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PRESIDENT
Mary Ellen Petrisko

July 8, 2016

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

Dear Director and CEO Alonso:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 22-24, 2016. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Accreditation Visit to SCI-Arc March 15-17, 2016. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by SCI-Arc prior to the Offsite Review (OSR), the supplemental materials requested by the team after the OSR, and the institution's May 20, 2016 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with your colleagues: Mr. John Enright, Vice Director/Chief Academic Officer and Mr. Paul Holliday, Chief Administrative Officer and ALO. Their 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 2023 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2024
4. Schedule the Mid-Cycle Review in spring 2020
5. Schedule an Interim Report to be submitted by March 1, 2020 to address the five recommendations from the team report:
 - a. The development, documentation, and application of shared expectations for student learning that account for standards of performance at different levels of the curriculum
 - b. Suggested improvements regarding General Studies and the Core Competencies
 - c. The development and implementation of a rigorous form of program review for General Studies, the other non-degree-granting programs, and the post professional degree programs
 - d. 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
 - e. The use of data 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.

Commendations

The Commission commends SCI-Arc in particular for the following:

1. Successfully navigating recent leadership changes with a clear understanding of its mission and a confidence in the maturation of SCI-Arc
2. SCI-Arc's commitment to create a diverse and international culture and community and for improvements in that regard
3. Faculty and student efforts in building a robust and generative learning environment, embodied in SCI-Arc's long-standing and renowned studio culture
4. The development of an ambitious and distinctive General Studies program
5. The commitment to fully support students and the mission of the Institution
6. Sustained leadership, as well as for leadership's discretion and engagement with the institution, including a renewed commitment to an effective board committee structure and to promoting diversity at all levels of the institution
7. The development of new spaces for learning and discovery
8. Success towards achieving financial stability
9. The continued deployment of an effective data management system and use of data in recruitment, admissions, and enrollment management.

Recommendations

The Commission identifies the following issues for further development:

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)
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 WASC-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)
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)
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)
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, 4.6)

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, The Commission confirms that SCI-Arc has addressed the three Core Commitments and has successfully completed the two-stage institutional review process conducted under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. Between this action and the time of the next review for reaffirmation, the institution is encouraged to continue its progress, particularly with respect to student learning and success.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of SCI-Arc's governing board in one week. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the SCI-Arc 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 SCI-Arc 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,



Mary Ellen Petrisko
President

MEP/cno

Cc: William Ladusaw, Commission Chair
Paul Holliday, ALO
Tom Gilmore, Board Chair
Members of the Accreditation Visit team
Christopher Oberg, Vice President
Geoff Chase, Vice President

REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM
For Reaffirmation of Accreditation

Southern California Institute of Architecture

March 14 – 17, 2016

Fred Fehlau, Chair, Provost, ArtCenter College of Design

David Chase, Assistant Chair, American Film Institute Conservatory

Jennifer Asselstine, Undergraduate Director of Architecture,
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Bruno Giberti, Associate Department Head, Architecture Department,
Faculty Coordinator, Academic Programs and Planning, California Polytechnic
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Dominick Tracy, Director of Learning Assessment and Accreditation,
California College of the Arts

Elizabeth Griego, WSCUC Staff Liaison

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

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SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of the Institution and its Accreditation History

The Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc) was founded in the early 1970s as the New School of Architecture, a private and independent school of architecture. Established by graduate faculty from Harvard and California State Polytechnic University in Pomona and led by Architect Ray Kappe, the school sought to establish an experimental and critically relevant counterpoint to what they felt were other more “rigidly” academic departments of architecture. SCI-Arc is one the world’s few stand-alone schools of architecture. Faculty and Board members of the institute have won the coveted Pritzker Prize and Rome Scholars Prizes, and have been Fellows and Gold Medalists of the American Institute of Architecture.

SCI-Arc’s five-year B.Arch, and M.Arch 1 and M.Arch 2 degree programs were initially accredited by the National Architecture Accrediting Board (NAAB) in 1976, and by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) in 1995. In 2008, the WASC Commission reaffirmed SCI-Arc’s accreditation and removed a previous Notice of Concern. At that time it also scheduled a reaccreditation timetable for completion in 2016.

SCI-Arc currently offers one-year, three semester postgraduate MS degrees in Architectural Technologies, and the Design of Cities. Two new postgraduate programs, Fiction and Entertainment, and Design Theory and Pedagogy, are currently pending WSCUC Substantive Change approval. It also holds a summer “Making+Meaning” workshops open to current college students and graduates, active professionals, and newly admitted M Arch 1 students. “Design Immersion Days” are offered for high school students.

In Fall 2015, SCI-Arc had an undergraduate enrollment of 255, a graduate enrollment of 227, and 21 students enrolled in their two postgraduate MS programs. It has identified an overall enrollment goal of 500-520 students as an optimum number for quality and capacity reasons, and has structured its business plan to accommodate that number.

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

SCI-Arc's current campus is located in a 90,000+ square foot, quarter-mile long facility, previously an abandoned Santa Fe Freight Depot, its third home after locations in Santa Monica and West Los Angeles, California. In 2011, SCI-Arc purchased the Santa Fe building and its adjacent parking lot with the support of its Board of Trustees and other financial supporters of the institute. Today, the neighborhood has undergone an urban renaissance, with several new residential, food and retail establishments.

Along with further renovations to the building's studio and administration spaces, SCI-Arc expanded its fabrication shops to include 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 both the "Magic Box" and the "Robot House" gives SCI-Arc the opportunity to differentiate the institution and the degree programs and to provide further leadership in the profession aligning with the mission of the school.

A master plan is currently underway to determine the feasibility and function of an additional facility to be built on the southwest corner of the parking lot.

MISSION

SCI-Arc defines its mission as a responsibility to "re-imagine the very edges of architecture, educating architects to engage, speculate, and innovate." It further elaborates this mission in terms of the following ambitions:

- To examine everything about the built environment — from design and materials to culture and experience
- To ask provocative questions to provoke new thinking and prompt new theoretical constructs
- To be international leaders in creating the future of architecture
- To create designs that change how people interact with each other and their environment

The studio-based learning environment at SCI-Arc is rigorous and demanding. Faculty and students engage with one another in degree-required studios, some of them vertical, as well as General Studies and other critical studies seminars. Students are highly motivated to push formal and conceptual boundaries, and their faculty members expect and encourage high levels of oral and visual presentation.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES, GOVERNANCE, AND DECISION MAKING

SCI-Arc has recently undergone a change in executive leadership. Eric Owen Moss, who held the directorship for 14 years from 2001 to 2015, successfully led the institute through a difficult financial period culminating in the purchase of the institution's building, left SCI-Arc to return to his professional practice. After an open search process engaging trustees, administration, faculty, students, and alumni, Hernan Diaz Alonzo, previously the Graduate Programs Chair, has been named Director and Chief Executive Officer, the fifth director in SCI-Arc's history. John Enright, previously Undergraduate Program Chair, has been named Vice Director and Chief Academic Officer. Faculty members Elena Manferdini and Tom Wiscombe have been named Graduate and Undergraduate Programs Chairs respectively. Architect and faculty member Ming Fung, who worked closely with Eric Owen Moss, has assumed the role of Chief of Strategic Advancement, and will work closely with all departments to build global recruitment and development partnerships for the institute.

The governance structure of SCI-Arc appears to be clear and effective. The Board of Trustees annually reviews its bylaws and has developed an effective committee structure. A recent change in board leadership has also allowed the board to align its goals with that of the new institutional leadership. The staff organizational structure is clearly articulated and because of SCI-Arc's small size, is easy for all members of the institution to understand.

In addition to the Board of Trustees and executive leadership, there are various other governance groups consisting of:

- The Academic Council (Faculty, Students, Staff and Leadership)
- Faculty Council (Faculty)
- Student Union (Students)
- Alumni Council (Alumni, Staff)
- Academic Affairs Committee (Faculty, Students, Staff and Academic Leadership)
- Curriculum Committees (Faculty and Academic Leadership)
- Academic Coordinators (Faculty)
- Enrollment Management Committee (Administration, Staff)
- Admissions Committee (Faculty, Program Chairs)
- Portfolio Committee (Faculty, Program Chairs)
- Scholarship Committee (Faculty, Program Chairs)
- Diversity Committee (Faculty, Students, Staff and Leadership)
- Design of Theory Fellowship Committee (Faculty, Program Chairs)
- Technology Committee (Faculty, Staff and Leadership)

Together, these committees afford the institution various venues and opportunities for discussion and crosschecking recommendations and decisions. The Visiting Team found that members of the community utilized these committees in an effective manner, and despite the number of committees for the relatively small size of the institution, they appeared to support one another's work rather than becoming redundant exercises in inclusion.

TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY

As described above, several members of the executive and senior staff are also new, and care is being taken to create greater capacity for shared decision-making and transparency. (In fact, the administrative offices have been moved to the ground floor with glass walls to physicalize that very intent.) Staff members consult with one another on policy and procedures, and faculty and students appear to be well informed if not involved with this level of institutional function.

The size of the institution; the faculty, staff and student population; the physical proximity of all constituents; the studio structure and schedule; and the openness and

transparency afforded by the building design - these all promote ongoing and dynamic face-to-face communication in a variety of settings and an ease of access to staff and directors. Faculty and students expressed the fact that expectations in terms of both student work and presentation were clear. Faculty highlighted the methodology of sharing all syllabi and reading lists as a benefit to continuity and clarity of each individual studio and course. Further, faculty spoke of the character of the conversations, whether they are in public, private or semi-private settings, as being frank, open and honest, promoting critique and feedback whether it be in evaluating student work or faculty contributions.

Because of the facility's size and layout, all activity is viewable at all times of the day, and much of the pedagogy relies upon this open and public presentation of work and ideas. There are many organized workshops and lectures, which also provide the community an opportunity to come together to discuss issues within the institution, the field of architecture, and the culture at large.

MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT REVIEW

Publically presented print and digital marketing materials appear to be clear and comprehensive, with defined requirements and program/degree descriptions. Promotional materials represent the profession in contemporary terms, with no apparent misrepresentations of the profession or stated promises of immediate employment. Further requirements for licensure that are not specifically SCI-Arc's direct responsibility are explained in a way that makes students' progression into the profession clear.

The newly launched website has a forward thinking design and innovative digital interface, and represents SCI-Arc's commitment to experimentation and speculative architecture. Print materials are equally engaging and match the brand identity of the website.

B. Description of Team's Review Process

During the Offsite Review, the Visiting Team identified six (6) lines of inquiry for the Accreditation Visit (see appendices for full text):

1. Governance and Planning
2. Evidence-Based Decision Making
3. Diversity
4. Assessment of Student Learning and Program Review
5. Student Retention and Graduation
6. Faculty and Staff Retention and Professional Development

The Visiting Team was presented with documentation addressing these lines of inquiry before and during its on-site visit. Many of these questions were answered and/or addressed. Some concerns have been carried forward as per other sections of this Team Report and spelled out in the recommendations, mainly those surrounding:

1. Assessment of Student Learning
2. General Studies and Core Competencies
3. Program Review
4. Faculty Development
5. Greater Capacity for Analysis of Data

During the time on site, the Visiting Team met with various members of the Institute, including board members, senior staff, general staff, faculty, and students; participated in specific meetings addressing diversity, finance, data collection, record keeping, governance, hiring, faculty/staff retention, student retention, and student success; and had the opportunity to tour the facility and see student/faculty interaction and classes in session.

All members of the community appeared to have a clear understanding of the Institute's mission and values, and expressed great enthusiasm for the learning environment that they have created and the success of its students and alumni. Since the team experienced such broad *esprit de corps* amongst members of the community, it found no reason for concern about any substantial underlying tensions or discord.

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

The institutional Report was thorough (if perhaps unnecessarily long), and displayed an open attitude to the accreditation process. The Visiting Team had limited but adequate time in the team room and was provided all of the documentation needed to complete this report. The team believes the report and the accompanying materials presented an accurate representation of the institution.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS

A. Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions

The Commission Action Letter of June 30, 2008 outlined several areas for the institution to address at the time of its next review:

1. Institutional Planning and Financial and Enrollment Management
2. Institute Governance and Administration and the Role of the Board and CEO
3. Faculty Roles, Policies and Professional Development
4. The Educational Effectiveness Inquiry and Systems for Enhancing Teaching Effectiveness and Learning Results
5. Enhancing Diversity within the Institute

Following are the Visiting Team's findings as to the institution's response to previous commissions concerns:

Institutional Planning and Financial and Enrollment Management: With the integration of the Jenzabar EX Enterprise Planning and Data Integration Software, the institution is building robust data gathering and planning structures that it was not able to create previously. Because of this, planning, finances and enrollment management are integrated into daily activities, and staff report success at running reports and analyzing data to make more effective decisions (CFRs 3.7, 4.5, 4.6).

Institute Governance and Administration and the Role of the Board and CEO: The recent search for the new director reaffirmed that the position must require a full-time commitment to the institution, with the expectation that the director engage in continued professional practice in appropriate balance with the responsibilities of the position. This is not uncommon in institutions of design and is an acknowledgement of the need for executive leadership to remain current in the practice. The newly defined Vice Director/Chief Academic Officer role also has this expectation (CFRs 3.8, 3.6, 3.9).

Faculty Roles, Policies and Professional Development: The Board Academic Matters Committee reviews the work of the Faculty Council and the Academic Council on an annual basis. A faculty liaison to the Board has been created; annual faculty peer reviews and five-year full-time faculty contracts have been established, and an Office of Development and Alumni Affairs has been created to better support alumni and faculty with professional development opportunities (CFRs 3.2, 3.4, 4.4).

The Educational Effectiveness Inquiry and Systems for Enhancing Teaching Effectiveness and Learning Results: Please see sections of this report concerning this issue.

Enhancing Diversity within the Institute: Although the data indicates unequal gender enrollment and a lack of ethnic and cultural diversity amongst students, improvements have been achieved since the last accreditation visit. A newly invigorated Diversity Committee is using data reports to create strategies for engagement with local communities and increasing retention amongst current students. The experience in the studio supports this data, and although there is still a lack of diversity amongst the faculty, there appears to be an ever-increasing diversity among the student body (CFR 1.4).

B. Component 2: Compliance with the Standards and federal requirements; Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators

SCI-Arc faculty and staff completed the Review under WSCUC Standards in a reflective and analytical way. Each CFR within each Standard contained comments that substantiated the self-rating and indication of importance to address the CFR. The comments also contained references to institutional data and documentation that provide evidence of compliance with the standards. Gaps in policies and procedures were identified and marked as areas for improvement, also corresponding to the CFR in question. The improvements indicated the actions either underway or in planning to address policy gaps. Similarly, the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI) was completed in a reflective and analytical way. Federal requirements for the credit hour, marketing and recruitment, student complaints, and transfer policy are met and in compliance.

The finding with respect to WSCUC Standards, which is subject to Commission review, is that while the team believes the Institute is in compliance at the level of each Standard, several Criteria for Review will need further thought and work to meet the full intention of the Criterion. These include CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7 and 4.1, as further explicated in this report.

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

The meaning, quality and integrity of SCI Arc degrees were discussed with different constituencies during the site visit. The Board of Trustees confirmed a commitment to institutional and financial stability through the successful acquisition and enhancement of the SCI ARC facilities at 960 East 3rd St. in the Arts District of Los Angeles, and to a tuition review and adjustment that now aligns with budget expectations. The Board also expressed a commitment to pedagogical freedom as well as to diversity at all levels of the institution. The Institutional Report speaks of the creation of “an adaptable and flexible system of relations between entities” that can embrace change. The faculty confirmed the rigorous faculty review

and studio review process, as well as the strong collaborative nature of the teaching community.

Alumni spoke of the identity of the SCI-Arc experience as one of building capacities for independent design thinking, curiosity and innovation; it is clear that confidence and positivity sustains a community of alumni that spans time and geographical location. Student representatives expressed the view that opportunities afforded within the studio, curriculum and governance structures pave the way for them to develop their individual paths towards unique professional endeavors in the future. Faculty engagement, the public lecture series and the recent addition of the humanities classes within General Studies was highlighted.

WSCUC seeks to combine these experiences, clearly expressed across the SCI-Arc community, with the assurance and evidence that students meet the standards of performance set by the institution. (CFRs 1.2, 2.2) Articulating institutional learning outcomes and program learning outcomes in student-focused language lays the foundation for building authentic mechanisms of assessment, which can provide the assurance and evidence. SCI-Arc has an admirable mission statement and institutional goals. There remains a need to translate institutional goals stated from the faculty and institutional point of view, describing content, approaches, and offerings into student-focused language describing verifiable learning outcomes and expectations and to further generate and integrate SCI-Arc's overarching program expectations into learning outcomes for each of the distinct professional, post-professional, and non-degree programs.

As evidenced by institutional materials, the professional degree programs (B.Arch, M.Arch 1, and M.Arch 2) address the student performance criteria common to professional architectural education and now listed on the SCI-Arc website as "learning objectives". The school has rich, critically defined institution-specific goals, which can be leveraged to better inform prospective students and other constituents as the program learning outcomes are developed beyond these stated goals.

The post-professional programs, both new and existing, are also challenged by a lack of clear learning expectations. Dialogue with new faculty responsible for these programs suggest that the school is in the process of developing a set of uniquely positioned degree programs. The team encourages the simultaneous development of student-focused program outcomes aligned with the aspirations for these forward-thinking offerings.

The General Studies programs have now been instituted and developed across the five-year curriculum. This accomplishment was described as beneficial in a number of ways by Directors, Program Chairs, Faculty, Staff and Students in supporting student success, furthering the mission of the school, enriching the educational environment and curriculum, and supporting the development of both fundamental skills and theoretical and conceptual understanding. Learning standards for the General Studies program, however, are yet to be clearly articulated or successfully assessed.

While several components of the SCI-Arc curriculum and practice indicate that the institution is well positioned to further develop components of learning assessment, the current mechanisms do not clearly articulate the qualitative review process that is taking place. The gateway and final thesis portfolio reviews clearly indicate a comprehensive review of all students at milestone points in the degree program. The articles of assessment remain quantitative in nature. The qualitative evaluation criteria driving quantitative assessment were described by faculty as taking place in a dialogue prior to the review amongst faculty. Transforming this dialogue into documentation can further empower faculty and students and provide the basis for demonstrable assessment results.

Harnessing the language set forth in the thesis prep syllabus, as an example, can inform both the evolution of degree program learning outcomes as well as support the development of qualitative assessment tools for Visual, Cultural and Applied Studies and the final thesis as a whole. Documenting the process that achieves faculty consensus in evaluation of both the

components and the overall student thesis submission can be beneficial in formulating consistent, institutionally relevant assessment tools for the comprehensive review of students and still allow for change over time.

SCI-Arc has workshops, policies, and academic expectations built around the gateway and thesis portfolio submissions in place. As learning outcomes and assessment tools expand, the team would highlight that the outcomes would further inform the broader set of communications that are in place for reinforcing student understanding of the expectations and mechanisms for review. (CFR 2.3, 2.6)

The Summer Retreat is an institutional mechanism for reviewing curriculum, specifically studio curriculum via the presentation of representative projects of high level work. This practice has, over time, supported the shared culture of teaching design, oriented new faculty, fostered discussion and facilitated consensus, and the scaffolding of curriculum from one level to the next while appraising the aspirations of existing faculty. It is also clear that this practice aligns with the curriculum review and student review prescribed by professional accreditation. This practice, however, falls short of what WSCUC understands as outcomes based assessment in that the review is not clearly one that evaluates student work comprehensively but rather selectively and the outcomes are not demonstrated in data-driven analysis that links to curriculum change and budget allocation (CFR 2.4).

New strides have been taken in the use of data collection and it was clear that Directors, Program Chairs, Staff and Faculty are appreciating the opportunities afforded by the investment in the Jenzabar information system. This was particularly evident in conversations with different members of the SCI-Arc community with regard to new student recruitment and enrollment tracking and orientation. Faculty members reference the use of student evaluations. The CFO identified budget planning that is based on data tracked by Directors, Faculty and Staff. These are examples of the culture of data-based decision making being embraced by the constituents.

The institution will be served by expanding on these successes and building more authentic tools for assessing students, curriculum, faculty and tracking the data over time. (CFR 2.7, 4.3)

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

SCI-Arc fosters a culture of deep reflection on the nature of student work and the relationship of that work to the goals of the institution. This culture is predicated on regular formative analysis that is consistent with SCI-Arc's mission and studio culture. While there is understanding of educational quality and student achievement, there is also great potential for more formal and evidence-based demonstration of student achievement over time at SCI-Arc.

The General Studies program is relatively new in its completion. While faculty and students have celebrated its existence, there is a need to formulate the institution's student learning objectives for this program in ways that are inclusive of, but not limited to, core competencies and to continue tracking student progress towards the goals. The team would highlight distinctions between core competencies, program learning outcomes for General Studies, and program learning outcomes for the degree programs (CFRs 2.2, 2.3). While interrelated, these distinctive components will benefit from being articulated and mapped in such a way that appropriate relationships can be seen, courses can scaffold and assessment can be appropriately located to capture emerging and graduation level skills.

SCI-Arc has the opportunity to highlight the relevancy of core competencies throughout the curriculum and within each degree program. As one student shared, an understanding of calculus was important in their design studio within the context of a design project. The core competencies are expanded upon in the professional courses, and the thesis project offers a unique opportunity to give evidence of the learning outcomes at the highest level for the institution, as it is authentically imbedded in the core curriculum and milestone project (CFR 2.4, 2.6). While General Studies may be an appropriate place for assessment of formative progress on

the WSCUC defined core competencies, the institution would do well to broaden the assessment process of core competencies beyond the General Studies program courses. The General Studies program may have additional institution-specific learning outcomes assigned to it that then would be assessed in the senior year General Studies coursework.

The General Studies exam as currently conceived and implemented does not demonstrate significant evidence of students meeting core competencies across the curriculum. Discussions with key faculty made it clear that the institution is reflecting upon and reconsidering what was learned from the first attempt to comprehensively capture evidence of student learning. It was of concern to the team that the test reflected a misunderstanding of at least some of the core competencies, e.g. quantitative reasoning and information literacy. This misunderstanding should be addressed before further development of the learning assessment. Other forms of student assessment may be more appropriate and provide relevant and authentic evidence that express the nature of core competencies and the institutionally defined competencies, as well as expressing the unique intentions and implied program outcomes in the SCI-Arc mission.

Furthermore, the institution has the opportunity to build on the current culture and practice of portfolio reviews, which are rich demonstrations of student abilities as they prepare to graduate. The gateway and thesis portfolio reviews constitute a foundation for comprehensive review of student achievement if assessment tools and documentation methods are refined for consistency with the articulation of program outcomes for General Studies and for both undergraduate and graduate degree program learning outcomes.

As identified earlier in this report, the summer retreat provides extraordinary benefits with respect to creating a shared knowledge of curriculum objectives, the development of continuity between concurrent and sequential courses and studios, orienting new faculty, and for building shared institutional memory that allows for transmission of knowledge over time and advancing practices from one year to the next. While the retreat presentations can set a

benchmark for the aspirations for each course and studio, they do not meet the expectations for assessment set forward by WSCUC. Assessment practices would be well served by expanding focus to student learning outcomes based on comprehensive student portfolio reviews and the documentation and accumulation of information about student learning outcomes over time in order to ascertain progress of student learning amidst the changing curriculum (CFRs 2.6, 2.7, 4.3).

The responsibility for identifying the relationship between degree program requirements, General Studies requirements, and the core competencies is that of the institution. The opportunity to highlight these student understandings and skills in the curriculum near graduation need not be limited to the thesis project; the team offers this possibility as an example based on the evidence of current evaluation practices. Many institutions are currently grappling with issues of identifying appropriate evaluation milestones and methodologies. SCI Arc is positioned to harness its unique architectural curriculum and is in a position to contribute to larger educational conversations as it moves forward in this area.

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

SCI-Arc does not explicitly define student success in the institution report, but it does identify several indicators of success — time to degree; completion of the undergraduate/graduate thesis; “accomplishments outside of the required co-curriculum,” i.e., the co-curriculum; pass rates on the Architectural Registration Exams; and other forms of accomplishment commensurate with a profession that is “expanding and changing daily” (75).

In its efforts to promote student success, the institution is explicit about its heavy reliance on the institution of the studio and the highly structured nature of the five-year B. Arch. curriculum. In this regard, the report is worth quoting at length:

Once a student enters a stream, a comprehensive curriculum aids in a timely and straightforward progress towards degree.... The steady curriculum stream is aided also by

the idea communicated to all students upon entering SCI-Arc that they belong to their class, and they will stay with their class through the first few years of core studios and lecture courses, and rejoin their class in its entirety in the final year for Thesis. The effect of this teaming of the students in their class and reinforcing it in the rigorous environment of shared studios lends itself to the idea that the students support each other as if they were a team or family, and that the basic team or family unit is a progressive class working at the same rate towards degree (75-76).

SCI-Arc's professional accreditor requires a studio culture policy, which should promote student success by addressing "the values of time management, general health and well-being, work-school-life balance, and professional conduct" (NAAB, "2014 Conditions for Accreditation," 10). The institution's policy addresses the issues required by the accreditor while articulating a positive studio culture *philosophy* that is consistent with the institution's mission and identity.

Although the first cohort to fully experience the General Studies program has not yet graduated, the institution considers the introduction of the program as a student success initiative. Prior to the program, students had to complete their breadth courses at neighboring community colleges, frequently after they had completed their architectural studies. This had the effect of delaying graduation, a phenomenon that is still evident in graduation rates that sometimes exceed persistence rates, as students return, statistically, to graduate. Still, the Vice Director/Chief Academic Officer believes that the initiative has shaved a year off undergraduate rates.

Where advising is concerned, SCI-Arc considers its small size to be an asset, because "the institution is able to offer more personal support services on a case-by-case basis." Services include faculty advising, specifically by distinguished visiting thesis advisors; mandatory advising by the single Academic Counselor for all undergraduates and some graduate students; and ongoing financial aid counseling. Students must enroll in what is described as a "very affordable" health insurance plan, and they enjoy a limited personal-counseling benefit. Pre-

orientation advising by the Academic Counselor is followed a new-student orientation by the counselor in collaboration with Admissions and the Registrar. The counselor continues to monitor satisfactory academic progress and makes recommendations on a student's course load and sequence.

Time to Degree. The Institutional Report contained links to two specialized documents on admissions, retention, and graduation. These are prepared annually and reviewed by the leadership. The team had access to a complete set of the most recent student, staff, and faculty data produced by Jenzabar EX, a tracking system that the institution adopted after the last WSCUC review. No narrative was provided in either case to indicate how the institution interprets the information in these reports. There was no benchmarking of the data to its own record or to that of peer institutions, and thus no context in which to understand their significance (CFR 2.10). It was apparent to the team that the Jenzabar system has provided the institution with significant data-producing capacity that currently exceeds its capacity for analyzing and interpreting the data.

The institution appears to have some understanding of the situation. The report cites as an area for improvement the institution's need "to continue efforts to improve institutional research functions.... The college needs to better develop methods to merge collected data into useful reports." (49). A sustained and documented attempt to explain the meaning of those numbers to all stakeholders, including WSCUC, will make data reporting a more useful tool. This will require, as the WSCUC handbook states, that "the institution benchmarks its retention and graduation rates against its own aspirations as well as the rates of peer institutions" (CFR 2.10). The report also cites the institution's need to "place more attention to [sic] the disaggregation of data collected for graduation/retention" (49); SCI-Arc should also understand that there are statistical limits to the disaggregation of small student pools.

Graduation Rates. The admission report shows that 100% and 150% graduation rates in the B. Arch. program peaked at 50% and 80% respectively for the 2008-09 cohort of first-time freshmen and then declined; the Jenzabar report shows a 150% rate of 83%. The report shows that the 100% rates for transfer students were higher, peaking at 72% for the 2010-11 cohort. In contrast, the 150% rates for transfer students were lower than those of first-time freshmen.

It should be noted that, although the B. Arch. program averages about 250 students, the number of first-time freshmen for the three cohorts graduating during the period under review was quite small, varying from 5 in 2008-09 to 14 in 2010-11. This makes for numbers that are probably not very meaningful, especially when disaggregated. It would have been more revealing if SCI-Arc had broadened its focus to present persistence and graduation rates not for the cohorts *entering* during the period under review, most of which have not yet graduated, but rather for rates of cohorts *graduating* during the period.

Graduation rates appear to be much higher in the graduate programs, and the numbers are such that the rates are probably more informative. In the M. Arch. 1 program, the 100% and 150% rates peaked at 88% and 90% for the 2011-12 cohort and then declined. Rates in the M. Arch. 2 program peaked at 91% and 100% for the 2012-13 cohort and then declined. There is no steady pattern of improvement in either program, and the institution offered no analysis or explanation.

The Jenzabar reports disaggregate graduation rates by gender, by citizenship, and by a combination of ethnicity and status as a first-time freshman or transfer student. These rates are not charted, nor is a gap analysis undertaken, so it is difficult to say for sure what the disaggregation reveals.

The institutional report does not address the WSCUC graduation rate dashboard. Although there is a section in the Jenzabar reports entitled “Unit Redemption,” this does not appear to be the analysis of student success in the form of unit-redemption and absolute-

graduation rates, which WSCUC has proposed as an addition to the traditional measures of student success. Incorporating these additional measures into its consideration of student success will put SCI-Arc on the analytical cutting edge.

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)

SCIARC's *Institutional Report (IR)* describes program and curricular review processes and assessment practices that are fundamentally aligned with its institutional mission: "re-imagining the edge: Educating architects to engage, speculate, and innovate." Thus, the goal of its program review and assessment processes appear to be first and foremost oriented towards disrupting its pedagogy and curriculum in alignment with this mission rather than in attending to a set of fully articulated, student-centered learning outcomes measured against defined expectations and used to shape courses, assessments, and reviews:

Plans for change for the curriculums of the programs emanate directly from the bodies that create its assessments. This is carried out in such an immediate and direct manner that the stages from assessment to implementation are often registered as small steps rather than a slow process of findings, studies, and so on. (80)

While there is a danger that this approach can result in tactical rather than strategic improvements, for the most part the approach appears to be working well as SCI-Arc's faculty are deeply and constantly engaged with student learning and its demonstration through reviews and critiques.

Additionally, as mentioned above, it is important to acknowledge that SCI-Arc's three professional degree programs undergo rigorous and internally meaningful program review as a function of its accreditation from the National Architecture Accreditation Board (NAAB). While the Institutional Report did not identify this as formal program review, these accreditation

reviews have shown SCI-Arc's professional degree programs to be delivering on its curricular mandates and intellectual ambitions effectively. In addition to these programs, the institution offers two research-based, post-professional degree programs, neither of which are subject to a systematic program/peer review as WSCUC understands it (CFR 2.7). In addition, there is no program review for the non-degree programs such as General Studies.

As far as the professional degree programs are concerned, the prescriptive nature of NAAB's standards provides a productive foil to SCI-Arc's interest in engaging students at Architecture's disciplinary boundaries. Thus, while the curriculum is regularly changed to ensure faculty and students engage with new projects, briefs, and design problems, the experimentation is balanced by the understanding that the professional program (BArch and MArch) must adhere to NAAB's mandates.

At the same time, the Team found the Institutional Report's description of SCI-Arc's "assessment loop" to be confusing. The steps of the cycle presented were:

1. Identify Need for Change.
Steps: Understand data. Identify gaps. Ask questions.
2. Build Tools for Change
Steps: Conduct internal reviews. Assess issues.
3. Analyze Data and Develop plans for Change
Steps: Apply findings to set goals for change. Propose change.
4. Review, Discuss, Approve and Implement Change
Steps: Ratify and apply changes. Re-evaluate and return to Step 1.

The team recommends that this model be reconsidered, as it does not appear to describe either a generic process or the institution's actual process. Assessment of learning begins with gathering evidence of student learning and re-viewing it through the lenses of explicit learning outcomes. This appears to correspond to the second step in the model above. Similarly, "building tools for change" (step two) would seem to follow setting goals for that change (step three) and would come near the end of an assessment cycle, but the model seems to reverse that ordering.

Additionally, the cycle does not incorporate the systematic gathering of evidence for assessment purposes.

Team conversations during the visit revealed that SCI-Arc appears to follow a more conventional approach to assessment in its professional degree programming, wherein evidence of student learning is assessed through the key review processes in the curriculum, successes and areas in need of improvement are identified, and actions meant to address these issues are proposed and taken with the understanding that this cycle will then be repeated. The most prevalent example of this is in the summer faculty retreats. Thus, the team recommends that the institution reconsider its understanding and articulation of the assessment cycle and clarify for itself how this process is actually conducted at SCI-Arc.

In practice, the approach to quality assurance in the professional degrees' programming is both effective and labor intensive. Faculty and the academic leadership are deeply committed to understanding student learning first-hand through the frequent critiques and periodic formal reviews (CFR 4.3). In addition, the scale and even architecture of the Institute are such that the faculty is constantly in contact with student work spanning the range of courses and projects from the BArch's first year through the final work in the M.Arch. The insights into student learning gained through its practices appear to be effectively consolidated in the annual retreats each year, where each course in the core curriculum is presented by its instructor to the entire core faculty along with the student work demonstrating the key learning. The Team was able to confirm during the visit that the ensuing discussions are substantive and lead to significant changes to the professional degrees' curricula where warranted based on both student learning and on the faculty's collective desire to ensure students encounter novel learning challenges rather than repeat "tried and true" assignments year after year.

One challenge for this approach to program review and assessment lies in that novelty itself, as the frequent changes to curricular content and projects means that faculty are

continuously responding to new kinds of student work, and thus may lack the insights that can emerge through assessment of a more stable curriculum over time. In this sense, the dynamism of the curriculum needs to be balanced against the expectation that the faculty is able to consistently and adequately gauge student success with the learning outcomes and respond with strategies that improve student attainment of those outcomes. This may be more difficult to achieve when the curriculum is so frequently changed.

This situation could be exacerbated by the lack of student-centered language in many of the learning outcomes the team reviewed on syllabi, so the team recommends that SCI-Arc undertake training around the paradigm shift in higher education that has long since taken place and recast its course and program learning outcomes to explicitly state what students can do upon the completion of each (CFR 2.3). As it stands, most of the learning outcomes statements the team reviewed followed the “input” model exemplified by the educational goals presented on the school’s website.

Student performance reviews are posited as another key assessment opportunity due to the direct faculty engagement with evidence of student learning. These reviews and critiques provide faculty with rich, firsthand knowledge of student competencies on individual as well as group bases, and thus provide invaluable insight into student learning. SCI-Arc provided the Visiting Team with one such example of this assessment process in response to the team’s request to see an illustrative example of the full assessment cycle. The example demonstrated how the undergraduate thesis reviews were re-tooled because faculty had concerns that the work was either too abstract or too idiosyncratic to allow them to evaluate student learning appropriately. The resulting changes to the thesis process (too new to evaluate) seem to address the issue by re-orienting students towards creating more comparable thesis presentations that are appropriate to their undergraduate level.

However, it is worth noting that the example—the only example provided to the team of the full cycle of the undergraduate assessment process—did not demonstrate a process whereby faculty reviewed evidence of student learning, identified issues with students' performance, and took action to address findings about student learning. Rather, the example showed faculty recognizing their difficulties evaluating--or assessing--students' work and the resulting changes were meant to address that rather than address student learning as revealed through assessment practices. Thus, the team again recommends that SCI-Arc ensure the faculty retreats focus directly on learning assessment and that the institution develops the capacity to capture and record this assessment data to guide their curricular and pedagogical interventions.

The General Studies programming does not appear to benefit from the same degree of student learning assessment as the professional degree programming and the team recommends that more resources be devoted to training faculty in this area to conduct assessment effectively and that this new and still evolving curriculum be oriented more effectively around a set of student-centered learning outcomes delivered through the requirements. This is particularly important given the role the General Studies programming is meant to play in delivering the Core Competencies.

The Institutional Report revealed ambivalence towards the practice of systematic assessment that—while certainly not unique to SCI-Arc--seems rooted in a reductive understanding of it:

Peer review through open juries and informal discussion is preferred over what are perceived as artificial attempts to quantify performance (i.e. statistical surveys or test scores), and student participation is encouraged. (82)

Oddly, the institution chose to develop and implement a test in its General Studies courses to assess student learning rather than to design and implement authentic assessment tools in which it could have more faith.

Thus, 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 WASC-defined Core Competencies by locating those competencies within both the General Studies and studio curriculums where appropriate; and 3) further develop authentic tools for the summative assessment of General Studies Learning Outcomes and Core Competencies.

Student Portfolios are identified as “a natural source for assessment of Student Learning”(79). While this is certainly the case, these portfolios are also used to evaluate the performance of instructors (cf Faculty Evaluation, Promotion, and Tenure document appended to the Institutional Report), thus conflating instructor performance evaluation with the assessment of student learning outcomes in ways that are problematic for effective assessment of learning. The team recommends SCI-Arc consider creating and communicating a more distinct “firewall” between the evidence it draws upon in reviewing faculty performance and the processes for assessing student learning.

Thus, the assessment and program review processes at SCI-Arc would benefit from more concerted effort to describe and systematically carry out a comprehensive assessment process at SCI-Arc. While the small scale of the institution and the immediate and rich sources of evidence of student learning available to faculty clearly provide insights into what is and what is not effective, these are fragmentary, providing glimpses unequally distributed across the curriculum and resulting in a lack of assessment data, particularly on the General Studies curriculum and as relates to the Core Competencies.

It will be essential that SCI-Arc develop systematic documentation of student learning to ensure its internal discussions are recorded and informed by previous activities so actions result in progress rather than repetition. In addition, evolving assessment practices will need to be

molded to the SCI-Arc context so that they can provide its faculty with consistent and comprehensive insight into the core components of student learning that it has identified and defined through explicit, documented internal consensus. In so doing, SCI-Arc will doubtless have much to contribute to the evolution of effective learning assessment, engaged as its faculty are with direct evidence of student learning.

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

SCI-Arc has invested resources to increase its institutional research capacity through its adoption of the Jenzabar-EX data system and the identification of several staff positions to utilize the system, collect data, and generate reports. The Institute does not have an office of institutional research and thus lacks some of the analytical expertise and proactive approaches to data gathering, tracking, integrating, and communicating that such an office can provide.

At the time of the Institutional Report, SCI-Arc identified its institutional research methods and data as “in an emerging stage” (p. 83); and the team was concerned that no individual appeared to be tasked with overseeing the development and integrity of data collection or providing leadership around the deployment of data for strategic purposes such as planning, recruitment, student success, or program improvement.

However, during the visit the team was impressed by the progress SCI-Arc has made in its use of the data gathered through the Jenzabar database and with the resources invested to grow the staff’s and administration’s capacity to utilize data effectively. The team encountered a staff that was energized by the insights they were gaining utilizing improved reports and data for decision making, and recognized the contributions of the IT and student services staff in facilitating data collection and access. One illustration of this progress is in the Vice Director’s implementation of standardized reports from each department that draw on the shared data available from the Jenzabar system where previously each department generated its own data and

spreadsheets. Staff confirmed that these standard reports are now enabling them to be more efficient and to collaborate across departments more effectively; the Board also expressed that data reporting has greatly improved in the past year and is assisting their decision-making.

The use of data is less prevalent in the operations of the degree programs than in areas such as recruitment and academic advising, so the team recommends that more consideration be given to ways data can be harnessed for the coordinators and program chairs. Additionally, the team frequently struggled to understand the reports that were provided and observed that data analysis was generally left up to the individual end user, which may prevent deeper understanding of trends and the broad integration of data into operations.

In the absence of a dedicated office of Institutional Research, the team recommends that SCI-Arc further develop its capacity to analyze and interpret data in order to gain deeper understanding of student success at SCI-Arc, to communicate that understanding to all stakeholders, and to integrate that data analysis into short- and long-term institutional planning.

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

In reviewing the 2013 SCI-Arc financial statements, the Visiting Team finds very strong performance. The institution is tuition driven, and showed an increase in net tuition, 2013 over 2012, of \$2,755,000 or 18.4% year over year. The change in unrestricted net assets, year over year, jumped from \$2,133,199 to \$4,251,794, or 99.3% year over year.

SCI-Arc has a small endowment (approximately \$1,000,000), but it also has \$18,750,000 in cash or cash equivalents, equal to 117.5% of operating costs (a very good viability ratio). The Institute does have substantial debt, taken on in 2011 when they purchased a campus, and that debt has a 2018 maturity, at which time the loan balance will be \$15,885,000. However, it is secured by real property, and it is to be expected that refinancing the loans against this asset will not prove to be a problem.

There do not appear to be any substantive issues in the financials for an institution that must live off its enrollment, provided the enrollment management program is strong. The Visiting Team also met with various staff members involved in student recruitment and admissions, and it was clear that the institution is using data to make effective enrollment decisions. Further, the decision to cap enrollment at 500 – 520 (because of facility and class capacity reasons), presents the admissions and finance planning team with clear and definable goals. Given the uncertainty of the current climate in higher education and in the architecture sector itself, such prudent planning is an important factor in the future success of the institution.

H. Component 8: Reflection and plans for improvement

SCI-Arc summarized the findings, interpretations, and plans for moving forward in the institutional report as resulting from its self-study, and identified key events of the past several years that have informed the trajectory upon which Hernan Diaz Alonso, the Board of Trustees, and the SCI-Arc community have embarked in the 2015-2016 academic year. The institution noted improved tools for data collection, state of the art resources, ownership of General Studies, operational strength, and fiscal management and stability as strengths that have developed since the 2008 WASC accreditation process.

Areas for improvement identified in the self-study process and documented in the institutional report include continued improvement of the institutional research function and the development of methods to better disaggregate data and incorporate deeper analysis into useful reporting to better understand the impact of teaching, learning, and administrative practice on students and to assist in planning. SCI-Arc acknowledged the concern from the 2008 visitors report regarding General Education, and is anticipating robust review of the new General Studies curriculum. It is the hope of this team that the observation and analysis of this accreditation visit

will assist in continued improvement of the General Studies program at SCI-Arc as well as an improved and expanded institutional research function.

Several future directions are detailed in the institutional report, including:

- Focus on developing and maintaining a diverse community;
- Staying ahead of the technological curve while maintaining independence;
- Managing enrollment effectively;
- Appropriately institutionalizing practices and creating institutional memory without losing flexibility and adaptability within the context of the rapidly evolving field of architecture.

SECTION III – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The commendations and recommendations of this report align with the reflections and plans for improvement SCI-Arc identified in its self-study and institutional report. As noted throughout the Visiting Team report, SCI-Arc is a highly focused and innovative educational institution.

Faculty, staff and students are engaged and committed to their profession and to the advancement of the critical dialog surrounding architecture and technology. The infrastructure is efficient and staff members communicate clearly with one another. The overall morale and climate is high; there does not appear to be disagreement or discord amongst the community. In all, SCI-Arc appears to be in a much better place than has been described in previous visiting team reports. The Visiting Team has these further commendations and recommendations for improvement:

Commendations

Accreditation

For SCI-Arc's commitment to the accreditation process and the honesty and transparency evident in the Institutional Report, all related materials, and the meetings conducted during the Accreditation Visit (CFR 1.8).

Leadership; Change; Stability

For successfully navigating recent leadership changes with a clear understanding of its mission and a confidence in the maturation of SCI-Arc as reflected in the culture of commitment, learning, and student focus within the faculty and staff; the transparency by which it communicates internally and with and the outside community, and the clarity with which it describe its past, present and future. SCI-Arc's new leadership and Board of Trustees are to be commended for an effective transition process; commitment to improvement and evidence-based decision-making, and embrace of transparency, inclusion, and respect for the generation of new ideas. SCI-Arc is also to be commended for the accomplishments of its leadership over time; particularly Eric Owen Moss, Ming Fung and the Board of Directors for providing long-range vision and stability to the fiscal health of the Institution and the acquisition, renovation and additions to SCI-Arc's current campus (CFRs 1.1, 3.6, 3.7, 4.7).

Diversity

For SCI-Arc's commitment to create a diverse and international culture and community and for improvements in that regard evident by a comparison of present data with that included in the previous WASC Report of 2008, and for developing better tools with which to track information concerning various markers of diversity amongst your student body and the institution at large (CFRs 1.4, 2.10, 4.2).

Studio Culture

To the faculty and students for building a robust and generative learning environment, embodied in SCI-Arc's long-standing and renowned studio culture (CFRs 2.1, 2.5).

General Studies

For the development of an ambitious and distinctive General Studies program that extends SCI-Arc's mission and educational goals with the potential to positively impact student learning, persistence and graduation (CFR 2.2).

Staff and Faculty

To the administrative staff for their commitment to fully support students and the mission of the Institution, and for the strong sense of collaboration and collegiality amongst staff and faculty that was been evident throughout the visit (CFRs 2.10, 2.13, 3.1).

Board of Trustees

To the Board of Trustees for their focused and sustained leadership, as well as for their discretion and engagement with the institution, a renewed commitment to an effective board committee structure, to a guideline of 100% board annual giving, and to promoting diversity at all levels of the institution (CFRs 1.4, 3.9).

Facilities

For the development of new spaces for learning and discovery including the Robot House and Magic Box, the maximized potential of this historic facility, and the entrepreneurial opportunities afforded by a future master plan (CFR 3.5).

Finance

For SCI-Arc's success towards achieving financial stability, capacity to manage and reduce debt, its work toward improving its bond rating, and commitment to increase student scholarships through institutional and outside support (CFR 3.4).

Data-Based Decision-making

For the continued deployment of an effective data management system and use of data in recruitment, admissions and enrollment management, and for its plans to further deploy this practice to other assessment and development functions (CFRs 4.1, 4.2).

Recommendations

Assessment of Student Learning

As further discussed in the Visiting Team report, 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. The team further notes that SCI-Arc's current thesis and portfolio review process, as well as other milestone events in a student's matriculation through the program, are well positioned to serve in this capacity (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7).

General Studies and Core Competencies

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 WASC-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).

Program Review

The Visiting Team acknowledges that the NAAB-accredited programs are already subjected to a rigorous form of program review. SCI-Arc needs to develop an equivalently rigorous form of program review for General Studies, the other non-degree-granting programs, and the post post-professional degree programs. This process should demonstrate educational effectiveness and be tied to resource allocation. (CFR 2.7)

Faculty Development

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).

Greater Capacity for Analysis of Data

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, 4.6).

APPENDICES

1 - CREDIT HOUR AND PROGRAM LENGTH REVIEW FORM

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Policy on credit hour	Is this policy easily accessible? Team response: YES
	If so, where is the policy located? http://sciarc.edu/academics/ Credit Hour Policy also available to enrolled students and faculty via the my.sciarc Student/Faculty Portal (log-in required).
	Comments:
Process(es)/ periodic review of credit hour	Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)? Team response: YES
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? Team response: YES
	Comments: Review the Credit Hour Policy is the responsibility of the Undergraduate and Graduate Curriculum Committees, Program Chairs, and Academic Coordinators Consideration of credit hour relationship to courses is part of the regular semester scheduling process. Suggested changes (if needed) are then brought to the Academic Council for final approval & implementation.
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? Team Response: YES
	Comments: Semester course schedules are available to enrolled students and faculty via the my.sciarc Student/Faculty Portal; sample schedules were submitted for the visiting team's consideration.
Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours	How many syllabi were reviewed? 2 from each level – undergraduate and graduate
	What kinds of courses? Studio courses
	What degree level(s)? B. Arch, M. Arch
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? Team response: YES
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	How many programs were reviewed? 4: B.Arch, M. Arch, 1, M. Arch 2, Postgraduate
	What kinds of programs were reviewed?
	What degree level(s)? B. Arch, M.Arch
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? Team response: YES
	Comments:

Review Completed By: David Chase

Date: March 17, 2016

2 - MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT REVIEW FORM

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

Material Reviewed	Questions and Comments: Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this table as appropriate.
**Federal regulations	<p>Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students? Team response: YES</p> <p>Comments: SCI-Arc's Director of Recruitment and Recruitment and Outreach Assistant positions conform to terms of employment stipulating salary and benefits equal to the compensation and benefits package for all full-time SCI-Arc employees and are in compliance with Federal Requirements. No additional incentive compensation to employees or third party entities is given for success in securing new student enrollment.</p>
Degree completion and cost	<p>Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree? Team Response: YES</p> <p>Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree? Team response: YES</p> <p>Comments: Time to degree and cost information are readily available on SCI-Arc's website for all programs</p>
Careers and employment	<p>Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? Team response: YES</p> <p>Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable? Team response: YES</p>
	<p>Comments: SCI-Arc provides information via alumni relations, a career resource job board, an online viewbook about career preparation. The institution hosts career networking events, professional development and career training experiences. Licensure examination pass rates are tracked and made available, and recent graduates are surveyed 6 months post-graduation about employment status.</p>

*§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: David Chase

Date: March 17, 2016

3 - STUDENT COMPLAINTS REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulation*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's student complaints policies, procedures, and records.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Policy on student complaints	<p>Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints? Team response: YES</p> <p>If so, is the policy or procedure easily accessible? YES; If so, where?</p> <p>Comments: Grade appeals, financial aid status appeals, and Title IX and student conduct issues are detailed in the Student Handbook.</p>
Process(es)/ procedure	<p>Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? Team response: YES</p> <p>If so, please describe briefly: Student complaints regarding Student Conduct are described in the Student Handbook (Section 1 p. 58-65) and reported to the Academic Counselor or the Director's Office.</p> <p>If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? Team response: YES</p> <p>Comments: Process for addressing student complaints was verified during the Accreditation Visit in discussions with the Academic Counselor and the Accreditation Liaison Officer.</p>
Records	<p>Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? Team response: YES If so, where? Team response: The Offices of the Academic Counselor and Director.</p> <p>Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? Team response: YES The Academic Counselor is in regular communication with the leadership of SCI-Arc about student complaints. Information about the resolution of specific complaints and referrals for policy modification are made by the Academic Counselor.</p> <p>Comments:</p>

*§602-16(1)(1)(ix)

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

Review Completed By: David Chase

Date: March 17, 2016

4 – TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY REVIEW FORM

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

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Transfer Credit Policy(s)	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit? Team response: YES
	If so, is the policy publically available? Team response: YES The Transfer of Credit Policy is located on the admission webpage and detailed in the SCI-Arc 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? Team response: YES

*§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.

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5 – OFFSITE LINES OF INQUIRY

1. Governance and Planning

- a. The self-study mentions the hire of a New Chief Advancement Officer. What are the strategic goals surrounding fundraising? (SCI-Arc Institutional Report, p. 28) (CFRs 3.4, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8)
- b. What are the long-term plans for the strategic sustainability and use of the budget surplus, and how does this relate to the tuition discount rate? (CFRs 3.4, 3.7)
- c. How does student recruitment and enrollment management factor into ongoing financial planning over and above SCI-Arc’s goal of maintaining a total enrollment of 500 students? (CFRs 3.4, 3.7)

2. Evidence-Based Decision Making

- a. Who is responsible for Institutional Research, including data collection and analysis? (CFRs 4.2, 2.7, 2.10)
- b. How is data analysis used in institutional decision making? (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 2.7, 2.10, 3.7)

3. Diversity

- a. What is the role of diversity and inclusion in advancing SCI-Arc’s mission? (CFRs 1.4, 1.1);
- b. As the institution positions itself to be “international leaders in creating the future of architecture”, what is SCI-Arc’s strategy for taking a leadership role in advancing the inclusion of diverse ideas and people in architectural education and practice (CFRs 1.4, 2.3, 2.4);
- c. What are the Institute’s plans for attracting, retaining, and developing a diverse community of students, staff, and faculty? (CFRs 1.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3);
- d. How are issues of diversity and inclusion being addressed in the curriculum across the professional and non-professional degrees? (CFRs 1.4, 2.2, 3.3, 4.3, 4.4);
- e. As also noted in the NAAB VTR 2012, the WSCUC Team looks forward to reviewing evidence of progress and improvements based on the strategies of SCI-Arc’s Diversity Initiative (CFRs 1.4, 2.2, 3.3, 4.3, 4.4).

4. Assessment of Student Learning and Program Review

- a. We understand from the Institutional Report that there is a focus on three core competencies in the General Studies curriculum: written communication, critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning. How do these core competencies inhabit the educational space of the architecture curriculum? How may they be developed and assessed in that environment? What opportunities exist for skills transfer between General Studies and the professional curricula? (CFRs 2.2a, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5);
- b. We understand that professionally accredited programs are highly mindful of the accreditor’s student performance criteria. What progress has the institution made towards defining its own expectations for student performance in each course and

- program? How is SCI-Arc communicating these expectations to students and faculty? (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.5, 4.3, 4.4);
- c. We understand that SCI-Arc has a dynamic and recurring process of curricular review. How is it capturing the results of this process and communicating them to stakeholders, both inside and outside the institution? (CFRs 4.1, 4.3, 4.4);
 - d. How does SCI-Arc describe and differentiate between the degree programs — accredited undergraduate, accredited graduate, and non-accredited, post-professional degrees? How has SCI-Arc defined the expectations for student performance at the level of each degree program? How have these expectations been aligned to institutional goals? (CFRs 1.2, 2.2, 2.3 2.4);
 - e. SCI-Arc has defined an assessment cycle with evidence drawn from grades, student performance reviews, spring shows, portfolios, theses, faculty reporting, faculty peer reviews, and data collection software. Could SCI-Arc provide examples of the complete assessment cycle in action and documented improvements made to curriculum and pedagogy? (CFRs 4.3, 4.4, 4.5)
 - f. SCI-Arc is assessing the new General Studies curriculum; the team looks forward to reviewing that process and its results (CFRs 2.2a, 4.1).

5. Student Retention and Graduation

- a. How does SCI-Arc understand its student success data? Who bears responsibility for the work of analysis, interpretation, and improvement? (CFRs 2.10, 4.1, 4.2);
- b. What is considered an appropriate period for review, and is there a more complete retention and graduation dataset? (CFR 2.10);
- c. What conclusions have been drawn? Are retention and graduation rates appropriate to the disaggregated student profiles? How do they compare to peer institutions? (CFR's 2.10, 4.1, 4.3);
- d. Has SCI-Arc made projections and established goals for improvement? (CFRs 2.10, 4.1, 4.3 – 4.7);
- e. How does SCI-Arc support students' personal and professional development outside the classroom, and how is student success assessed? What kind of investment has been made in terms of full-time staff positions in this area? (CFRs 2.11, 3.7, 4.1, 4.3);
- f. How does the Institute understand the co-curriculum in relation to its identity, mission, and values? (CFRs 2.11, 1.1, 1.2);
- g. How does SCI-Arc understand student pass rates on the registration exams when compared to peer institutions? What is the institution's interpretation of these results as an indicator of degree quality, student success, and lifelong learning? (CFRs 2.10, 4.1, 4.3).

6. Faculty and Staff Retention and Professional Development

- a. Beyond the annual curricular retreats, co-teaching opportunities, and meetings with department leadership, the team is interested in SCI-Arc's additional strategies for supporting its largely part-time, practitioner faculty to develop as educators. For instance, how does SCI-Arc give faculty access to and/or incentivize faculty development opportunities in areas such as: best practices in adult learning;

- supporting ESL student success in their classrooms; or in building a classroom/studio culture of equity and inclusion? (CFRs 3.1, 3.2, 3.3);
- b. What are SCIARC's expectations of faculty for balancing their investment in developing as educators with their desire to excel as practitioners and professionals. How are those expectations communicated to faculty? (CFRs 3.1, 3.2, 3.3);
 - c. What is SCI-Arc's strategy for staffing its General Studies programs and ensuring its faculty are fully integrated into the culture and pedagogy of the Institute. In addition, the team is interested to know more about the Institute's perspective on requiring faculty in this area to hold advanced degrees in the disciplines studied through the General Studies programming (CFRs 3.1, 2.2a, 2.4).