WSCUC 2026 Special Visit Committee Meeting
Summary Notes

Date: January 30, 2025   **12:00 - 1:00 pm**
Venue: MS Teams

Facilitators: Dr. Bradley Henson and Dr. Satoko Siegel

Members: Bradley Andresen, Stephanie Amonoo-Monney, Suresh Appavoo, Stephanie Bowlin, Rosana Bravo, Connie Callahan, Denise Cornish, Katie Demedis (Guest) Sarah Farah-Franco, Mirabelle Fernandes Paul, Hyma Gogineni, Leslie Hayes, Rodney Hicks, Mayra Hoskins, Sil Han Jin, Rick Leeper, Josh McFarlen, Mark McIntire, Ellyn McLaughlin (Guest), Tina Meyer, Stephen O'Barr, Joseph Park, Jonathan Perry, Sunil Prabhu, Elizabeth Rega, Carl Todaro, Tim Wood

Recorder: Heather Simmons

Absent: Barbara Baker, Carolina Banuelos, Eugene Brown, Joshua Cameron, Cheng Yu Huo, Liliana Martinez, Andre Matti, Maria Pallavacini, Laurice Sorense

Items	Discussion/Action
New Members	**Added additional members to Steering Committee** - Dr. Siegel has had one kick-off meeting for previous new members and will provide another
Powers Introduction	**Powers Law Firm (Guests):** Expertise in higher education consulting and accreditation (D.C.-based). **Katie Demedis:** Higher education attorney; advises on Title IV, Title IX, state laws, and accreditation. Expert in PA program accreditation (ARC-PA).

	o **Ellyn McLaughlin:** Former faculty and administrator. Specializes in self-study, accreditation, and sanctions support. Leads institutional accreditation planning.

WSCUC Standards Worksheet (Survey #2)	• **Reports and Evidence**
	  o Based on self-study findings; worksheets verified by peer review.
	    ▪ Required appendix follows set criteria for review.
	      • Survey #1 evidence uploaded to Teams.
	  o Key Issues
	    ▪ Distance learning (e.g., CGN) lacks physical space; focus on online resources.
	    ▪ Online readiness assessments for faculty and students before finalizing the report.
	  o Gaps and Self-Study
	    ▪ Identify missing data early for adjustments.
	      • Site visit timeframe allows time for refinements post-submission.
	  o Student Success and Humanism
	    ▪ Foster belonging across student groups within existing resources.
	    ▪ Integrate humanism in teaching as a mission-driven priority.
	  o Employability and Student Outcomes
	    ▪ Focus: Graduate employability, preceptor engagement, clinical rotations.
	    ▪ WSCUC and Dept. of Ed emphasize student success and degree value.
	    ▪ Institutions must show analysis and improvement based on data.
	  o Data Utilization and Action Items
	    ▪ Improve documentation of data-driven decisions.
	      • Compile examples of data-informed changes.
	      • Review LEAD service metrics and interprofessional initiatives.
	      • Assess IRE's program effectiveness in decision-making.
	  o Final Steps
	    ▪ Ensure transparency in data, decisions, and outcomes.
	    ▪ Keep the survey open for feedback.
	    ▪ Prepare materials for final survey analysis.

WSCUC Institutional Report	• **Discussion on DEI and Accreditation Compliance**
	  o Important to review as we move forward.
	    ▪ The previous Site Visit Team identified the need for improvement in DEI efforts.
	    ▪ WesternU is rooted in humanism, which aligns with DEI principles
	    ▪ Also raises concerns given recent political shifts
	      • The use of DEI terminology in accreditation documents could pose risks.

	• WSCUC maintains DEI standards and has not altered requirements.
	   ◦ Institutions are still required to evaluate DEI efforts.
	      ▪ It is unclear if the federal government can legally prohibit schools from having DEI goals.
	         • Uncertainty about whether such restrictions would withstand judicial scrutiny.
	• Continue forward with DEI initiatives but be prepared for potential rebranding efforts.
	   ◦ Many institutions are renaming DEI efforts while maintaining core objectives.
	   ◦ Compliance with WSCUC standards is paramount.
	   ◦ Avoid hasty changes in response to an executive order that may not be enforceable.
	• The federal government could attempt to tie Title IV funding (student loans) to DEI restrictions.
	• Need to comply with both WSCUC standards and evolving federal regulations.
	      ▪ Finding a middle ground that ensures compliance while minimizing institutional risk.
	         • Remaining adaptable will be key.
	• **Next Steps**:
	   ◦ Add DEI and accreditation to the next agenda.
	      ▪ Allocate dedicated time for further discussion and strategy development.
	   ◦ Begin drafting compliance-focused documentation without finalizing terminology changes.

Writing Groups	• **Approach to Writing Projects**
	   ◦ Recognizing that participants have full-time roles, engagement levels will vary.
	   ◦ Emphasizing inclusivity to ensure all institutional voices are heard.
	   ◦ Writing groups will develop outlines and storyboards to frame key messages.
	   ◦ Data sheets will guide evidence-based narratives.
	• **Workflow and Review Process**
	   ◦ Writing groups submit outlines, which are synthesized into a cohesive narrative
	   ◦ The synthesized draft is returned to writing groups for feedback and refinement.
	   ◦ Powers will review and provide recommendations.
	   ◦ Committee members are encouraged but not required to contribute to writing if they have the capacity.
	• The process should be iterative, with periodic reviews to ensure effectiveness.
	• WSCUC expects a unified institutional voice, requiring consistency in narrative.
	   ◦ Avoid a fragmented report that lacks coherence.
	   ◦ Ensure robust review, comments, and recommendations throughout the process.
	   ◦ Maintain realistic expectations to prevent future delays.
	• Implement the outlined writing process while remaining open to adjustments.

	• Conduct regular check-ins to evaluate progress and address potential issues. • Prioritize collaboration and alignment with accreditation standards. • Keep the focus on producing a cohesive and well-supported narrative.
Next Meeting	• February 27, 2025