support all

academic programs and diversity initiatives, to create a stable financial outlook including

attainable enrollment planning, and ensure a smooth transition to the next administration."

(Institutional report, page 67)

SCI-Arc continued to operate under its 2016 strategic plan. The institution and the board

chose to delay any new strategic plan until after the new director arrives (first delayed in 2022-2022

because of COVID-19). Recently, the board had identified two immediate concerns: financial

stability and enrollment challenges, which the board and the institution were presently addressing.

Until a new plan is in place, the institution planned to operate under the following five initiatives:

INITIATIVE 1. SCI-Arc will complete the restructuring of the Board of Directors. A

committed Board will focus on long-term planning of the Institute, on funding and

development, and on the integrity of governance practices.

INITIATIVE 2. SCI-Arc will continue to redefine the edge in architectural pedagogy through

open inquiry, critical dialogue, community engagement, and the integration of state-of-the-

art technology into its curriculum.

INITIATIVE 3. SCI-Arc will continue to enhance the Institute's stature in the public eye, to

engage its peers both nationally and internationally, and to provide alternative educational

opportunities to those institutions.

INITIATIVE 4. SCI-Arc to acquire its own urban campus in the downtown area of Los

Angeles. (Purchased in 2012, refinanced in 2017)

INITIATIVE 5. SCI-Arc will continue strengthening its administrative infrastructure and

improve administrative systems. (institutional report, page 65)

Section III – Other Topics, as Appropriate (such as Substantive Change)

No other topics were the focus of this review.

Section IV – Findings, Commendations, and Recommendations from the Team Review

Commendations

The team commends the Southern California Institute of Architecture for:

1. The institution's clear mission that guides all activities, and its history of a high level of innovation in the field of architecture.

2. Its dedication to an innovative studio pedagogy and new ways of learning through the use of the newest and most advanced industry practices and tools.

3. The creative culture of SCI-Arc, which emphasizes an extensive public review of student work, the collaborative spirit of the faculty, and nimble responses to past challenges.

4. Enthusiastic efforts to create community on campus through the peer mentorship program, the affinity groups, and the advancement of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

5. The institutional research function at SCI-Arc for its impressive progress with data resources and reporting tools achieved since the last visit, its responsiveness to campus needs, and its dedication to collaborative support for decision making.

Recommendations

The team recommends that SCI-Arc:

1. Continue to build on its investment in student services and support resources and policies, by expanding efficiency and transparency surrounding admissions, transfer credit, scholarship application, and awards, with an emphasis on additional academic advising, international student support, student health and wellness, and career counseling and placement. (CFR 2.13)

2. Formalize program learning outcome assessment in the student review processes by documenting the criteria used to assess student work, evaluating how individual students performed based on that criteria, and using that information to pursue the ongoing improvement of teaching and learning. (CFR 2.4)

3. Finalize a consistent program review process to be applied to all degree programs and general education, including the examination of student learning outcome attainment. Complete the pending program reviews for the MS degree programs and the general studies/liberal arts curriculum. (CFR 2.7)

4. Devise and implement a strategic enrollment management plan that encompasses the collaboration of recruitment, retention, communication, and financial aid, and that contributes to the institution's financial resource stability. (CFR 3.4)

5. Administer a campus climate survey to SCI-Arc's faculty and staff, present its findings to the campus, and pursue action plans in response. (CFRs 2.1, 4.1, 4.3)

FEDERAL COMPLIANCE FORMS

$_1$ - 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 **SCI-Arc Evidence:** Student Handbook **pp. 20-21:** Credit Hour Policy Faculty Handbook **pp. 9-10:** Credit Hour Policy	Is this policy easily accessible? **X** YES ☐ NO
	If so, where is the policy located? The Student Handbook and Faculty Handbook.
	Comments: The institution's policy on credit hour is easily accessible.
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)? **X** YES ☐ NO
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? **X** YES ☐ NO
	Comments: The curriculum committee ensures credit hour assignments are accurate and reliable.
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet Fall 2023 Schedule of Classes	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? **X** YES ☐ NO
	Comments: According to the Schedule of Classes, the on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours.
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses *Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.* N/A	How many syllabi were reviewed? N/A
	What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? N/A
	What degree level(s)? ☐ AA/AS ☐ BA/BS ☐ MA ☐ Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? N/A
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? **N/A**
	Comments: N/A
Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed	How many syllabi were reviewed? 3
	What kinds of courses? Internship, workshop, and independent study.

hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated) *Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.* [Internship Syllabus Example](#) [Workshop Syllabus Example](#) [Independent Study Syllabus Example](#)	What degree level(s)? ❒ AA/AS **X** BA/BS **X** MA ❒ Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Architecture
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? **X** YES ❒ NO
	Comments: The syllabi describe work consistent with the credit hours assigned to the courses.
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials) **SCI-Arc Evidence:** [Course Catalog](#) **SCI-Arc Website:** [Undergraduate Programs](#) [Graduate Programs](#) [Postgraduate Programs](#)	How many programs were reviewed? 2
	What kinds of programs were reviewed? BArch and MArch 1
	What degree level(s)? ❒ AA/AS **X** BA/BS **X** MA ❒ Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Architecture
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? **X** YES ❒ NO
	Comments: The programs reviewed are of a generally acceptable length and designed according to the disciplinary accreditor (NAAB) expectations.

Review Completed By: Kelly Wahl

Date: March 29, 2024

2 - Marketing and Recruitment Review Form

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

Material Reviewed	Questions and Comments: Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this table as appropriate.
**Federal regulations	Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students? **X** YES ❐ NO
	Comments: Federal regulations are followed when recruiting students.
Degree completion and cost **SCI-Arc Website:** Prospective Students Applying to SCI-Arc	Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree? **X** YES ❐ NO
	Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree? **X** YES ❐ NO
Undergraduate Programs Graduate Programs Postgraduate Programs Cost to Attend and Net Price Calculator Financial Aid	Comments: The information is readily available on the institution's website.
Careers and employment **SCI-Arc Career Services**	Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? **X** YES ❐ NO
	Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable? **X** YES ❐ NO
my.sciarc portal: Career Resources page via my.sciarc. Available during onsite visit.	
	Comments: Career Services provides this information.

*§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: Kelly Wahl

Date: March 29, 2024

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 **SCI-Arc Evidence:** **my.sciarc student portal:** SCI-Arc Grievances and Complaints Procedures Student Handbook **pp. 70-81:** Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination Policy **p. 77:** Reporting Cyberbullying **p. 80:** Reporting Harassment	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints? **X** YES ☐ NO
	If so, is the policy or procedure easily accessible? Is so, where? SCI-Arc student portal and Student Handbook
	Comments: The policy and procedures are easily accessible.
Process(es)/ procedure	Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? **X** YES ☐ NO If so, please describe briefly: As explained in the documentation, it varies by situation type.
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? **X** YES ☐ NO
	Comments: The institution adheres to all policies and procedures.
Records	Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? **X** YES ☐ NO If so, where? It varies with the situation type.
	Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? **X** YES ☐ NO If so, please describe briefly: It consists of consulting the records collected, which vary by situation type.
	Comments: Records are stored by academic advising, academic leadership, human resources, and student services, depending on the situation type.

*§602-16(1)(1)(ix)

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

Review Completed By: Kelly Wahl

Date: March 29, 2024

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) **SCI-Arc Evidence:**	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit? **X** YES ☐ NO
SCI-Arc Website:	If so, is the policy publicly available? **X** YES ☐ NO If so, where? The institution's website.
Transfer Students and Articulation Agreements Student Handbook	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? **X** YES ☐ NO
p. 23-25: Transfer and Waiver Process	Comments: The institution's documents communicate this policy and the formal procedure for receiving transfer credit.

*§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: Kelly Wahl

Date: March 29, 2024

Distance Education Review
Team Report Appendix

Institutions must have WSCUC approval to utilize distance education in the delivery of any of its programs in any amount, and are required to seek WSCUC approval for programs where 50% or more of the program can be completed through distance education. The institution's use of distance education in the delivery of its programs is reviewed as part of a comprehensive evaluation of the institution including an Accreditation Visit or Seeking Accreditation Visit.

Distance Education is defined as:

Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed below to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor or instructors and to support **regular and substantive interaction** between the students and the instructor or instructors, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies that may be used to offer distance education include:

- The internet;
- One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband, fiber optic, satellite, or wireless communication devices;
- Audioconference;
- Other media used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in this definition

In keeping with federal expectations, WSCUC requires institutions that utilize distance education in the delivery of programs to demonstrate "Faculty-Initiated Regular and Substantive Interaction" and "Academic Engagement" as defined by the federal regulations (see Code of Federal Regulations §600.2).

Regular and Substantive Interaction is engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and also includes at least two of the following:

(i) Providing direct instruction;

(ii) Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework;

(iii) Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency;

(iv) Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or

(v) Other instructional activities approved by the institution's or program's accrediting agency.

An institution ensures regular interaction between a student and an instructor or instructors by, prior to the student's completion of a course or competency -

(i) Providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency; and

(ii) Monitoring the student's academic engagement and success and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student.

Academic Engagement requires active participation by a student in an instructional activity related to the student's course of study that –

(1) Is defined by the institution in accordance with any applicable requirements of its State or accrediting agency;

(2) Includes, but is not limited to -

(i) Attending a synchronous class, lecture, recitation, or field or laboratory activity, physically or online, where there is an opportunity for interaction between the instructor and students;

(ii) Submitting an academic assignment;

(iii) Taking an assessment or an exam;

(iv) Participating in an interactive tutorial, webinar, or other interactive computer-assisted instruction;

(v) Participating in a study group, group project, or an online discussion that is assigned by the institution; or

(vi) Interacting with an instructor about academic matters

Please complete Section B for institutions that utilize distance education in the delivery of programs that do not rise to the level of a WSCUC approved distance education program.

Institution: The Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc)

Type of Visit: Reaffirmation of Accreditation (Comprehensive Visit)

Name of reviewer/s: Kelly Wahl (Assistant Chair)

Date/s of review: March 29, 2024

Section Completed: B

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report for all comprehensive visits 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.

SECTION B: For Institutions Without Approved Distance Education Programs

1. Courses reviewed (as appropriate; please list)

    N/A

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

    During the visit, the team met with the director, CAO, chief administrative officer, program chairs, and information technology management. All parties confirmed that the institution offers in-person courses only.

Nature of Online Learning Courses. How do faculty use distance learning options in face to face courses e.g., blended learning, hybrid learning, hybrid flexible (hyflex), flipped classroom, or other instructional strategies that allow student/instructor separation? How extensive is distance learning in the curriculum?	All of SCI-Arc's programs are 100% onsite. However, faculty can incorporate distance learning or hybrid distance learning options in their courses on rare occasions, such as allowing for a guest lecturer to attend a course remotely, or using the technology to allow for the sharing of computer interfaces during a lecture. Distance learning options may also be granted as exceptions on rare occasions in the event of students/faculty health, or VISA/travel issues. All Seminar classrooms and Studios have technology that support distance learning options such as the use of Zoom, Teams, and Miro softwares.	The team confirmed the narrative provided on this form about the nature of instruction at SCI-Arc.

Faculty and Student Preparation for Distance Education. What training is offered to faculty who incorporate distance learning in their courses? Can students request a distance learning option for onsite courses? How is their placement in the option determined? What orientation to distance education do students receive?	The SCI-Arc Media Department offers training on all classroom and studio technologies that are be made available to support any distance education teaching needs. Training videos and software support is available through the IT office available to all students, faculty, staff on how to use the Zoom, Teams, Miro softwares. Students may request through Student Services an exemption option to attend remotely due to certain health/Visa/Travel issues. These exemptions are rare and only for limited durations.	The team confirmed the narrative provided on this form about the preparation of faculty and students for the use of distance education technology.

Quality of the Distance Education Infrastructure. Are the learning platform and academic infrastructure of the institution conducive to learning and interaction between faculty and students and among students? Is the technology adequately supported? Are there back-ups?	Since the implementation of the new distance learning technologies such as Zoom, Teams, Miro, and renovated technology classrooms, students and faculty have an even stronger ability to interact and connect during the learning process. All technology and Distance Learning tools are fully supported by the SCI-Arc IT and Media offices. Staff are onsite to perform any support needs. Zoom and Teams offer backup platforms for Distance learning and school provided full equipped technology classrooms allow backup for faculty to use.	The team confirmed the information provided on this form regarding SCI-Arc's distance education infrastructure.

Faculty Initiated Regular and Substantive Interaction. How does the institution ensure compliance with the federal expectation for "faculty-initiated, regular and substantive interaction"? How is compliance monitored? What activities count as student/instructor substantive interaction"?	Since all degree programs at SCI-Arc are 100% onsite, Regular and Substantive Interaction occurs everywhere at the institute. Students are given direct instruction and feedback by faculty. Every student at the institute has their own onsite personal workspace (including provided desk/chair) organized by cohort throughout the SCI-Arc building. Design Studio instruction takes place in person between faculty and students in an open studio environment. Seminars take place in onsite classrooms at regularly scheduled days/times during the week. Distance Education technologies are used to enhance that experience.	The team confirmed the information provided on this form regarding faculty initiated regular and substantive interaction.

Academic Engagement. How does the institution ensure compliance with the federal expectation for "Academic Engagement"? How is compliance monitored? What activities contribute to academic engagement?	As described earlier, all degree programs at SCI-Arc are 100% onsite, Academic Engagement occurs everywhere at the institute. Students are given direct instruction and feedback by faculty in one of SCI-Arc's Design Studio locations and individual classrooms. Every student at the institute has their own onsite personal workspace (including provided desk/chair) organized by cohort throughout the SCI-Arc building. Design Studio instruction takes place in person between faculty and students in an open studio environment. Seminars take place in onsite classrooms at regularly scheduled days/times during the week. Studio reviews occur in review spaces throughout the building to create a shared experience. Distance Education technologies are used to enhance that experience.	The team confirmed the information provided on this form regarding academic engagement.

Student Identification Verification and Privacy. What is the institution's process for student verification, e.g., a secure login and pass code; proctored examinations; other technologies or practices that are effective in verifying student identification? What precautions are taken by the institution to protect technology from cyber security intrusions on its or outsourced systems? Are additional student charges associated with the verification of student identity disclosed at the time of registration or enrollment?	Access to the SCI-Arc IT systems and online/digital resources are controlled by the use of user IDs, passwords, and multi-factor authentication. All user IDs and passwords are uniquely assigned to faculty and students. Faculty/students must complete their multi-factor authentication set up prior to use of SCI-Arc IT systems and services. The SCI-Arc IT Department collaborates with a third-party vendor to conduct External Penetration Testing, Internal Security Assessment, and a Social Engineering exercise related to Cyber Security. As part of the Cyber Security Program, ITS has created two policies: **Information Security Policy** – Framework for safeguarding SCI-Arc's Infrastructure, and the **Security Incident Response Policy** – Expectations for managing Information Security Incidents.	The team found the student identification, verification, and privacy measures to be appropriate for the nature of the distance education technology and its use at the institution. The team confirmed the information provided on this form.

Quality Assurance. What processes are in place to collect data from courses that use some type of remote learning? How are the findings used to improve instruction?	SCI-Arc conducts course evaluations for all studios and seminars taught each semester. Course findings/results are shared with the Vice Director/Chief Academic Officer, Program Chairs, and Curriculum Coordinators, and discussed in Academic Leadership meetings.	The team confirmed the information provided on this form regarding these quality assurance processes.

Revised September 2022