

**REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM**  
For Reaffirmation of Accreditation

To the University of California Berkeley

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The team evaluated the institution under the 2023 Handbook and Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective evaluation for consideration and action by the institution and by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC). The formal action concerning the institution's status is taken by the Commission and is described in a letter from the Commission to the institution. This report and the Commission letter are made available to the public by publication on the WSCUC website.

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## **SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT**

### **A. Description of Institution and Accreditation History**

The University of California Berkeley (Berkeley) was one of the original land grant institutions created by the 1862 Morrill Act, chartered by the State of California in 1868 and formed in Oakland, California, as the merger of the College of California and the Colleges of Agricultural, Mechanical, and Mining Arts. Berkeley moved to the site of its current campus in 1873 and graduated its first class that year. The institution’s initial accreditation with WSCUC occurred in 1949. Under the Carnegie Classification framework, Berkeley was categorized as a doctoral university with “Very High Research Activity.” As the initial campus of the University of California’s 10-campus system, it was accountable to the University of California’s Office of the President located in Oakland, California.

The team conducted this review before the enrollment census was taken for fall 2024. Berkeley enrolled approximately 45,800 students: 33,100 undergraduates studying in 117 bachelor’s degree programs, and 12,800 graduate students studying in 152 master’s programs, 10 professional doctorate programs, and 89 research doctorate programs. Of the graduate students, 450 sought academic master’s degrees, 5,000 sought academic doctorates, 1,300 sought doctorates of professional practice, and 6,050 sought graduate professional degrees. Two-thirds (67%) of the students at Berkeley were California residents, 12% were domestic non-residents, and 16% were international non-residents, with 5% of residency unknown. Twenty-one percent of the undergraduate population transferred into Berkeley (90% of these transfers were from California community colleges), and 79% enrolled as undergraduates accessing Berkeley directly from high school. The racial and ethnic diversity of the overall student population included the following: 36% Asian Non-Underrepresented, 18% Chicana/Latina, 22% White, 4% African American/Black, <1%

Native American/Alaska Native, <1% Pacific Islander, <1% Asian Underrepresented, 4% Decline to State, and 16% International. Twenty-eight percent of undergraduates received Pell Grants, and 30% of undergraduates were first-generation college students.

The team reviewed Berkeley's data presented on WSCUC's Student Outcome Overview dashboard and found that the institution's statistics were more favorable than its highest performing comparator group (the "peer median") on all six measures and for all years reported. This included the following outcome measures: eight-year outcomes (percent degrees awarded, all students); six-year first-time, full-time graduation rates; freshmen full-time retention; median undergraduate debt; percent earning more than a high school graduate six years after enrolling; and median bachelor's earnings four years after graduation.

In February 2015, WSCUC reaffirmed Berkeley's accreditation for 10 years, and during that interval, the institution implemented no programs that required substantive change review. Berkeley was approved by the Commission in March 2022 to pursue the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation. The thematic focus of Berkeley's self-study was proposed to be "Promoting Student Success Through Discovery and Engagement," which enabled the campus to explore its progress supporting students on their Discovery paths to become life-long learners. The theme chosen was a deep dive into the effort the campus has invested in fulfilling the goals outlined by the campus strategic plan of 2018 for Discovery and student support. The questions pursued included:

- What are our definitions of Discovery and an undergraduate Discovery experience?
- What percentage of students reported having the awareness, interest, and resources to pursue a Discovery experience?
- What are the best practices for graduate students to promote the success of undergraduate students with particular attention to students from non-traditional and under-resourced backgrounds?

- What are the best practices for faculty in designing and delivering a Discovery course or a Discovery experience?
- What do the data show about student success related to engagement with advising, cohort group programs, graduate students, and faculty?

At the time of the visit, Berkeley had five distance education programs offered online, all at the master's level: Master of Advanced Study in Engineering (MAS-E) (launched in fall 2024); Master of Information and Cybersecurity (MICS); Master of Information and Data Science (MIDS); Master of Materials Science and Software Engineering (MSSE); and Online On-Campus Master of Public Health (OOMPH). As part of this review, these programs are discussed among this report's appendices in the Distance Education Review, with a focus on the MIDS and the OOMPH programs.

## B. Description of Team's Review Process

During June 2024, the Berkeley Institutional Report and its supporting materials were posted in Box for the team. Team members individually prepared worksheets to evaluate the institutional report's self-study, to propose issues to explore during the visit, to request individuals and groups to meet during the visit, and to suggest additional materials for the team to review before arriving in Berkeley. The team held a conference call on August 7 to discuss the worksheets, the report, the supporting materials, and the visit, as well as WSCUC policies and procedures. Berkeley furnished every document and hyperlink requested by the team as additional materials before the visit. The team's chair met via Zoom with the Berkeley chancellor in advance of the visit. On September 24, the team held an executive session at the hotel in preparation for the onsite visit to begin the next day.

The team met with the following individuals and groups during the visit: the chancellor; the executive vice chancellor and provost; the vice provost of undergraduate education; the assistant

vice provost and chief of staff for undergraduate education; the institution's WSCUC steering committee; the chancellor's cabinet; the council of deans; academic senate leadership; the vice chancellor of equity and inclusion and that area's leadership team; the interim vice chancellor and chief financial officer and that area's leadership team, as well as college and school financial leaders; the vice chancellor for research and that area's leadership team; the vice chancellor for university development and alumni relations and that area's leadership team; the vice chancellor for administration and that area's leadership team; the vice chancellor of student affairs and that area's leadership team; the vice provost for graduate studies and dean of the graduate division and that area's leadership team; leadership and staff from the Center for Teaching and Learning and from the Student Learning Center; the chief academic technology officer, leaders of learning technologies and spaces, and leaders of research, teaching, and learning; the project manager, advising strategy + training, and academic advisors; leaders from the division of academic planning and the office of the vice provost for the faculty; the faculty director and the executive director of Berkeley Discovery, with participating faculty and the Discovery Opportunities Database manager; institutional research leaders; and program review leaders, including the director of academic program review, the vice provost for academic planning, participating faculty, and assessment staff. The team also held open meetings with faculty, graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, undergraduate students, and staff. Both before and during the visit, the team received and reviewed messages sent to the WSCUC confidential email account established for this review. The address of this account was offered via mass email to the Berkeley campus community as a method of contacting the team. Throughout the review process, the team collected information during the visit's meetings for analysis and interpretation during the team's deliberations, and the team confirmed and corroborated the discoveries made among the materials and documents linked from the institutional report and supplied in response to the team's request. The team's

review focused on analyzing evidence and gaining insight regarding the institutional report, Berkeley's exploration of its theme for this review, and the conclusions drawn throughout the institution's self-study.

One team member conducted the Distance Education Review and prepared the report provided in the appendix. An examination of online course syllabi was pursued in this review of Berkeley's online programs, with four courses representing different online programs examined in addition to the syllabi reviewed to complete the federal compliance forms. Briefing documents were supplied by Berkeley to prepare the team for the Distance Education Review. Narrative, explanations, information, and materials serving as components of this briefing were corroborated and incorporated verbatim into the team's response.

While undertaking this review, the team examined the state authorizations for distance education for the online programs. At times, programs pursued the application process for the various state approvals independent of each other. As a consequence, instead of seeking one application for authorization for all online programs at once, a redundancy of attention and energy had to be invested in the process of qualifying Berkeley to provide distance education to students from particular states. The team advises Berkeley to explore how the campus might centralize the state authorization process as a component of the overhead dedicated to these online self-supporting programs. This may prove to be an effective approach to free resources local to the programs and to avoid duplicative effort.

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

Berkeley's institutional report provided an impressive amount of information in the body of its text as well as in its hyperlinked exhibits, including the Compliance with the Standards report,

which cataloged evidence in support of specific Criteria for Review. The sections of the institutional report were organized and responsive for the Thematic Pathway format, such that the document conveyed a highly detailed account of programming and initiatives related to the Discovery Initiative.

Charged by the chancellor, Berkeley's WSCUC Steering Committee represented the campus's faculty (eight members), students (two members), and staff/leadership (ten members). This committee determined the theme for the Thematic Pathway review and conducted the self-study. The group contributed narrative and evidence for the report and engaged in the review for Compliance with the Standards. Initial drafts of the institutional report were shared with the chancellor's cabinet, the chancellor, key campus leaders, and the academic senate leadership for feedback and guidance, which involved multiple rounds of edits. The vice provost of undergraduate education – as a key member of the committee – promoted Berkeley's reaffirmation of accreditation by attending the meetings of committees, councils, and cabinets, including “megameetings,” to ensure the strategic and consistent engagement of the campus. The accreditation effort's website posted slide decks explaining the process to the campus community throughout the development of the report and the preparations for the visit.

A positive outcome recounted by the steering committee to the team was the alignment and connection of work happening across campus regarding Berkeley's strategic goals. Individuals and units involved could “plug into” each other's endeavors, and the campus could enjoy an amplification of their projects and initiatives. Student members of the steering committee noted how much they gained in terms of knowledge of campus initiatives and how this connected them with corners of the campus with which they hadn't formerly had direct experience. They reported that their input as students was valued. Overall, the committee described how the crisis of the



pandemic required the campus to work together toward common goals, such that they were seasoned at getting things done collaboratively.

The team perceives that a guiding question in this review was “How is this done at Berkeley?” and as a consequence, extensive lists of approaches, plans, and initiatives were presented in the self-study. These activities were focused on the relevant audiences for and agents of the changes. Evidence of success was highlighted, and the review provided detailed descriptions of committed actions that embodied institutionalized values. Data and evidence in the report supported the institution’s claims that the campus had built programs in response to Berkeley’s strategic plan and mission. At times, outcomes quantified in the report (e.g., rates of participation in specified activities) could not be attributed solely to a particular program’s implementation, given the nature of such achievements; variance in the success could have potentially been a function of external factors contributing, too. The team suggests that all future initiatives be launched with a specific and rigorous analysis already proposed to determine the programming’s accomplishments. This conscious assessment plan may enable the clearest recognition of initiative outcomes including the extent to which they have led to the desired change or the improvements intended.

Primarily, the team came away from reviewing the institutional report with an understanding of the institutional priorities for student learning; they were emphasized and elaborated upon throughout the exploration of the theme. Berkeley detailed its primary systems for quality improvement such as academic program review, and examples of self-studies and outcomes of these processes were among the supporting materials, in particular in the Compliance with the Standards section. The volume of programming at Berkeley suggested a campus culture dedicated to students and their experiences, one in which individuals and units

proved viable to promote initiatives and activities in a spirit of activism, entrepreneurship, and commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

## **SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS ON SELF-SELECTED THEMES**

### **A. Institutional Context and Response to Previous Commission Actions**

On March 6, 2015, the WSCUC Commission made two recommendations to Berkeley:

1. “Undergraduate Initiative. The Commission is impressed with the multiple initiatives under the heading of the Undergraduate Initiative. As expressed by the team, the Commission wishes for this cluster of thoughtful processes to become even more ‘innovative, expansive, and ambitious,’ as it has large potential both for this institution and as a model for others. In particular, the Commission urges the institution more intentionally to evaluate the many undergraduate strategies in support of student success with the purpose of providing adequate resources for those with the highest demonstrated effectiveness.” (CFRs 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 4.1, 4.3)
2. “Faculty Roles and Deployment. The Commission acknowledges the trend at Berkeley, as at most other institutions, to rely more broadly on non-senate, non-tenure track and adjunct faculty, especially in the delivery of the lower-division curriculum. In this context, the Commission urges the institution to continue its evaluation of the most effective ways to fulfill its promises for undergraduate students to enjoy full participation in the benefits of a major research university, including meaningful engagement with research faculty. These efforts to enhance the undergraduate experience should continue to be integrated with Berkeley’s exemplary equity and inclusion programs to ensure that all students equally enjoy the benefits the research university offers.” (CFRs 3.1, 3.2, 4.7)

In their 2023 self-study report, Berkeley provided updates on these two recommendations.

#### Recommendation 1

For the first recommendation on the Undergraduate Initiative, the campus highlighted four areas with funding support from the Light the Way campaign. First, the campus established the council of college deans to collaborate on course offerings, program approvals, and enrollment planning. This ensured coordinated efforts across all undergraduate-serving units and alignment with the University of California's Office of the President. Second, the campus revamped their student orientation program by launching Golden Bear Orientation in 2018, focusing on engaging students with the academic community. Starting when students accept their admission offers and continuing into their first semester, this programming included summer advising, academic planning, and orientation using the same online platforms as their courses and included tailored in-person events to meet individual student needs and interests. Third, the campus developed and improved several programs to increase and improve recruitment, retention, advocacy, wellness, and career support, such as the Berkeley Underground Scholars, Undocumented Student Program, HBCU-Research Experience for Undergraduates, and transfer student housing. The review team was impressed with the campus's overall progress on this recommendation. The team commends Berkeley for convening of the deans, improving the support of student advising and academic planning, improving students' sense of belonging, and partnering with HBCUs to increase students' research experiences.

At the same time, during the site visit many student services representatives described to the team the challenges of providing sufficient resources while student enrollment grows and students' needs change (e.g., to require personalized support) in an austere fiscal environment. They were carefully reviewing their capacity, innovating new strategies and collaborations, and

seeking new ways to support their student support mission. While the review team commends the extraordinary efforts of support services teams, the team also recommends that the campus continue their focus on fully supporting their at-risk, disabled, and marginalized student populations to promote equitable access to opportunity. (CFRs 2.13, 2.14, 4.1, 4.5) The current levels of support did not seem sustainable and could jeopardize the retention of dedicated student support staff, even with such a unified campus ethos.

## Recommendation 2

For the second recommendation regarding faculty roles and deployment, the campus highlighted nine areas:

- The campus expanded opportunities for students to connect with faculty research projects through programs like the Undergraduate Research Apprentice Program, Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships, Underrepresented Researchers of Color, and Sponsored Projects for Undergraduate Research, which provided funding, mentorship, and support for student research.
- The Townsend Honors Thesis Workshop supported undergraduate research by guiding students through their humanities-focused honors thesis, offering feedback, small research stipends, and access to a wider research network.
- The Berkeley Emeriti Academy provided retired faculty opportunities to serve as research mentors to undergraduate students. The program offered academic poster sessions and conducted workshops to support students.
- The Jacobs Institute for Design Innovation provided experiential learning in design and fabrication for students, and offered courses, an undergraduate certificate, and various

- hands-on opportunities. The institute emphasized student access and included facilities for machine shop work and student groups involved in engineering projects.
- The Berkeley Connect program paired undergraduates with graduate student mentors to build a community—disciplinary tailored programs—that focused on small-group meetings, one-on-one advising, and events like career panels that promoted academic and career development without traditional coursework and connections to alumni for professional opportunities.
  - The Berkeley Changemaker academic program, which enrolled around 20% of the undergraduate population across 30 courses taught by more than 60 faculty members, focused on critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills. Of note was the Gateway Changemaker course, which enrolled over 2,500 students, with more students from underrepresented communities engaging with 26 distinguished faculty members and 9 recipients of Berkeley’s Distinguished Teaching Award.
  - The Berkeley Collegium grant program to bridge classroom studies and real-world research awarded over 50 faculty projects that integrated teaching and research, with awards ranging from \$15,000 to \$20,000.
  - The Light the Way campaign raised \$250 million for undergraduate instruction and funded 41 faculty lines and 58 doctoral scholarships. This investment sought to improve education by raising funds for 100 tenure-track faculty positions and necessary research resources.
  - The Instructional Technology and Innovation Micro Grant Program offered awards between \$25,000 and \$50,000 to faculty for using technology (e.g., AI) to improve course activities. The program targeted large-enrollment courses and encouraged innovative approaches to automation and scalability.

These areas highlighted the commitment to the campus goal of ensuring research and immersive learning experiences for all students (i.e., the Discovery Initiative). The review team was impressed with the Discovery Initiative team’s thoughtful and collaborative approach toward this goal. When meeting with the team, faculty and directors associated with the Discovery Initiative shared their evaluation and the success of the first phase, as well as their plans for the second phase (i.e., Discovery 2.0), which entailed expansion to reach more students. They also identified the need to raise awareness and funding to scale up and meet their campus goals. To that point, the review team will reflect later in this team report on the importance of the campus focusing on a sustainable model to ensure access to this programming for all students.

#### B. Institution-Specific Theme: Promoting Student Success through Discovery and Engagement Rationale and Methodology

The theme-based approach to reaffirmation of accreditation gave Berkeley the opportunity to develop a campus-wide engagement in “Discovery,” an initiative that was aligned with the institution’s public mission and its compliance with WSCUC Standards. “Discovery” advanced Berkeley’s core emphasis on and delivery of a world-class undergraduate education. The Thematic Pathway showed the ambition to “reflect the emergent needs of society” in the institution’s goals, and it aimed to develop a supportive and inclusive community. It was notable that the Discovery Initiative—in its fullness—emerged from lengthy organic research and learning investigation. This began with faculty-led collaboration that then inspired an inclusive strategic planning process initiated by the chancellor. Over a period of some years, comments and feedback were welcomed from many Berkeley stakeholders including students, faculty, staff, and, significantly, alumni, whose support proved critical.

The theme of Discovery had been at the forefront of Berkeley’s vision for almost a decade, emerging from a senior faculty consultative white paper that sought to determine how the institution could enhance undergraduate students’ opportunities for research and immersive learning. This led to the development of three central “experiences”: the Golden Bear Orientation; the Arts+Design Initiative; and Data Science Undergraduate Studies. In 2016, the Undergraduate Initiative underscored the importance of experiential, research-led, and creative emphases in curricular and co-curricular activities. This became the principal focus in the 2018 Strategic Plan, further developed through the exploration and planning of a working group in 2019 into the full design of “Berkeley Discovery” in 2020. This initiative sought to foster “connections between academics and real-world experience” through high-impact learning practices subsumed within “Discovery Learning.” The resulting strategic plan saw Berkeley as a transformative institution whose students emerged with skills and knowledge to positively impact real-world issues.

The Thematic Pathway reviewed by the team emerged as a challenging, cogent, and campus-wide initiative to meet the goals of the vision and demonstrated broad institutional commitment and effort.

#### High-Impact Learning Practices and Discovery Learning

Embedded from early in the development of the Discovery theme were ten practices associated with high-impact learning experiences intended to prepare students for their lives as informed and fully participative citizens. These included deep learning, innovation and creativity, and engagement and motivation—the experience of which enhanced students’ transferable skills, intellectual curiosity, and lifelong independent thinking. Such practices underpinned the central fourteen modes of delivery for Discovery Learning ranging from undergraduate research to

internships, community-based learning, capstones, entrepreneurial activities, collaborative projects, study abroad, mentoring, and leadership.

These experiences and activities led in 2020 to founding the Berkeley Discovery Initiative, which aimed to make more coherent, and particularly more manageable, the wide array of efforts to engage students in high-impact learning practices and transformative activities. To effect these aims, the Center for Connected Learning was currently being built and due to open in 2025; the ambitious Discovery Opportunities Database was created to facilitate navigation of all the opportunities available to students and to ensure equitable access for every undergraduate; and, in addition, innovative curricular design fulfilling the aims of the initiative was supported through Discovery Trailblazers—a program that provided funding and guidance for faculty teams to implement teaching and research goals at scale. From ten groups invited to develop full proposals for student-centered innovative educational experiences supported by staff and faculty directors, six successful curricular projects were funded in a variety of trans- and interdisciplinary areas involving ten departments. These six were fully operational by the time of the team’s visit, and the directors of those projects talked in detail about their work and its positive outcomes. All seemed outstanding in their vision, energy, and determination to offer students new opportunities to work together with faculty and instructors in innovative and immersive environments that included laboratories, the library, classrooms, and online working spaces.

#### Methods of Communication

Communication at a campus as large and diverse as Berkeley’s had proven one of the main obstacles to the wholly successful execution of the Initiative’s objectives. To overcome this challenge and to ensure access from a variety of points, the institution had worked hard to draw the attention of all campus members to the opportunities available to them. Messaging from the



chancellor, vice provost for undergraduate education, and all institutional participants at Golden Bear Advising and Orientation was complemented by “Getting Started Guides,” social media outlets, a communications toolkit, and workshops. Through strategic partnerships with campus offices and units, such as the Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarships and the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Task Force, the Discovery team sought to advertise and promote the Initiative, reaching a good number of students, but with more work ahead to reach all possible participants. Students were not all aware of the Discovery Opportunities Database at the time of the visit, and feedback had suggested that a better user experience was desired. The database was to be relaunched in a new user-friendly format shortly after the visit, and when students’ attention was drawn to the database, they were instantly exploring the opportunities offered across campus and at every level of study.

Prior to the visit itself, the team reviewed the substantial documentation describing the motivation and design for the Discovery Initiative and scrutinized the existing assessment evidence provided in Berkeley’s institutional report and supporting materials. The team noted the emphasis on the holistic approach to the institution’s Discovery focus and its gradual implementation. Of particular importance to the work of the Initiative were the transgenerational approaches to high-impact learning and the breadth of experiential education encouraged by Discovery’s variety and flexible formats. The transgenerational teams of researchers and practitioners included different categories of Graduate Student Instructors, who were thoroughly trained and mentored (as documented in the Graduate Council Policy on Appointments and Mentoring). These Instructors were involved in the teaching—in classrooms, lecture theatres, the library, and laboratories—of the many courses each semester, working with undergraduates in a shared experience to promote learning that extended through all areas of the institution.

The team was eager to learn more about the extent of faculty and student involvement in the Discovery Initiative, their interpretations of the emerging evaluation and feedback evidence, and their responses about the project's effectiveness. The team was impressed to hear faculty and instructors report that the Discovery Initiative was assisting students in collaborative and communal research and scholarship, developing transferable and articulatable skills, augmenting students' communication and networking abilities, and building their knowledge and confidence.

### Data and Results

The campus reported the results of the Discovery Opportunities Database, Trailblazers program, and student surveys on research engagement. While the overall evaluation of the Discovery Initiative was not yet developed, the reported results of early programs in the Initiative showed promise. The Discovery Opportunities Database had been adopted by 14% of undergraduates, with high usage among freshmen, but slightly lower adoption by Chicanx/Latinx students. Trailblazer course improvements showed that these experiences boosted GPA and sense of belonging, though human resource and infrastructure challenges existed. Efforts to involve faculty in research and to address socioeconomic barriers were ongoing to ensure all students benefited. In the meeting with the review team, Discovery Initiative representatives shared takeaways from the results of their early efforts and indicated overall satisfaction. They also revealed the next phase of the Initiative (Discovery 2.0), which focused on organization and scaling up the infrastructure, communication, access, and resources. The review team concurs with these plans. Below are detailed summaries for these results.

## Discovery Opportunities Database

The Discovery Opportunities Database, launched in early 2023, had been accessed by 4,464 students (14% of the undergraduate population) by the end of fall 2023. These users conducted 76,983 searches and viewed over 11,246 listings, primarily for research experiences, internships, and scholarships. The database team ensured inclusivity and diversity by analyzing user demographics to improve outreach and user experience. The analysis utilized demographic data, shared in early 2024, to identify disparities and recommend improvements. Future evaluations will track the impact over time. Positive student feedback highlighted the database's usefulness. Qualitative student interviews also were conducted each semester, and findings were shared with stakeholders. The database aims for continuous improvement and feedback collection.

## Berkeley Trailblazers Program

The Berkeley Trailblazers initiative, funded by the Discovery Initiative, consisted of six faculty-led project teams aimed at integrating Discovery-oriented content into their course offerings. Below are summaries of findings from these programs.

Integrative Biology focused on embedding Discovery-based learning within their curriculum. While the program faced initial challenges with hiring staff and defining the Discovery experience, it developed a "Discovery Arc" model integrating skills, community, and career orientation. The program also incorporated equity and inclusion principles and issued stipends for student research.

Physics and Astronomy created a mentoring community for underrepresented students and reformed the curriculum that integrated practical skills such as coding and order-of-magnitude thinking. The program also utilized resources from Lawrence Berkeley National Lab and

Space Sciences Lab for research projects to overcome human resources and infrastructure challenges. These efforts fostered faculty and staff collaboration and won the “Team Advising Innovation Award” in the fall of 2022.

The Electrical Engineering & Computer Sciences (EECS) department proposed a new instructional model integrating team-based research opportunities with core courses. This proposal included creating a how-to-do-research course, matching graduates with undergraduates for mentorship, redesigning existing courses to emphasize Discovery, and connecting research teams with faculty and external partners. Despite starting one semester behind schedule, the project successfully enrolled students and developed a project proposal framework. Challenges included mentoring graduate students, most of whom were inexperienced in such roles. The initial iteration supported 30 students, with plans to scale up to accommodate the entire major, which had over 1,700 undergraduates by fall 2023. Students who took the how-to-do-research course thought it was one of their more useful and memorable courses.

The Transforming Beginning Reading and Composition and Foreign Languages Requirements project focused on collaborative inquiry and peer-engaged learning, the project transformed these requirements into enriching small-class experiences for over 15,000 students. The project was anchored on five pillars: embedding inquiry, integrating primary sources, creating Discovery pathways, structuring collaborative work and creativity, and promoting experiential learning. The project supported 28 faculty members across 12 departments and involved a “Discovery Fellows” cohort. Instructors who initially had low expectations were pleasantly surprised by the quality of student research. The initiative highlighted the importance of a Discovery-focused pedagogy for scaling future courses.

The Youth Equity Discovery Initiative (YEDI) Program at Berkeley involved collaboration across three schools: Education, Social Work, and Public Health, and offered three engagement opportunities for students from historically marginalized groups:

- YEDI Berkeley Connect was a mentoring opportunity between undergraduate and graduate students.
- YEDI Immersion Experience supported community organizations or faculty-led projects focused on well-being and equity.
- YEDI Culmination was a symposium for participants to reflect and share their discoveries and academic products.

In its first year, YEDI supported nearly 50 students across ten projects, with topics ranging from mental health interventions for Latinx immigrant students to the impact of COVID-19 on homelessness. The second year saw an increase in projects and faculty engagement. The program fostered personal growth and a deeper connection to Discovery. Additionally, it introduced a new model for Graduate Student Researchers, offering them leadership roles and practical experience.

The College of Chemistry aimed to support transfer students through a structured mentorship program involving peers, graduate students, and faculty. This initiative addressed the challenge of integrating transfer students into Berkeley's fast-paced academic environment and provided research opportunities. They discovered that only 27% of transfer students engaged in research before their senior year compared to 67% of freshman admits. The project outcomes included the creation of a new one-unit course to enhance engagement through laboratory tours, research presentations, panel discussions, and Discovery Proposals. This course replaced optional low-attended mentoring events and successfully increased student involvement and deepened student engagement with the campus and scientific communities.

Student performance outcomes for participants in the Trailblazer programs showed a higher term GPA than that of a comparison group, especially among marginalized students. While Trailblazer participants had higher high school GPAs and fewer were first-generation or low-income students, they still outperformed peers from similar backgrounds. Moreover, 85% of Trailblazer participants felt valued at Berkeley, compared to 82% of the comparison group. Trailblazer participants also reported higher engagement in high-impact practices, such as presenting research and conducting computational analysis. The data indicated that these programs contributed positively to student outcomes in academic performance and involvement in impactful activities.

Additionally, the EECS Trailblazer participants indicated higher engagement and awareness in Discovery activities than other College of Engineering students. Notably, 56% prioritized these activities, and 45% were aware of them, compared to 47% and 28%, respectively, among University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) respondents from the College of Engineering. Post-program, fewer Trailblazer participants faced barriers to engagement, and they found it easier to identify opportunities and contact faculty.

#### Additional Results for Discovery Initiative Program

The Data Science Discovery Program (DSDP) was formed before the Discovery Initiative was officially launched, but was created in parallel with campus conversations around the importance of Discovery experiences. Its staff collaborated closely with Discovery Initiative staff. DSDP grew steadily from 2016 to 2020, with participation expanding significantly post-2020. Participants were generally less likely to be transfers, Black or Latinx, first-generation, or from low-income backgrounds, although the proportion of low-SES participants increased over time. Pre- and post-surveys showed significant differences between program students and others regarding

science identity, motivation, and engagement, indicating possible selection bias. There was a slight, though not statistically significant, increase in self-efficacy among program participants. Student feedback highlighted the positive impact of hands-on learning and real-world applications. Mentors appreciated the research assistance and active involvement of students, with 26% of the 95 respondents expressing high satisfaction.

The Survey of New Students (SONS) at Berkeley revealed that new undergraduates highly valued becoming innovative thinkers, engaging in research, and performing community service. Over four years, more than half of the students rated faculty-assisted research and their own research as very important or essential. Nearly three-quarters of students prioritized becoming innovative thinkers, and virtually all considered it important. Additionally, a significant majority emphasized the importance of community service and connecting academic work to community experiences. The UCUES module on Discovery highlighted barriers such as job commitments, family responsibilities, and financial concerns that limited student engagement with Discovery experiences. Students from minoritized backgrounds reported these barriers more frequently. Higher percentages of students from minoritized backgrounds reported they lacked awareness of opportunities, experienced less connection with relevant faculty and administrators, and had difficulty finding activities in their discipline, which suggested the need for the campus to design programs to promote the inclusion of these groups.

### C. Reflections – Synthesis of Insights as a Result of the Reaffirmation Process

#### Support for Disabled Students

Throughout the institutional report and the team's visit, Berkeley expressed the importance of its priority to better serve students with disabilities, not only to ensure their sense of belonging in the community but also to provide them with the accommodations they need to succeed. This

work was identified during the institution's review of its compliance with the Standards and emphasized as a necessary response to the "challenges of [the] current time."

Educating the largest disabled student population in the University of California (UC) system, Berkeley determined accommodations through the work of its Disabled Students Program. The team met with the leaders of Equity and Inclusion responsible for this work and learned about the history of this unit, its current endeavors, and its plans for the future. The team commends the progress that has been made in this area since the Disabled Students Program moved into Equity and Inclusion. The institutional report explained – and the team observed during the visit – that the Student Learning Center also stood dedicated to its programming in support of students requiring accommodations. The campus planned to establish a permanent proctoring center of sufficient size to alleviate the over-extension of staff in the Disabled Students Program on the occasions when they were called upon to schedule additional locations for examination accommodations. The success of the disabled student population depended on the services being provided effectively, and as a consequence, the team reinforces the importance of continuing to address this unit's resource needs in its recommendation that Berkeley continue their focus on fully supporting their at-risk, disabled, and marginalized student populations to promote equitable access to opportunity. (CFRs 2.13, 2.14, 4.1, 4.5)

#### Additional Student Success Efforts

The institution formulated specific plans for the future given what was learned through the reaffirmation process, and the institutional report's conclusion organized these student success efforts within three broad strategies: to support for students, to support for faculty and staff, and to change the campus's institutional structures and processes. The team acknowledges the agents at the institution invested in accomplishing these goals. In particular, the division of undergraduate



education and its Center for Teaching and Learning were dedicated to the success of the future activity described below.

Several initiatives proposed were related to the Discovery courses and how increasing these offerings would promote equity of opportunity for students to participate in high-impact practices, particularly given how financial obligations could prevent underserved students from participating in co-curricular activities like working on a faculty member's research project. Initiatives sought to expand the number of Discovery course offerings and consequently raise the level of participation by virtue of students completing coursework. The central web portal to present tools and modules that related to the Trailblazer program was suggested to expand its access for faculty to the successful instructional practices implemented thus far in Discovery curriculum. Instructional development activities focused on incorporating high-impact practices into courses, engaging in inclusive teaching practices, and providing accommodations for students with disabilities. Recognizing the importance of this training, the campus proposed a certification program for instructors who complete a related pattern of pedagogy development activities. These specific plans to focus on the Discovery courses and to promote Discovery experiences in the curriculum were cited as priorities for the Center for Teaching and Learning.

A special tag in the course catalog was planned to identify Discovery courses, so that students could find these immersive experiences during the process of selecting courses to take. The team concurs that such an approach could foster greater student enrollment in this curriculum by virtue of advancing familiarity with these opportunities. Growing the listings presented by the Discovery Opportunities Database was another strategy cited in the institutional report and confirmed by the team during the visit as an institutional strategy for advancing the Discovery Initiative. While data were being used to refine the database interface, the team advises the

campus to concurrently dedicate attention to broadcasting the availability of this resource in an effort to increase the number of student users.

Engaging with students to amplify their sense of belonging on campus was promoted by Berkeley throughout this reaffirmation review as a tactic to enhance student success. Of note were the recent courses in the subject area “Letters & Science,” which served deliberately as an onboarding forum to promote belonging. These courses represented the academic space where new students could learn about the campus and how to take part effectively in the academic life of a research intensive institution. The team appreciates how success can follow the integration of such wayfinding into the beginning of the undergraduate career and normalizing a need to learn about the specifics of how to belong in such a complex institution. As was the case with so many opportunities for undergraduates at Berkeley – ranging from the Discovery experiences to other student success initiatives – the team cannot stress enough the importance of consistent and effective communication with students to facilitate their taking advantage of such a potentially valuable experience.

With Discovery 2.0 on the horizon and so many related initiatives underway, the team recommends that Berkeley build on the momentum of the Discovery Initiatives' early successes by exploring a sustainable model to ensure access to an immersive experience for every undergraduate student. (CFRs 2.1, 2.2, 2.5)

#### D. Compliance: 2023 WSCUC Standards and Federal Requirements

##### Standard 1

##### Institutional Purposes

Berkeley pursued the UC mission, which focused on education, research, and service, including an emphasis on “providing long-term societal benefits through transmitting advanced

knowledge, discovering new knowledge, and functioning as an active working repository of organized knowledge.” Berkeley’s principles of community emphasize freedom of expression, open and equitable access to opportunities for learning, participation and leadership in addressing pressing community issues, honesty and integrity, the intrinsic relationship between diversity and excellence, the dignity of all individuals, a just community, and both a respect for differences and a call for civility and respect. The Principles of Community statement was produced through a collaborative effort of the campus community, including students, faculty, and staff, as well as alumni. The team finds these published statements appropriate and clear, particularly as an articulation of the institution’s contribution and value to the community. (CFR 1.1)

In the institutional report, Berkeley detailed the campus’s equity and inclusion work, with a focus on the extensive programs and services directed at support for the student population. The team notes how central these values and this activity was to the culture and identity of this institution. The team’s meeting with the vice chancellor for equity and inclusion and the area’s leadership explored Berkeley’s commendable dedication to this work. Reporting and dialogue that took place between the equity and inclusion area and the campus’s academic deans demonstrated the value of using information to effect improvement; information about the institution’s diversity, equity, and inclusion was shared and discussed not only to advance awareness but also to prompt constructive action. Throughout this review, the team notes that the topic of equity and inclusion proved intrinsic to the way the campus accomplished its strategic goals. For example, the campus adopted the principles of the Adaptive Equity-Oriented Pedagogy model’s framework to mitigate equity barriers for students using the campus’s Discovery Opportunities Database. The team commends this proactive effort to address the obstacles that diverse students may encounter when exploring opportunities for experiential learning. (CFR 1.2)

## Integrity and Transparency

In its review, the team appreciated the volume and quality of materials presented as evidence of compliance with the Standards. (CFR 1.8) Transparency, integrity, and policy adherence were extensively represented in the institutional report and its supporting documents. The systems and processes in place to protect academic freedom were described at length and proved to be a critical element of the institution's culture and practice. (CFRs 1.3, 1.5, 1.6)

During the visit's open meetings of students, faculty, and staff, the topic of communication arose on numerous occasions. Each group surfaced concerns about how the volume of messages they received – and at times the modes of communication – prohibited easy recall of important information. So many email messages, for example, divided audience attention to the extent that critical facts were missed. Inefficiency and challenges to collaboration were explained as the consequence of communication lapses. The individuals who met with the team described occasions when they would have benefited from knowing about work being done outside their department during their own pursuit of important goals. Staff sought access to messages after they had been sent and suggested storage of the institution's official communication on a website for later searches and consumption. They theorized that if the messages persisted in a single virtual location, the community would have a better chance to benefit from various announcements, could search for content after the fact, and could digest information with greater ease as their schedules permitted. The concern of all groups was that people weren't hearing what they needed to hear when they needed to hear it, and making the messages available in a durable format such as on a website could better meet their needs.

The team notes that the large and vibrant campus had so much to communicate because of the impressive scope of what regularly occurred, and timing of message delivery could have been the enemy of message comprehension. Students in particular expressed concern at missed

opportunities to take advantage of valuable programming and services, and they pointed to inconsistency in how information was communicated during orientation activities. Former orientation volunteers present in the open student meeting expressed how this inconsistency occurred as a function of so many different student orientation leaders being responsible for imparting information to their groups about student support services. The quality and execution of these orientation leaders' communication varied from orientation group to orientation group. When prompted by the team to share their knowledge and understanding of important Berkeley initiatives and services, the students present reported only a modest awareness. In the open student group, as mentioned earlier in this report, no students were familiar with the Discovery Opportunities Database. A student who used the Student Learning Center explained how she would have benefited from accessing it earlier, because she lacked sufficient understanding of its services after participating in orientation. Several students felt that the advising they received would have been better if the messaging had been clearer, had been timed more effectively, and had considered their needs more fully.

As the vehicle for crisis communication, the WarnMe system was described by members of the faculty and staff as being at times undescriptive and at others confusing in its content. Although a review was to take place after the system was used to address an incident on campus in February of 2024, no one in the team's open meetings could offer what was concluded from the review and what improvements might have been on the horizon. With both Clery timely warnings and emergency notifications communicated by this system, the importance of WarnMe – and the campus's understanding of its messaging – was a critical component of the Berkeley's public safety efforts. The team advises leadership to communicate a clearer explanation of the WarnMe system, share any findings from reviews of this system, describe which campus parties are able to

post in the system, and elaborate upon what the community should expect during an emergency or after a crime has been committed.

After noting the variability of both the campus's approach to communication and the manner in which that communication was received by the community, the team recommends that Berkeley improve internal communication to foster transparency, augment collaboration and innovation, and support student success and other institutional priorities. (CFR 1.7)

Conclusion: The team's conclusion, subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with Standard 1.

## Standard 2

### Degree Programs (CFRs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4)

At the time of this review, the campus was organized into 6 colleges and 6 schools, 130 academic departments, and 80 interdisciplinary research units. Besides WSCUC, Berkeley's academic programs were also reviewed by 17 disciplinary-specific accreditation organizations. The campus provided comprehensive and well-organized information and support for potential first-year and transfer students, such as the admission process, student profile, tuition and fees, and financial aid. All degree programs had an "about the program" webpage with requirements, learning goals, advising, and contact information. The review team noted a few were missing learning goals (e.g., Logic, Tibetan Studies). The course catalog also offered a detailed list of the program's courses, their units, when they were offered, and the length of course sessions.

The campus employed a rigorous and structured approach to admissions and curriculum management. Admissions were guided by foundational academic requirements and the senate Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education, with guidelines tailored to different student populations. Once enrolled, students followed a program of study, overseen by

various academic and administrative bodies, ensuring a cohesive learning experience. The curriculum was also governed by the academic senate, with proposals for courses and programs undergoing thorough review. Continuous feedback and assessments, including biennial surveys, helped calibrate teaching approaches and ensure academic excellence across the system. The senate Committee on Courses of Instruction also reviewed and approved new courses and course changes. They provided instructions, timelines, and review criteria. The sample syllabi that were shared with the team provided an informative overview of the course, its requirements, conduct policies, and schedule. Relatedly, the administrative Council on Advising and Student Support also oversaw how students were advised and ensured an equity-oriented and strength-based approach.

Academic program reviews were designed to enhance the institution's mission by evaluating each unit's strengths, opportunities, and challenges through a comprehensive self-study and external peer review. Overseen by the Program Review Oversight Committee, which represented a partnership between academic administrators and five academic senate committees, the review process informed strategic planning, faculty hiring priorities, and program improvement efforts. Units were encouraged to explore critical areas, align curriculum with field trends, and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. The self-study and review typically took 18-24 months and involved thorough data analysis and consultation.

The overall structure of the degree program development and review supported the institution in achieving its education and student success objectives. The review team does note that analysis of learning specific to the program learning outcomes (i.e., learning goals) was absent in the historical examples of program reviews received by the team as evidence of compliance. Recent changes to the campus's program review guidelines (as of August 2024) provided guidance and encouragement for departments to pursue this in their self-studies. Standard 2, however, does not suggest that program reviews may include such analysis if departments choose to undertake it;

the language states the analysis must be present. Recent staffing in the Center for Teaching and Learning contributed assessment effort intended to support departments engaging in such analysis, and the team appreciates the beginning of an expectation. The review team recommends that the campus incorporate an analysis of student achievement of program learning outcomes consistently and constructively in the academic program review self-studies. (CFRs 2.4, 2.7, 4.1)

#### Faculty (CFRs 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8)

In the report, the campus reported employing a total of 3,344 senate and non-senate faculty members. While the headcount of regular faculty had seen a minor increase of 3.4% over the past decade, there had been a significant rise in “other faculty” by 42.2%. As such, the student-faculty ratio remained comparable to some peer institutions. The campus aimed to increase the number of faculty lines, as evidenced by the recent Light the Way campaign, which funded 46 new senate faculty. Faculty were supported by the Center for Teaching and Learning, which provided resources, training, and consultations to enhance teaching effectiveness. The Center for Teaching and Learning recently added new staff positions and expanded programming to address the changing learning needs of students. Despite the expanding staff support, the review team noted that the primary concern for faculty was the unsustainable student-faculty ratio and the growing demands that strained faculty capacity. These concerns, coupled with housing affordability and continued shrinking funding from the State of California, made it difficult to retain faculty, particularly those who were tenure-track. The review team adamantly advises that the administration and faculty continue working together to develop short- and long-term strategies to address these challenges before exhaustion and fatigue become the prevailing campus norm (see additional discussion in Standard 3).



Faculty decision-making structures, governance, rights, and responsibilities were articulated in the UC Regents Standing Orders, UC Regents Bylaws, and UC system-wide Academic Personnel Manual (APM). Policies in these documents acknowledged the importance of faculty involvement in institutional governance through the academic senate, which ensured high-quality instruction, research, and academic freedom. The academic senate's duties included determining admissions conditions, overseeing certificates and degrees, authorizing courses and curricula, and advising on budgets.

Faculty members had rights such as free inquiry, presenting controversial course material, and freedom of expression. They also participated in institutional governance, including course approval, faculty appointments, and student discipline. Ethical principles for faculty included upholding the highest scholarly standards and respecting students as individuals, fostering honest academic conduct and protecting the confidentiality and academic freedom of students, seeking and sharing truth in knowledge, improving their scholarly skills, maintaining intellectual honesty, and respecting institution regulations so long as they do not contravene academic freedom and they consider the impact of their decisions on the institution's programs.

Institutional disciplinary procedures were reserved for serious misconduct that impaired the core campus functions. The UC system-wide APM outlined policies for faculty research, evaluation, promotion, and tenure. APM 210 detailed criteria for faculty appointments, promotions, and evaluations, highlighting the importance of research and creative work. It also included policies for non-senate instructors under collective bargaining and academic review criteria for various professor series. The vice chancellor for research's website had several standard operating procedures and guidance documents on faculty research funding, governmental compliance, and partnerships with private industry, and on visiting scholars.

Academic departments designed their curricula based on specific objectives, and new courses and significant modifications were approved by the academic senate's Committee on Courses of Instruction, which ensured alignment with Berkeley standards. Faculty were encouraged to seek guidance from the Center for Teaching and Learning when preparing syllabi. The Course Design Guide aided in setting student learning outcomes and effective assessments. Achievement was measured through class counts, enrollments, and mandatory course evaluations with questions focusing on learning enhancement, assignment design, and inclusivity. These evaluations impacted merit reviews and teaching awards, such as the Distinguished Teaching Award. In addition, the academic program review process involved active faculty participation and self-study, supported by a central campus administration team. Key support areas included: data summaries; diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice strategic planning; climate assessments; graduate and undergraduate program guidance; learning outcomes assessments; and sexual harassment prevention plans.

#### Student Learning and Performance (CFRs 2.9, 2.10, 2.11)

The campus provided four sample learning outcomes reports. Based on the sample reports and meetings, the review team was unclear on the role faculty played in the assessment process, particularly the review and evaluation process. Also unclear was how these reports were used to make program and curricular improvements. Three of the four reports demonstrated direct assessments of learning outcomes with results. One of the reports (i.e., French) did not contain direct assessment strategies; it was a program-level survey for students in their undergraduate and graduate programs in spring 2022 with a 5.8% overall response rate. These assessment reports were authored by staff and not faculty and did not document curricular improvements based on assessment results.

As for student graduation data, the campus provided disaggregated tables grouping students by their entry year, covering data up to fall 2017 for first-year and fall 2019 for transfer students. Overall, the most-recent 6-year graduation rate was impressive at 91% and steady since 2008. The summary noted equity gaps among various student demographics, such as African American and Pacific Islander students (86% and 75%, respectively). For student outcomes, the campus reported UC dashboard data on earnings, industries, and graduate degree attainment for UC alumni, sortable by various factors such as campus and major. These dashboards helped prospective students and campus majors understand long-range outcomes and the value of UC degrees. The Berkeley Career Center also conducted the “First Destination Survey” for each graduating cohort and provided insights into median salaries, signing bonuses, top employers, job titles, and internship experiences for employment data. The 2022-2023 survey revealed the graduates completed their chosen majors, and the median salary was \$93,000, with 89% of graduates securing job offers before graduation. The UC system was working on a strategic partnership with a third-party labor market analytics platform to collect verified employment data on graduates. This will result in a dashboard that uses data from sources like LinkedIn to track alumni employment and education. Although the launch date was uncertain, it demonstrated UC’s commitment to improving data quality and depth.

#### Student Support (CFRs 2.12, 2.13, 2.14)

Berkeley’s advising and student services operated in a distributed environment, involving various colleges and departments with diverse advising roles and methods. Despite this diversity, a strong community of professionals proved committed to equity-oriented access and support for students’ learning, progress, and timely graduation. Students could engage with advising before and after accepting admission through virtual and in-person events. They accessed advising

resources via the Golden Bear Advising online course in the summer and have ongoing support through emails, workshops, and online resources. Campuswide advising and student services were coordinated by the Council for Advising and Student Support and its executive committee. Important updates were shared through the “Advising Matters” newsletters and website, and professional development was offered via the Advancing Practice program. The Berkeley Online Advising platform and the Advising Strategy and Training program provided excellent resources, including the Equity-Oriented Advising and Coaching Program.

The institutional report highlighted three co-curricular areas within the division of student affairs. The Residential Life department supported over 8,000 students in university-owned housing with live-in staff, resident assistants, and faculty who offered guidance and referrals for health services, financial aid, career counseling, tutoring services, and disability accommodations. The Career Center provided virtual and in-person career counseling and organized 15-18 annual career fairs, and the personalized support ranged from general to niche fields, with varying employer attendance. The Career Center also offered programs focused on career education, job search skills, networking, and recruiting, planned in collaboration with various institutional and external units. Finally, the Financial Aid and Scholarships Office offered comprehensive support, including financial aid counseling and financial literacy programming. Cal Student Central assisted students with in-person and online services from departments such as financial aid, registrar, accounts payable, and billing. An AI chatbot and text notifications also kept students informed about important deadlines. Programs like Bears for Financial Success and iGrad provided financial education during orientations and in various campus spaces.

The campus provided three sample reviews to demonstrate assessment of its student support and co-curricular programs: Student Learning Center, Residential Life, and University Health Services (UHS). The Student Learning Center served around 10,000 students annually with

over 250 undergraduate tutors and 20 professional staff. To improve its services, the Student Learning Center conducted surveys, such as the 2022 study on pandemic-related learning gains and losses, which received 850 responses and 1,838 comments. Findings from this survey led to initiatives like “Stay Well Together” to address social isolation and expanded virtual services alongside in-person offerings. The Residential Life department at Berkeley developed and implemented programs to support residents’ academic success, community engagement, diversity awareness, identity exploration, and holistic wellness. A recent data overview led to the introduction of term limits for undergraduate RAs, resulting in increased professional development opportunities and satisfaction among them. Adjustments included redeveloping RA training and redistributing returning RAs to mentor new RAs across different buildings. These initiatives have shown improvements in RA skill development and resident progress on learning goals. UHS and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at Berkeley were focused on providing high-quality healthcare and counseling services. UHS operated with a systematic quality management program to enhance care delivery and efficiency. For example, CAPS underwent a quality improvement study and redesigned its One At A Time counseling, such as its appointment scheduling and student connections with other well-being services.

During meetings with the student support unit representatives, the review team learned the challenges associated with the increasing number of students and their expectations for personalized support. Many staff members spoke about the need to wear multiple hats to accommodate students and ensure they feel supported. They also indicated that burnout and retention issues will significantly increase and that additional resources were vastly overdue. Compromises in this area would likely leave behind the most vulnerable student populations. The review team agrees and recommends that Berkeley continue their focus on fully supporting their

at-risk, disabled, and marginalized student populations to promote equitable access to opportunity. (CFRs 2.13, 2.14, 4.1, 4.5)

Based on the team’s review of the institutional report, the evidence provided, and the team’s discussions with campus representatives, the review has two recommendations related to Standard 2: (1) learning outcomes assessment in program review; and (2) student support services. Details are provided above in their respective areas.

Conclusion: The team’s conclusion, subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with Standard 2.

### Standard 3

#### Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

Prevalent at Berkeley were world-class faculty highly engaged in discovery and deeply committed to achieving educational excellence. A strong tradition of shared governance among faculty was observed through the academic senate. Academic handbooks were well tailored for Berkeley and complement UC systemwide policies.

While Berkeley employed many “regular” and “other” faculty (approximately 3,344 as of October 2023), faculty expressed concern over recent increases to their workload. The primary driver cited was a 2023 UC systemwide union agreement that substantially raised Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) pay and reduced the number of GSIs that departments could afford. This workload shift to faculty was exacerbated by Berkeley’s requirement to grow its student population as part of a five-year compact between California’s governor and the UC Office of the President (Fiscal Year 2022-2023 through Fiscal Year 2026-2027).

Proud members of the Berkeley community included approximately 9,272 staff (as of October 2023), and they described their work as “empowering,” “values-driven,” and

“meaningful.” To amplify the importance of having an engaged workforce, non-union staff at Berkeley had performance evaluations that included “Discovery” as a measured category. Staff politely admitted to being “exhausted” and “overwhelmed,” words also used by faculty as they described concern for their staff. Berkeley’s training and professional development opportunities were praised by staff, especially free extension courses. Staff noted they were too overworked to benefit from the 5% time built into position descriptions for professional development.

The institution regularly measured campus climate among all members of the Berkeley community. There were strong campus climate results, including a 2019 My Experience Survey with four out of five (82%) of those surveyed satisfied with their jobs overall. The cost of living in the Berkeley area, specifically affordable and proximate housing, was often referenced as a barrier to recruitment, retention, and well-being across all sectors of the institution. (CFRs 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)

#### Fiscal, Physical, Technology, and Information Resources

Budget challenges were well understood at all levels across Berkeley. A relatively small campuswide deficit (3% or \$131 million) was planned for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, caused by a lower-than-planned state contribution and increased operational costs, mainly labor. A larger deficit was anticipated for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 given an additional and substantial decline in state support. Despite these deficits, the campuswide budget was stable and well protected by Berkeley’s sizable investment income, reserves, and philanthropy.

There was fatigue among several Berkeley leaders about pushing the state toward a renewed financial commitment to UC campuses, including Berkeley. Energy among Berkeley leaders was pivoting from traditional sources (tuition and state funds) to new revenue, specifically funding associated with “sharing in the economic value that Berkeley creates in society.” With the new chancellor originating from Berkeley’s Haas School of Business – someone also familiar with

leading the expansion of innovation and entrepreneurship campuswide – many felt that now was the ideal time for Berkeley to identify new and self-supporting revenue sources.

On the expense side, Berkeley did not express plans to undertake drastic cost-cutting measures, except perhaps within small, under-resourced pockets around campus. The state’s inflexible laws and the UC’s rigid regulations were shared as example limitations to reducing costs. The campus’s risk-averse culture was also cited as thwarting the undertaking of bold cost-saving measures, with some of this aversion linked to the press’s appetite for publicizing Berkeley’s every move.

Berkeley’s financials were reported in both an annual campus-specific financial statement and consolidated into UC’s systemwide financial statement. (CRFs 3.4, 3.5)

The weathered condition of the campus’s physical plant was visible to the team. State funding for deferred maintenance and building renewals had essentially evaporated, leaving much of Berkeley’s infrastructure in need of repair and upgrade. A disciplined approach that involved consistently dedicating additional institutional funds to “chip away” at the daunting deferred maintenance, renewal, and seismic backlog (\$13 billion in 2024 dollars) was noted as a strategy to advance the academic mission. “Broken infrastructure undermines the climate in important ways,” according to an academic senate member interviewed by the team. Some immediate cosmetic improvements (paint, finishes, carpet) would be welcomed by the campus community. Renewals could facilitate some recruitments; it was mentioned that Berkeley can often match the faculty salaries of competitors, but the campus was finding it increasingly difficult to compete against universities that offer state-of-the-art facilities. Acknowledged was the astronomical cost of San Francisco Bay Area construction and the added costs for renovating the many historical buildings on the Berkeley campus.



Berkeley's hyper-decentralized culture was observed as both the institution's blessing (stimulated creativity and discovery) and curse (lack of economies and efficiencies). As an example, a significant number of resources for information technology resided within campus departments; "double that of central" was the provided estimate. Despite the decentralization, information technology was not a resource identified as lacking. (CFR 3.6)

#### Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes

UC, a 10-campus public system of higher education, had its 26-member Board of Regents. While Berkeley and the other UC campuses were governed by this board, the campuses operated with significant autonomy. Berkeley embraced a "two-person box" senior leadership organizational chart, whereby the chancellor and the executive vice chancellor and provost worked as a team to co-lead the institution. This collaborative leadership approach resulted in a comparatively large chancellor's cabinet and complex matrix structure, though the cabinet was observed as engaged and informed. The cabinet's communications were facilitated through regular meetings and through sessions with expanded leadership groups, retreats, and social engagements. (CFR 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11)

Conclusion: The team's finding, subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with Standard 3.

#### Standard 4

##### Quality Assurance Processes

Berkeley engaged in sustained, data-based reflection about how it effectively fulfilled its mission and its educational objectives, especially in relation to inclusiveness, equity, and diversity of opportunity for students, faculty, and staff. The institution envisioned its future in the light of the

evolving student body and environment of higher education. Its quality assurance activities informed institutional planning, the systematic evaluations of educational effectiveness, and the development of the strategic plan and its implementation.

In its institutional report, the institution provided an extensive range of data that illustrated a sustained commitment to the provision of a high-quality student experience and an understanding that feedback, and the analysis of that feedback, was critical to continuous improvement. In order to ensure sustained attention to learning assessment, Berkeley recently hired a dedicated assessment analyst, and the institutional research units, across multiple divisions, designed communication strategies to permit the sharing of data and the operationalization of best practices. The institution was receptive to feedback from student evaluations, and its responses were thorough and focused. In relation to the Discovery Opportunities Database, for example, student criticisms of the user experience were quickly taken on board, and the database interface was in the process of being redesigned for easier navigation at the time of the team's visit. (CFRs 4.1, 4.2)

#### Institutional Improvement

Berkeley's institutional report, the evidence cited within it and appended to the report, and the team's interviews of multiple stakeholders during the visit showed an institution that took very seriously the ongoing requirement to gather data on students' learning opportunities, experiences, and demographics. Data assessment, evaluation, and analysis were used to enhance processes, practices, and performance across the institution. The team was impressed by the materials submitted for the review and the information that emerged consistently from those panels interviewed. Based on all the evidence, Berkeley clearly engaged in data-driven decision making at multiple levels institutionally, with an important governance contribution from its academic

senate. The concerns and requirements of students, faculty, and staff were persistently focused upon and provided the motivation for adjustments in the work of the institution. (CFRs 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7)

Since the recommendations of the last WSCUC review, the institution created and sustained a culture on its campus that was led by coherent strategic thinking filtered through structured committee work and institutional communication. Strategy was scaffolded by evidence from empirical feedback and evaluation, leading to an enhanced emphasis on and deployment of immersive and research-led student experiences. The creation of the Discovery Initiative, with its holistic approach and multiple components, illustrated that Berkeley thought carefully and strategically to meet the students where they were, and to address the rapidly evolving needs of all students—graduate and undergraduate, but within broader social contexts. Such efforts ensured the progress of the institution’s mission and the advancement of its vision for higher education. (CFR 4.7)

Berkeley engaged in assessment and evaluation of its educational programs, its administrative processes and initiatives, and its efforts to ensure that all students were thriving. (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4) A broad range of quantitative and qualitative data was collected to generate significant and widely applicable assessment, including self-reported commentary, fundamental facts, and statistics of use and engagement. The team was impressed with the data collection processes and analyses, and the ways in which the institution sought to integrate evidence in its planning, programs, new initiatives, and strategic operations.

Conclusion: The team’s conclusion, subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate compliance with Standard 4.

## Federal Requirements

Berkeley provided evidence of its compliance with the four federal requirements, and a review with the team's commentary is presented in the appendix to this report. The following forms constitute the Federal Compliance Forms Appendix: Credit Hour and Program Length Review Form; Marketing and Recruitment Review Form; Student Complaints Review Form; and Transfer Credit Policy Review Form.

## **SECTION III – OTHER TOPICS, AS APPROPRIATE**

The team found no other topics to review.

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

The self-study pursued by Berkeley for its reaffirmation of accreditation not only documented and analyzed the institution's compliance with the WSCUC Standards but also examined its success and accomplishments yielded through the Discovery Initiative, which stemmed from the campus strategic plan and its dedication to providing all undergraduates with a rigorous and impactful education. By connecting the distributed efforts of the campus toward these goals in a focused Thematic Pathway review, Berkeley benefited from the opportunity to reflect and to consider its next steps toward attaining its high-priority goals. The team finds the campus's dedication to its mission to be an enduring motivation to pursue these significant initiatives and to gain additional ground toward its success. Through investing its time, energy, and resources in its plans for action, which were formed during this review, Berkeley used this opportunity to forge a path to further achievement. The team offers these five commendations and four recommendations.

**Commendations:**

The team commends the University of California Berkeley for:

1. Its Discovery Trail Blazers program, which promoted curricular innovation, demonstrated faculty dedication, and upheld its commitment to pedagogic excellence.
2. The success of its capital campaign and its determination to generate new revenue streams to support continued institutional excellence.
3. Its spirit of collaboration and dedication to shared governance.
4. Its responsive institutional research staff, whose enthusiasm for collective effort supported continuous improvement.
5. Its creation of a positive culture in which faculty and staff exhibited devotion to the institution's public mission.

**Recommendations:**

The team recommends that the University of California Berkeley:

1. Continue their focus on fully supporting their at-risk, disabled, and marginalized student populations to promote equitable access to opportunity. (CFRs 2.13, 2.14, 4.1, 4.5)
2. Improve internal communication to foster transparency, augment collaboration and innovation, and support student success and other institutional priorities. (CFR 1.7)
3. Build on the momentum of the Discovery Initiatives' early successes by exploring a sustainable model to ensure access to an immersive experience for every undergraduate student. (CFRs 2.1, 2.2, 2.5)

4. Incorporate an analysis of student achievement of program learning outcomes consistently and constructively in the academic program review self-studies. (CFRs 2.4, 2.7, 4.1)

## APPENDICES

### A. Federal Compliance Forms

# Federal Compliance Forms

## Overview

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

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

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

## Credit Hour and Program Length Review Form

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

### Credit Hour - §602.24(f)

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

1. The accrediting agency meets this requirement if-
  - i. It reviews the institution's-
    - A. Policies and procedures for determining the credit hours, as defined in 34 CFR 600.2, that the institution awards for courses and programs; and
    - B. The application of the institution's policies and procedures to its programs and coursework; and
  - ii. Makes a reasonable determination of whether the institution's assignment of credit hours conforms to commonly accepted practice in higher education.
2. In reviewing and evaluating an institution's policies and procedures for determining credit hour assignments, an accrediting agency may use sampling or other methods in the evaluation.

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

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

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

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

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

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



# 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	<p>Is this policy easily accessible? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If so, where is the policy located? <a href="#">University of California Academic Senate Regulation 760; Committee on Courses of Instruction Handbook 2.31, "Designation of Unit Value"</a></p> <p>Comments: UC Academic Senate Regulation 760 specifies that "[t]he value of a course in units shall be reckoned at the rate of one unit for three hours' work per week per term on the part of a student, or the equivalent." The Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate implements this policy through its faculty Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI), and the COCI handbook contains additional details on how unit value is determined.</p> <p>The institution's credit hour policy was easily accessible.</p>
Process(es)/ periodic review of credit hour	<p>Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO  <a href="#">Academic Senate Berkeley Division Bylaw 33 "Courses of Instruction"; Committee on Courses of Instruction Handbook 2.31, "Designation of Unit Value"; Committee on Courses of Instruction Handbook 2.1.1, "New Courses"; Committee on Courses of Instruction Handbook 2.1.2, "Changes to Existing Courses"</a></p> <p>Comments: The institution had an established procedure for the periodic review of credit hour assignments that considered both accuracy and reliability. The academic senate led this process.</p>
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	<p>Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments: <a href="#">Berkeley Academic Guide Class Schedule</a></p>
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	<p>How many syllabi were reviewed? 4</p> <p>What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? Online</p> <p>What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctoral</p> <p>What discipline(s)? Cybersecurity, Data Science, Education, Public Health</p> <p>Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments: The syllabus review determined that students in these courses were completing the equivalent amount of work for the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded.</p>
Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g.,	<p>How many syllabi were reviewed? 3</p> <p>What kinds of courses? Independent study, internship, and practicum</p> <p>What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctoral</p> <p>What discipline(s)? Chemistry, College Writing, and Information Science</p>

internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated) <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: The syllabus review determined that students in these courses were completing the equivalent amount of work for the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded.
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	How many programs were reviewed? 7
	What kinds of programs were reviewed? Two bachelor's degrees, three master's degrees, and two doctoral degrees.  <a href="#">BA in African American Studies</a> <a href="#">BS in Civil Engineering</a> <a href="#">MA in Folklore</a> <a href="#">MS in Environmental Health Sciences</a> <a href="#">Master's in Business Administration (MBA)</a> <a href="#">PhD in English</a> <a href="#">PhD in Mechanical Engineering</a>
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? African American Studies, Business Administration, Civil Engineering, English, Environmental Health Sciences, Folklore, and Mechanical Engineering
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: The material reviewed showed that the programs offered at the institution are of an acceptable length.

Review Completed By: Kelly Wahl, Assistant Chair  
Date: September 17, 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	<p>Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><a href="#">Consumer Information – Federal Disclosures</a> (UC Berkeley Office of the Registrar)  <a href="#">Guideline on Undergraduate Recruitment Practices</a> (UC Office of the President): specifically states “Campuses will abide by local, state and federal laws (e.g., confidentiality and incentive compensation) and University policy (e.g., Standards of Ethical Conduct) applicable to the outreach, recruitment and admission process.”</p> <p>Comments: The team observed that the institution follows federal regulations on recruiting students.</p>
Degree completion and cost	<p>Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><a href="#">Undergraduate Graduation and Retention Rates</a> (UC Berkeley Office of Planning and Analysis)  <a href="#">Time-to-degree for graduates with multiple majors, minors, capped and STEM majors: Freshman entrants</a> (UC Berkeley Office of Planning and Analysis)</p> <p>Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><a href="#">Student Budgets (Cost of Attendance)</a> (UC Berkeley Financial Aid and Scholarships Office)</p> <p>Comments: The institution provided information about the typical length of time to degree and information about the overall cost of the degree.</p>
Careers and employment	<p>Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><a href="#">What Can I Do With a Major In...?</a> (UC Berkeley Career Engagement)</p> <p>Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p><a href="#">Where Do Cal Grads Go?</a> (UC Berkeley Career Engagement)</p>
	<p>Comments: The institution provided information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified and the employment of its graduates.</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: Kelly Wahl, Assistant Chair  
Date: September 17, 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	<p>Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If so, is the policy or procedure easily accessible? Is so, where?            Yes, the policy was easily accessible. The policy was hosted on the <a href="#">Office of the Registrar</a> webpage.</p> <p>Additional resources for a variety of concerns were centralized at the <a href="#">UC Berkeley Support Portal</a>.</p> <p>Both the Ombuds Office and the Support Portal staff could refer students to the appropriate offices for complaints as relevant to help them navigate the campus.</p> <p>Comments: The team observed that the complaint policies and procedures varied with the type of complaint and could be accessed via the web.</p>
Process(es)/ procedure	<p>Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If so, please describe briefly: Students who encountered challenging behaviors or difficult interactions on campus regarding academic, student services or conduct issues could find information and assistance via the <a href="#">Ombuds Office</a> website. In addition, the <a href="#">Berkeley Support Portal</a> directed students with complaints to the appropriate offices and resources for their concerns. Complaints were handled by the appropriate units depending on the specific situation.</p> <p>Relevant offices that received complaints included, but were not limited to:  <a href="#">Ombuds Office for Students and Postdoctoral Appointees</a>  <a href="#">Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination</a> (UC Berkeley’s Title IX office)  <a href="#">Center for Student Conduct</a>  <a href="#">UC Berkeley Police Accountability Board</a>  <a href="#">Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate Committee on Courses of Instruction</a> (receives grade appeals)  <a href="#">Office of Ethics, Risk, and Compliance Services</a>  <a href="#">UC Berkeley Privacy Office</a></p> <p>If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments: The institution had procedures for addressing student complaints that included numerous offices, and the team found evidence that the institution adhered to these procedures.</p>
Records	<p>Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If so, where?</p>

	<p>Offices of record kept records of complaints that they received and the resolution of those complaints. These offices included, but were not limited to, the Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination, the Whistleblower Office, the Center for Student Conduct, the Office of the Registrar, and the Ombuds Office for Students and Postdoctoral Appointees.</p>
	<p>Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO          If so, please describe briefly:</p> <p>Offices that kept complaint records used databases that permitted tracking over time. The University of California <a href="#">Policy on Student Grievance Procedures</a> and the latest <a href="#">Annual Civil Rights Report</a> and <a href="#">Student Ombuds office report</a> exemplified the kind of tracking possible in UC Berkeley systems and under UC policies.</p>
	<p>Comments: The institution maintained records of student complaints and had an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time.</p>

\*§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, Assistant Chair

Date: September 17, 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)	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, is the policy publicly available? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where? <a href="#">Transferring Credit</a> (UC Berkeley Office of the Registrar) <a href="#">Course Evaluation</a> (UC Berkeley Central Evaluation Unit)  <a href="#">ASSIST</a> was the official transfer and articulation system for California’s public colleges and universities and helped transfer students determine which courses transferred to UC Berkeley.  <a href="#">Transfer Admissions Information by College</a> (UC Berkeley Office of Undergraduate Admissions)
	Does the policy(s) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: The institution had a policy/formal procedure for receiving transfer credit that was publicly available and included a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education.

\*§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, Assistant Chair  
 Date: September 17, 2024

## B. Distance Education Review Form

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 either Section A for institutions that offer distance education programs approved by WSCUC or are 100% distance education institutions OR 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:** University of California Berkeley

**Type of Visit:** Reaffirmation of Accreditation

**Name of reviewer/s:** Kelly Wahl, Assistant Chair

**Date/s of review:** September 18, 2024

**Section Completed:** A

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 A:** Institutions with Approved Distance Education Programs

1. Programs and courses reviewed (please list)

Master of Advanced Study in Engineering (MAS-E)

Master of Information and Cybersecurity (MICS)

Master of Information and Data Science (MIDS)

Master of Materials Science and Software Engineering (MSSE)

Online On-Campus Master of Public Health (OOMPH)

Interviews with program leaders were conducted for the following programs:

Master of Information and Data Science (MIDS)

Online On-Campus Master of Public Health (OOMPH)

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

*Number of programs offered by distance education:* five (5) current active programs were offered by distance education. The Master's in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science was offered via distance education, but was discontinued in 2017, with plans to deactivate it in WSCUC's portal after all enrolled students are confirmed to be graduated.

*Degree levels:* All 5 were master's degrees

*FTE enrollment in distance education courses/programs:*

As of spring 2024:

MAS-E: Program had just launched; no current students; expected 32 students to start in fall 2024

MICS: 173 enrolled students

MIDS: 983 enrolled students

MSSE: 48 enrolled students

OOMPH: 290 enrolled students

Total spring 2024 FTE enrollment in distance education programs; 1,494 students

*History of offering distance education:* The University of California system did not permit distance education bachelor's degrees. University of California Berkeley began offering its first distance education master's program, the On-Campus/Online Master of Public Health (OOMPH), in 2012, and its second, the Master of Information and Data Science (MIDS), in 2013. At the time of the visit, the campus had five active distance learning master's programs; in addition to the two already mentioned, these included the Master of Information and Cybersecurity (MICS), established in 2018; the Master of Molecular Science and Software Engineering (MSSE), established in 2020; and the Master of Advanced Study in Engineering (MAS-E), which expected to welcome its first students in fall 2024. Several other campus programs allowed some distance education coursework but also had in-person course requirements, such as the Master of Public Affairs (MPA).

In addition to distance learning master's degree programs, individual courses at both the undergraduate and graduate level were offered via distance learning if they were approved for online delivery by the faculty Committee on Courses of Instruction of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate. The [Schedule of Classes in the Berkeley Academic Guide](#) indicated course modality (such as web based, in person, or online instruction). For example, for fall 2024, as of July 22, 2024, 4.8% of advertised UC Berkeley courses were offered via distance education (the schedule lists 6,105 courses; 5,827 are categorized as in person, 14 as web based, and 264 as online instruction). This included the courses in the fully-online master's degree programs. UC Berkeley also offered some online classes and non-degree programs through UC Berkeley Extension.

*Percentage growth in distance education offerings and enrollment:* Since UC Berkeley's last WSCUC accreditation review in 2015, enrollment in distance education master's programs at UC Berkeley grew from 393 students (157 in MIDS and 150 in OOMPH) in spring 2015 to 1,494 in spring 2024 (breakdown above) – an increase of 280%. Students learning at UC Berkeley through distance education meaningfully increased as a proportion of the graduate student body over the last decade – 3.9% of UC Berkeley graduate students in spring 2015 were in distance education programs (393 students out of 10,065 total

graduate students), and this rose to 12% in spring 2024 (1,494 students out of 12,237 total graduate students).

*Platform, formats, and/or delivery method:* Several different learning management systems (LMSes) were used, including bCourses (UC Berkeley's instance of Canvas, used for most courses throughout the university) and the vendor Coursera's LMS (used by the MAS-E). Until 2024, the MIDS and MICS programs used various LMSes provided by the vendor 2U, including a proprietary Moodle-based platform and then a 2U instance of Canvas; at the time of the visit MIDS and MICS used bCourses, the standard UC Berkeley LMS. All programs used Zoom for live video meetings as relevant. Some programs combined recorded (asynchronous) video lecture with live video meeting (synchronous) sessions, such as MIDS and MICS.

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

Materials presented online and among the institution's evidence were reviewed, including websites, syllabi, and various other reports and documents.

Interviews were conducted with the Chief of Curriculum and Instruction, UC Berkeley School of Public Health (representing the OOMPH program) and the faculty Head Graduate Adviser, Master of Information and Data Science program, UC Berkeley School of Information.

Program websites were also reviewed:

[MIDS](#)

[MICS](#)

[OOMPH](#)

[MSSE](#)

[MAS-E](#)

## Observations and Findings

Lines of Inquiry	Observations and Findings	Follow-up Required (identify the issues)
<p><i>Fit with Mission.</i> How does the institution conceive of distance learning relative to its mission, operations, and administrative structure? How are distance education offerings planned, funded, and operationalized?</p>	<p>The University of California system did not allow distance learning as the sole mode of instruction for bachelor's degrees. Distance learning was only allowed as the primary modality for graduate programs; a small percentage of courses, and non-degree programs through UC Berkeley Extension, also made use of distance education methods. Distance education was primarily conceived of in UC Berkeley's institutional context as a tool for reaching students unable to be physically on residence on campus, particularly mid-career graduate and professional students. Distance education offerings were proposed by individual schools and colleges to the academic senate for review in accordance with the <a href="#">Berkeley Compendium</a>. Historical taskforces on online and remote instruction at both the campus and systemwide levels, as well as key recommendations by the UC Commission on the Future, have highlighted issues and concerns about the role of online and remote instruction at UC. Reports, recommendations, and other materials on this issue were compiled and presented by the Berkeley Academic Senate on their website.</p>	

<p><i>Connection to the Institution.</i> How are distance education students integrated into the life and culture of the institution?</p>	<p>Each distance education program made its own efforts to integrate students into the life and culture of UC Berkeley. Because distance education programs were only allowed at the graduate level, typically students experienced the strongest connection to their program and home department, school, or college. For example in the MIDS program, the School of Information (I School) maintained a large Slack team for all I School graduate students, faculty, and staff, which had thousands of active users and encouraged collaboration and social connection. The MIDS program also incorporated one major required in-person activity, a 3-4 day conference-like “Immersion” program usually held on the UC Berkeley campus, which helped students develop additional connections to the campus, faculty, and peers as well as pursue professional development.</p>	
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<p><i>Quality of the DE Infrastructure.</i> 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?</p>	<p>The learning platform, most commonly bCourses (UC Berkeley’s instance of Canvas), was highly conducive to faculty-student and student-student interaction via integrated discussion tools such as EdDiscussions. Many programs also incorporated group projects and peer learning conducted via videoconference and asynchronous collaboration tools. Comprehensive <a href="#">support for bCourses</a> was provided by staff in the unit Research, Teaching, and Learning (RTL), which handled educational technology for UC Berkeley. The system was backed up, and Canvas offered multiple ways for faculty to back up course content. Coursera’s Canvas LMS instance was similarly backed up.</p>	
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<p><i>Student Support Services:</i> What is the institution’s capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services, academic support and other services appropriate to distance modality? What do data show about the effectiveness of the services?</p>	<p>In order to start a new graduate program at UC Berkeley, including distance learning programs, the faculty and department proposing the program were required to explain the resource requirements of the program and how the program proposed to meet them, and their explanation was reviewed by the graduate council of the academic senate and other bodies. (For example, see section 6, “Resource Requirements,” of the <a href="#">template for new self-supporting graduate degree program proposals</a>.) For distance learning proposals, programs were also required to describe the structure and platform for online course delivery (<a href="#">section 5.4</a>). Programs that could not satisfactorily assure capacity for relevant services were not approved. Program review processes examined the resources available to support students. For example, graduation rates were high: as of fall 2022, 90% of all MIDS students who had started the program had graduated, 88% within 3 years. Similarly, as of fall 2022, 97% of all MICS students who had started the program had graduated within 3 years.</p>	
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<p><i>Faculty.</i> Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? Do they teach only online courses? In what ways does the institution ensure that distance learning faculty are oriented, supported, and integrated appropriately into the academic life of the institution? How are faculty involved in curriculum development and assessment of student learning? How are faculty trained and supported to teach in this modality?</p>	<p>The academic senate expectation for degree programs at all UC campuses was that the curriculum was owned by the campus’s ladder faculty, and as such there was an expectation of their leadership in all instruction. Specific to MIDS and MICS: Currently in the program, most courses were taught by full-time adjunct faculty members or by part-time lecturers. Ladder faculty oversaw the curriculum through their service on the leadership committee. The adjunct teaching was advantageous for these professional degree programs because it enabled the university to hire many industry experts. Most of the part-time lecturers taught only online courses; most of the full-time adjunct faculty also taught in-person courses. In order to orient and support these instructors, the School of Information employed two staff academic program managers in the MIDS program and one in the MICS program, appointed a faculty member as head graduate adviser for each program, and maintained a detailed onboarding wiki. Training sessions on the LMS were also offered. The faculty held biweekly meetings online to discuss pedagogical issues, and also held course-specific weekly meetings to coordinate instructors teaching sections of the same class. Each class had a senior “lead instructor” and a faculty “course coordinator” who helped orient new</p>	
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	<p>instructors. Lead instructors served as the primary designers and revisers of courses and were additionally compensated when a major revision of online course materials was needed.</p> <p>For the OOMPH program, core faculty included ladder faculty and professors-in-residence, and full-time adjuncts, as well as lecturers instructing in areas for which current experience in the field is valuable (e.g., emergency management). Long-term staff instructional designers were part of the teaching team and partnered with faculty in the preparation of courses and in support of their work in this modality. All courses were managed by teaching teams that met weekly. Faculty were compensated for course development; lecturers received their appointments before they started to teach. Every third year, the program rebuilt 60% of its courses.</p>	
<p><i>Curriculum and Delivery.</i> Who designs the distance education programs and courses? How are they approved and evaluated? Are the programs and courses comparable in content, outcomes and quality to on-ground offerings? (Submit credit hour report.)</p>	<p>All courses were designed by faculty members; proposed course syllabi were reviewed, evaluated, and approved (or returned with feedback) by the Committee on Courses of Instruction (COCI) of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate. COCI held online courses to the same educational standards and credit hour policies as on-ground offerings. See the <a href="#">COCI Handbook policy on approval of new courses</a>.</p>	

<p><i>Faculty Initiated Regular and Substantive Interaction.</i> 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”?</p>	<p>In order to submit a course to COCI for approval, the proposing department had to fill out a credit hour worksheet indicating how many weekly hours of in-person activity, online activity, and out of class work were conducted. If the proposed course deviated from standard hourly meeting times for the relevant credit value, the proposing faculty member was required to demonstrate and document how students were completing the required number of total work hours for the course. In order to ensure compliance, the scheduling system enforced a process rule that courses could only be scheduled using the approved credit hour formula for that course (for example, a 3-unit course approved with 3 hours of web-based lecture could only be scheduled with a 3-hour web-based lecture in the Schedule of Classes). If a faculty member wished to deviate from this meeting pattern, a revised proposal had to be submitted to COCI for review and approval. Activities that counted as substantive student/instructor interaction for online classes included web-based lecture and web-based discussion. Additional COCI policies on web-based and online classes could be found in <a href="#">section 2.5 of the COCI handbook</a>.</p>	
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<p><i>Academic Engagement.</i> How does the institution ensure compliance with the federal expectation for “Academic Engagement”? How is compliance monitored? What activities contribute to academic engagement?</p>	<p>UC Berkeley ensured compliance with the federal expectation for academic engagement by maintaining its credit hour policy as described in COCI Handbook <a href="#">section 2.3.1. Designation of Unit Value.</a> Courses were not approved that could not show sufficient weekly student work hours. Courses were also not approved unless they included a breakdown of the course grading policy, which in turn ensured sufficient student engagement to produce relevant deliverables (papers, projects, exams, etc.) and in many cases specifically outlined class policies on attendance and participation. In addition, the Learning Management System collected data as a record of academic engagement. Activities that could contribute to academic engagement in distance learning courses included attending web-based lecture, attending web-based discussion section, watching recorded (asynchronous) lectures, completing homework assignments, and taking exams.</p>	
<p><i>State Licensure Requirements.</i> Describe, as appropriate, the institution’s process for disclosing to students how state licensure requirements are met by distance education programs, whether licensure requirements are not met by programs, or whether the institution has not determined where licensure requirements are met by the programs.</p>	<p>None of the distance education programs led to licensure.</p>	

<p><i>Student Identification Verification and Privacy.</i> 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?</p>	<p>Verification: For all students, including students in distance learning programs, UC Berkeley used <a href="#">CalNet authentication</a> to provide a secure single sign-on (SSO) experience, including for the learning management system. Users were required to use two-factor authentication. UC Berkeley did not allow the use of proctoring software due to concerns about student privacy; instead, the campus offered training sessions on best practices for live Zoom remote proctoring. Best practices and alternatives to Zoom proctoring were found on the <a href="#">Academic Senate's website</a>; the Center for Teaching and Learning maintained a <a href="#">Remote Proctoring FAQ</a>. Some online Summer Sessions courses developed by Digital Learning Services (DLS) had special <a href="#">proctoring requirements</a>, such as requiring students to take their final exam in-person at UC Berkeley or with a proctor off-site.</p> <p>Cybersecurity: UC Berkeley’s cybersecurity practices were robust. See more from the campus <a href="#">Information Security Office</a>; additional information was available on request. Regular cybersecurity training was required for all UC Berkeley staff and faculty, including graduate student instructors and other academic student employees.</p> <p>No additional student charges were associated with the verification of student identity</p>	
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	for degree-seeking students at UC Berkeley.	
<p><i>Retention and Graduation.</i> What data on retention and graduation are collected on students taking online courses and programs? What do these data show? What disparities are evident? Are rates comparable to on-ground programs and to other institutions' online offerings? If any concerns exist, how are these being addressed?</p>	<p>The campus and individual programs collected data on retention and graduation for students in all programs, including distance learning programs. This data was reported back to the Graduate Council as part of a mandatory report on a new graduate degree program covering the first 3 years. Graduation and retention rates for UC Berkeley's online programs were relatively high for such programs. For example, as of fall 2022, 90% of all MIDS students who had started the program had graduated, 88% within 3 years. Similarly, as of fall 2022, <a href="#">97%</a> of all MICS students who had started the program had graduated within 3 years. The retention rate for the online MPH was <a href="#">94% as of 2024</a>. Most of UC Berkeley's online master's degree programs did not have comparable on-ground programs (for example, there was no in-person MIDS, MICS, MAS-E, or MSSE degree). OOMPH did have an on-campus equivalent MPH program, and outcomes between the programs were compared, in particular during disciplinary accreditation processes.</p>	

<p><i>Student Learning.</i> How does the institution assess student learning for online programs and courses? Is this process comparable to that used in on-ground courses? What are the results of student learning assessment? How do these compare with learning results of on-ground students, if applicable, or with other online offerings?</p>	<p>Student learning in online programs and courses was assessed using processes comparable to on-ground courses, such as projects, exams, homework assignments, and papers.</p> <p>In the case of the OOMPH program, there was assessment of learning tied to disciplinary accreditor expectations of knowledge and competencies. The MIDS program used a local review process to ensure the goals of their curriculum map were fulfilled in their students' coursework.</p> <p>Analysis of student learning assessment was encouraged in the academic program review process, and as such could include results that compared online programs with their in-person equivalents.</p>	
<p><i>Contracts with Vendors.</i> Are there any arrangements with outside vendors concerning the infrastructure, delivery, development, or instruction of courses? If so, do these comport with the policy on <i>Agreements with Unaccredited Entities</i>?</p>	<p>MIDS and MICS contracted with 2U. MAS-E contracted with Coursera. These arrangements comported with the policy on <i>Agreements with Unaccredited Entities</i>.</p>	

<p><i>Quality Assurance Processes:</i> How are the institution's quality assurance processes designed or modified to cover distance education? What evidence is provided that distance education programs and courses are educationally effective?</p>	<p>All graduate degree programs at UC Berkeley were approved and periodically reviewed by the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate. For distance education programs, these periodic reviews included additional questions about the online modality, including the learning management system and technology. Reviews also included student outcomes information (i.e., retention and graduation statistics) and student satisfaction data.</p>	
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*Revised April 2023*