

**REPORT OF THE WSCUC VISITING TEAM**  
**EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW**  
**for REAFFIRMATION**

To the American University of Armenia

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The team evaluated the institution under the 2008 WSCUC Senior College and University Commission Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective evaluation for consideration and action by the institution and by the WSCUC Senior College and University Commission.

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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## **THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW TEAM REPORT**

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

#### **A. Description of the Institution and Visit**

The American University of Armenia (AUA) opened September 21, 1991, the day Armenia declared independence from the former Soviet Union. As a partner in this national birth, AUA’s mission is to bring American style education to Armenia, with the goal of preparing Armenian citizens and those of the region to address the needs of sustainable development in an environment that values and develops academic excellence, free inquiry, integrity, scholarship, leadership, and service to society (CFR 1.1).

In keeping with this mission, AUA enrolls approximately graduate students pursuing master’s degrees or graduate-level certificates within academic programs in the areas of Business Administration, Computer and Information Science, Economics, Environmental Science and Conservation, Industrial Engineering and Systems Management, Public Health, Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Translation, Law, and Political Science and International Affairs. A Masters in Economics was added in 2012, following substantive change review.

Research and scholarship beyond the classroom are supported by nine research centers that bring together students, faculty, and external stakeholders in projects that address national needs. AUA has no off-campus sites or distance education programs.

In fall 2013 AUA initiated a much anticipated expansion of its educational mission, welcoming its first class of undergraduates. Nearly three hundred Armenian and international students matriculated to pursue bachelor degrees in one of three areas: Business, Computational Sciences, and English and Communications. In fall 2014, more than 300 hundred new undergraduates joined the AUA community, following a 50% increase in applications over the first year. With nearly 600 undergraduates as of fall 2014, AUA is squarely on its path toward the goal of 1600 students, approximately 75% undergraduate, by 2017. Importantly, these developments also signal strong demand for this new phase of AUA’s contributions to higher education in Armenia.

Now into its third decade, AUA has achieved significant success in fulfilling its mission. In its first twenty-plus years, AUA has graduated over 2200 students, 70% of whom are currently employed in Armenia. At

the graduate level, AUA also enjoys impressive retention and graduation rates for what is still a relatively new institution, with first year retention rates of 86 to 94% and three year graduation rates of 80 to 87% according to the most recent data available (2006-2010). The first year retention rate for AUA's very first undergraduate cohort was 85%. Although slightly lower than anticipated by AUA, it is very respectable, particularly given the complications posed by mandatory conscription for 18 year-old males, as well as the time it takes to identify and respond to the needs of an entirely new type of student body.

AUA's success in delivering its mission was recognized by stakeholders who highlighted AUA's unique importance in the higher education landscape of Armenia and the region. Government officials external to the institution described AUA as a model for higher education, providing for the free exchange of ideas and, as such, an important agent of change in Armenia's continuing economic, social, and political development. The team also learned about AUA's importance in the continued evolution of Armenia's higher education system.

The implementation of AUA's mission is guided by two boards: the Board of Trustees associated with the California-based American University of Armenia Corporation (AUAC) and the Board of Directors of the Armenia-based American University of Armenia Foundation (AUAF). The AUAF was established after the AUAC as required by a change to Armenian law in the early 2000's. Although separate decision making entities, significant overlap in membership between the two boards facilitates communication and coordinated oversight of AUA, while continued incorporation in the U.S. facilitates tax exempt support of AUA by American philanthropists.

AUA also benefits from a formal affiliation with the University of California, which has greatly influenced its academic development and provides legal and investment-related support. Through informative meetings with the AUAC Board of Trustees in California, and with an Armenian member of the AUAF Board of Directors while in Yerevan, the team learned that both boards are very committed to the mission and success of AUA and exercise that commitment through appropriate oversight of institutional operations (CFR 3.9).

In September 2010, AUA hired its first full-time president (CFR 3.10). Immediately following his appointment, the president embarked on a strategic planning process, culminating in plans to expand and diversify faculty, income sources, and degree programs with the addition by 2017 of three or more undergraduate degree programs enrolling 1200 undergraduates (CFR 4.1). At the time of its Capacity

and Preparatory Review (CPR), AUA had submitted substantive change proposals for the structural change and new degree programs necessary to implement its first three undergraduate programs in fall 2013. Accordingly the structural change site visit was integrated into the CPR site visit for reaccreditation, with the substantive change team members pursuing their review alongside the WSCUC CPR team. Following the CPR visit, the structural change and three undergraduate degree proposals were approved in 2012.

At the recommendation of the CPR team, the Commission rescheduled AUA's Educational Effectiveness Review from fall 2013 to fall 2014, formally recognizing the demands initiating undergraduate education would place on AUA. This shift promoted both a successful start to undergraduate education in fall 2013, and successful completion of the Educational Effectiveness Review in fall 2014. It also provided the Commission with an opportunity to review undergraduate education at AUA, following the conclusion of its inaugural year.

In spring 2014, AUA experienced a transition in its senior leadership as its first full time, resident president stepped down after a successful four years at AUA. The provost and vice president for institutional advancement also resigned, each for unrelated personal reasons. In July 2014, the Board of Trustees appointed an interim president who appointed an interim provost. In addition to being a founder of AUA, the interim president has served as the founding Dean of Engineering, Director of the Engineering Research Center, Interim Provost, and was a founding member of the Board of Trustees. The interim provost had previously been an AUA faculty member and Dean. A new vice president for development also began in September 2014, assuming advancement responsibilities.

AUA was granted Initial Accreditation in February 2007 for a period of seven years. This report addresses the Educational Effectiveness Review, the final phase of AUA's first review for reaffirmation of accreditation.

## **B. The Institution's Educational Effectiveness Review Report: Quality and Rigor of the Review and Report**

In keeping with its Institutional Proposal, AUA organized its EER Report around two themes: *Institutionalizing the Assessment of Student Learning* and *Cultivating a Community of Scholars*. Together these themes address AUA's three goals for reaccreditation: 1) Recalibration of AUA's institutional mission and goals, 2) Focus on student learning across the institution and the development of more

diverse and effective methods of assessment, and 3) Alignment of research and scholarship with teaching at a graduate institution focused on impacting the development of a nation.

With respect to the reaffirmation review as a whole, the Institutional Proposal also included a set of outcomes specific to each theme. For Theme 1, these were: 1) the Student Learning Committee (SLC) will be institutionalized forming an integral part of teaching, curriculum review, and academic program review; 2) the faculty, including visiting faculty, will integrate into teaching on a regular basis the assessment of student learning; and 3) the faculty of the academic programs will use the results of ongoing assessment of student learning to improve teaching, courses, and the curriculum in order to meet the AUA's mission. With respect to Theme 2, the outcomes were: 1) there will be broad understanding and consensus among faculty, students, and researchers on what constitutes research and scholarship as a community of scholars at AUA; 2) the standards for research and scholarship will be applied in the evaluation of faculty and research staff; 3) there will be more faculty and student collaboration on applied and theoretical research and scholarship; and 4) more core and full-time faculty will be in place to support teaching, research and scholarship. Through discussions with faculty, students, staff, AUA leadership, and representatives of the Boards of Trustees, the team verified that these outcomes have been systematically and thoughtfully cultivated and achieved to a substantial extent. Most importantly, AUA understands these outcomes as critical to their long term success, and expects to continue to advance their development in the post-affirmation period.

The team found the EER report to be well organized, thorough, clearly written, and supported with a notable level of detail. Tables and figures effectively communicate evidence in support of analysis. The report comprehensively describes educational effectiveness practices at the institution, including important advances in capacity, practice, and process. Strengths and challenges are frankly described. With respect to both themes, the institution collected and analyzed ample and relevant forms of evidence. The team was particularly impressed with evidence illustrating AUA's progress in advancing the assessment of student learning, including evidence-driven modifications to instruction, courses and programs (CFR 2.4).

The educational effectiveness self-study was developed under the guidance of faculty-led committees (CFR 3.11), and the related work involved representatives from across the institution, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, and most high-level administrators. The team found the report to accurately portray the condition of the institution, as confirmed through discussions and evidence reviewed during the site visit (CFR 1.9).

The reaffirmation process has had a large and positive impact on AUA's quality assurance systems, and more generally on its understanding of its educational effectiveness. The impact began with the insightful analysis and self-awareness that guided the identification of AUA's themes and outcomes at the outset of the reaffirmation process. AUA has found the themes to intersect in important and mutually reinforcing ways, confirming the seriousness and fidelity with which it has engaged these goals. Perhaps somewhat unexpectedly, the addition of undergraduate education had a particularly positive impact on the institution's realization of its intended outcomes, even as the time required by its start-up delayed attention to some intentions (e.g. implementing faculty reviews). In the end, the comprehensive development needed to initiate undergraduate education - hiring new faculty, designing and implementing curriculum for majors and general education, developing co-curricular infrastructure to support student success, etc. - provided new avenues to engage systematically and regularly student learning assessment and goals for building a community of scholars. At all levels of the institution, AUA's capacity for and ability to gather and use evidence to inform planning and decision making has grown (CFR 4.3). Strengths and areas for continued attention for development have been identified, and AUA's ability to realize its mission has been enhanced.

### **C. Response to Issues Raised in the Capacity and Preparatory Review**

In its action letter of July 10, 2012, the WSCUC Commission identified six action items for AUA to address as part of its educational effectiveness review. Because these items subsume the major recommendations of the Capacity and Preparatory Review team, only AUA's progress in relation to the Commission's expectations are described and evaluated here. As of September 2014, AUA has met, has plans to meet, or has made significant progress on all of these expectations. A brief summary of each action item and its status as of the September 2014 site visit follow.

#### *Refining Assessment Practices and Institutionalizing Staffing and Resources for Educational Effectiveness*

Since the CPR, AUA has made substantial strides in its capacity for assessment as well as in integrating assessment into the fabric of the university. This work has been substantially enriched and advanced through the activities associated with initiating undergraduate education. For instance, the team heard repeatedly about the role syllabus development has played, and continues to play, in building faculty understanding of and attention to course, program, and institutional priorities for student learning (CFR 2.3, 2.4).

AUA's capacity for institutional research has also grown with the addition of one FTE to the Institutional Research Office (CFR 4.5). Likewise, formalization of the Office of Assessment and Accreditation (OAA), including a director, has ensured significant administrative support for teaching, learning, and assessment initiatives (CFR 4.7). The Student Learning Committee has also been formalized as a standing committee of the Faculty Senate, with a commensurate clarification of its responsibilities for supporting teaching, learning, and assessment (CFR 4.7).

AUA provided multiple, strong examples of the use of student learning evidence to inform revisions to courses and programs at both the graduate and undergraduate levels (CFR 4.4). AUA reported in its self-study that unevenness in annual engagement in program assessment remains. For instance, several graduate programs did not complete an annual assessment report in the two years preceding the EER. As the team learned during the visit, reasons for these reporting gaps varied by program, but included a lack of onsite program leadership, small faculties with many responsibilities, and/or simply a failure to document existing assessment activities. The addition of faculty, including onsite program chairs, and staff to support program assessment activities is expected to increase levels of engagement with annual assessment, and progress in this direction was observed during the visit. AUA also needs to clarify plans and processes for evaluating the meaning of program-level assessment results at the institutional level as a means for evaluating the extent to which institutional goals are being realized and in support of planning, decision-making, and resource allocation (CFR 4.3).

#### *Implementing the New Undergraduate Degree Programs*

AUA successfully completed its inaugural year of undergraduate education, and its second year was under way at the time of the EER visit. This includes initiating three majors together with a general education (GE) program. The latter is grounded in a well-designed set of three year-long foundation courses, includes an impressive selection of electives (upwards of 25), is led by an associate dean for general education, a new appointment, and is overseen by a new General Education Committee (CFR 2.2). The design of the GE is curriculum is particularly amenable to robust assessment; a seven-year plan has been developed and implemented with results already informing curricular revisions.

As recommended, AUA is attending to the Core Competencies; all five are addressed in outcomes associated with the two institutional goals common to both undergraduate and graduate education. At the undergraduate level, AUA is working to ensure these skills are systematically addressed by the curriculum. For instance, critical thinking, oral communication, and written communication are a focus of general education curriculum starting with the very first required courses, Freshman English I and II.

AUA is also working to ensure sufficient depth and variety in courses to support development of quantitative reasoning.

With respect to information literacy, the library has developed strong partnerships with faculty and programs to provide undergraduates with an introduction to the use of data bases and research tools. Building on this robust and essential foundation, the team encourages AUA to ensure a strong collaborative relationship between the library and academic affairs as a means for ensuring that students develop a full suite of information literacy skills by the time of graduation. The new Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education under development by the Association of Colleges and Research Libraries may be useful in this regard. More generally, AUA will want to continue to attend to the Core Competencies, aligning course and program learning outcomes with institutional goals and using direct as well as indirect evidence to assess these outcomes, including at or near the time of graduation.

Finally, AUA is also mindful of the need to define and demonstrate the quality, integrity and meaning of its degrees. As AUA notes in its EER self-study, the university is well-positioned to address this expectation, starting with its robust, university-wide framework of program and institutional outcomes, assessment practices, and data sources.

### *Promoting Student Success*

As recommended, AUA has completed its work on a set of institutional goals and outcomes for student learning. Alignment of graduate level outcomes to these institutional priorities is in process, with each program adjusting its outcomes as a follow-up to academic program review. As at other institutions, developing a set of goals and outcomes appropriate to both undergraduate and graduate education has been a challenge. AUA has identified two goals and associated outcomes as applicable to all AUA graduates, and is advancing alignment across all programs (CFR 2.3).

AUA has also developed a rich, multidimensional view of student success, and gathers relevant data, including retention and graduation rates, disaggregated by relevant variables, and seeks student, alumni, and employer feedback (CFR 2.10). Efforts are underway to disaggregate critical rates by geographic areas within Armenia, and to disaggregate time-to-degree data.

Beyond this important progress, AUA will want to continue to work toward broadly shared definitions of student success. It will also want to evaluate the extent to which it is satisfied with its retention and

graduation rates. Clarifying its goals in this regard, particularly at the undergraduate level, will support planning and resource alignment at both the unit/program and institutional levels (CFR 4.2, 4.3).

AUA has also taken seriously the request to benchmark its retention data. However, the university has found this understandably challenging for the reasons described in its self-study. AUA plans to continue to pursue this type of benchmarking at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, with a focus on identifying comparator universities that are institutionally relevant (CFR 4.4).

#### *Reviewing Academic Support and Student Services Programs*

Consistent with Commission expectations, AUA has developed guidelines and a timeline for the annual review of academic support units. This process currently addresses seven units: the AGBU Papazian Library, Information and Communication Technology Services, Center for Student Success, Office of Admissions, Office of the Registrar, the Institutional Research Office, and the Alumni and Career Development Office. Reviews for nearly all units are scheduled to begin in 2014-15. The library initiated these activities in 2013-14. The process does not currently involve a periodic review. Looking forward, AUA will want to couple the annual assessment process to a comprehensive periodic review, much as has been done for academic programs (CFR 2.11, 4.5).

#### *Strengthening the Institution's Financial Position and Capacity*

In its last Action Letter for the CPR, the Commission requested continuous, ongoing, disciplined attention to financial operations and advancement in order to provide the necessary resources for institutional growth and development. In addition, it expected multi-year faculty contracts to be implemented (CFRs 3.2, 3.3., 3.5). These requests reflected AUA's fiscal circumstances, including its reliance on fund-raising and endowment earnings to balance its budget. The Commission shared the concern that the unpredictability of philanthropic support, combined with ongoing global economic challenges, might put AUA at financial risk.

During the EER, both trustees and senior representatives acknowledged that AUA still relies on the goodwill of a small number of philanthropists, most of whom reside in the United States, to meet budget shortfalls. In meetings with the staff and key stakeholders, it became clear that AUA enjoys deep and widespread support from its diaspora. Indeed, they are described as being heavily dedicated to its ongoing success. AUA also has a strong, established relationship with the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), which manages one of its endowments, and provides regular, annual contributions and support for scholarships and educational programs. Together, these two sources of financial support

constitute a powerful combination of forces committed to AUA's vision for the future. They also provide an important safety net as the Board of Trustees advances its goals to eliminate the underlying structural deficit.

Despite these positive factors, AUA is well aware that the number and sources of philanthropic gifts must still increase to ensure even greater financial stability (CFR 1.8). Impressively, its fund-raising revenues have grown from \$2-3 million in fiscal year 2011-12 to almost \$8 million in 2013-14. The university has also recently appointed a new vice president for development who is charged with advancing a \$25 million endowment campaign ("25 by 25"<sup>1</sup>) to provide the income needed to support the annual costs of undergraduate education. Outreach for the campaign has already begun, with many special events planned in the near future; thus far, one-fifth of the goal has been secured.

AUA has a well-defined financial plan for advancing institutional goals, and the CFO meets regularly with the board's Budget and Finance Committee to monitor progress. As a result, AUA has made substantial progress towards financial sustainability through increased tuition revenues, endowment growth, deficit reduction, and streamlining its infrastructure (CFR 3.5). Furthermore, to maximize tuition revenues, it strategically increased tuition by 25% for its highly desirable business degree program.

Planning takes into consideration the investments that must be made in faculty, administrative staff, student support services, library capacity, technology, and classroom space in order to accommodate the growing undergraduate student population, and to maintain the standards of its graduate programs (CFR 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7). Looking forward, AUA plans to carefully extend these resources over time, with help from USAID grants, fund raising and tuition revenues. But this will be done cautiously so as not to over extend the institution's financial capacity.

Finally, AUA also began implementing multiyear contracts in 2012. As of spring 2014, 13 faculty members had two year contracts, constituting about 43% of full time faculty and 12% of all faculty. In 2014, AUA anticipates offering three-year contracts to several core faculty.

The institution is making great progress in developing financial sustainability. As it moves forward, the team advises that AUA continue keeping a close eye on its budget and finances, and rigorously monitor its financial performance, so that its financial resources can keep pace with academic growth, providing

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<sup>1</sup> The first 25 connotes \$25 million and the second the intention to fulfill this funding goal by the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of AUA or the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first AUA graduating class.

the resources necessary to maintain its high quality programs and deliver a superb educational experience (CFR 3.5, 4.2).

#### *Ensuring Consistency of Credit Hour Information*

In the context of its transition from a quarter to a semester-based academic calendar, AUA faculty conducted a comprehensive revision of course syllabi. A review of syllabi for a range of courses, both graduate and undergraduate, confirmed that AUA courses comply with WSCUC policy on the credit hour. Credit hour requirements are delineated in AUA policy and published on the AUA website. Curricular and program-level review processes are in place to ensure continued compliance with credit hour requirements.

#### *Major Changes since the CPR Visit*

Since the CPR visit, there has been a change in senior leadership but without disruption to the ongoing operations of AUA. AUA has experienced no major changes that affect its capacity for educational effectiveness, apart from the start of undergraduate education. The status and impact of undergraduate education on AUA is addressed throughout the report, including section II C: The Expansion into Undergraduate Education.

## **SECTION II – EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS UNDER THE STANDARDS**

### **A. Theme 1: Institutionalizing the Assessment of Student Learning**

#### *a. Graduate Education*

In 2010, AUA established two themes to guide its reaffirmation of accreditation process. Work on the first of those themes, “Institutionalizing the Assessment of Student Learning,” was well under way at the time of the CPR site visit in 2012. A Student Learning Committee (SLC) had been established to support the faculty in developing and implementing assessment plans for all degree programs, which at the time were only at the master’s level. The Office of Assessment and Accreditation (OAA), established in 2011, had responsibility for oversight of student learning assessment in conjunction with the academic deans.

Since the time of the CPR visit, and in preparation for the implementation of three undergraduate degrees, AUA expanded its capacity for assessment by appointing an associate dean for general education, forming a General Education Committee, and enhancing the roles of both the Institutional Research Office (IRO) and the OAA in supporting assessment.

AUA also expanded the resources available on its website to promote the understanding and use of assessment tools related to teaching and learning. A rich series of workshops and trainings on a range of assessment topics were offered, focusing on topics specific to the needs of AUA's faculty (CFR 3.4).

Through a collaborative process, AUA developed university-wide goals aligned with its mission (CFR 1.2, 2.3). Two of these goals reflect learning expectations common to all students, undergraduate and graduate alike, and the outcomes associated with these goals encompass all five of the Core Competencies (CFR 2.2). Both undergraduate and graduate programs are currently adjusting their student learning outcomes to converge with these institutional goals.

AUA has made strong progress in growing its capacity for assessing student learning at the same time as goals and outcomes have been analyzed and adjusted.

To assess student progress in relation to program goals and outcomes, the faculty in each degree program are responsible for developing and implementing annually a Student Learning Assessment Plan (SLAP), and for reporting on their findings and the use of findings in annual Student Learning Assessment Reports (SLARs). Through these structures, as well as program review, AUA has been able to address the Commission's 2012 recommendation that the EER team see evidence of student learning as well as the use of the results of assessment for improvements to curriculum and pedagogy (CFR 2.4, 4.4, 4.7).

The team finds that assessment activity in the graduate programs is generally quite strong. The multi-year assessment plans (SLAPs) are concrete as to objectives, assessment methods, timelines, responsible parties, and strategies for closing the loop in response to findings. Many objectives stem from recently completed program reviews, demonstrating an important link between program review and on-going assessment (CFR 4.4). AUA's multi-year approach to assessment, that involves assessing one or two objectives in each annual cycle, should make the workload manageable. For most programs, both direct and indirect assessments have been developed for the objectives under analysis. As AUA continues to advance its assessment activities, it will be important for programs to analyze both direct and indirect evidence of student learning and achievement.

Student Learning Assessment Reports (SLARs) are equally concrete and report on the results of the implementation of the SLAPs. The types of changes made as a result of assessment activities are substantive: changes to syllabi, revisions to curriculum, and validation of or refinements to course sequencing (CFR 2.4, 4.7). It is clear that AUA has made a commitment to systematic and effective

assessment of student learning in its master's programs and has provided the leadership, training, and resources necessary to authentic assessment (CFR 3.4, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7).

Based on its review, the EER team found that, while a culture and practice of assessment is widely evident in the graduate programs, some gaps exist as the EER report candidly acknowledges: "progress is uneven and some programs have fallen behind in annual assessment" page 26. Specifically, while seven of the eight master's programs at AUA have an SLAP, four have not submitted a SLAR for the 2012-13 academic year and three programs (MBA, MPSIA, MS in CIS) last submitted a SLAR in 2010-11. These gaps are likely a consequence of institutional changes such as the development of undergraduate programs, increased hiring activity, and the conversion to semesters, which redirected many faculty members' efforts for a period of intense activity. For some programs, the gaps were due to a lack of onsite program leadership, small faculties with many responsibilities, and/or simply a failure to document existing assessment activities. These challenges are being addressed through the addition of onsite program leadership, the growth in faculty driven by undergraduate education, and increased staff support for assessment. The team encourages AUA to continue to advance program engagement in this activity, so that all of its students and programs may realize the kinds of benefits more regularly accrued, thus far, to a subset of AUA programs.

*b. Undergraduate Education*

Following its last WSCUC review and the CPR, AUA added three undergraduate programs and enrolled its first class of freshmen students in the fall of 2013. Accordingly, the university has expanded its assessment efforts to include undergraduate courses and curricula. Given that the addition of undergraduate programs is recent, assessment efforts in the general education curriculum are nascent, but the university has taken steps to ensure that assessment will be conducted in ways that increase student learning (CFR 2.4). The university has appointed an associate dean of general education and formed a General Education Committee (CRF 3.11). Both of these developments are an important part of AUA's overall goal of institutionalizing the assessment of student learning (CFR 4.6, 4.7).

Adding undergraduate programs and establishing a general education curriculum has also provided the university with the opportunity to think more deeply about university wide learning outcomes, and to consider how different levels of the curriculum taken together can foster student achievement. Already, faculty have begun to make changes to the curriculum, and to align more effectively classroom assignments, homework activity, and course outcomes (CFR 2.5, 4.7). Acknowledging that changes could

be made also led the faculty to create subcommittees aimed at coordinating efforts across the social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities.

While assessment at the undergraduate level is off to a good start, and it can build on the broader structures supporting assessment across the university, it will be important to track how the focus on student learning develops over the next few years. The Student Learning Committee, working with the assessment director, and with the support of the IRO, will play key roles as the university enrolls more (300 more per year) undergraduates over the next few years. Focusing on student learning at the undergraduate level will mean concentrating on both course and program outcomes, and it would be expected over time that the shift may move from refining course content to an examination of program outcomes.

Clearly the university has made important progress in using assessment to consider how best to structure courses and curricula to foster student learning (CFR 2.4). The addition of full time faculty, the broader mission to include undergraduates, and the new positions that have been established reflect strong work in this area.

## **B. Theme 2: Cultivating a Community of Scholars**

As AUA started to prepare for the CPR, it agreed that to move forward as a university and achieve its potential, attention needed to be paid to "creating a community of scholars." At that time, emphasis was placed on achievement of four interrelated goals paraphrased here: (1) that there would be a consensus amongst faculty, students and researchers on what constituted research and scholarship; (2) that the standards for research and scholarship would be applied to the evaluation of faculty, researchers and staff; (3) that there would be more faculty and student collaboration on research; and (4) that more core faculty would be in place to support more teaching, research and scholarship. Great effort has been placed on achieving these goals with much success to report.

Since the founding of AUA, and the beginning of the CPR process in 2009, the number of faculty has grown substantially (CFR 3.2). As a result of this growth, there have been many other changes that have added to a sense of *esprit de corps*, creating a community of scholars who have many more chances for collaboration and personal and professional growth than before.

The core faculty now stands at 111; 30 full-time and 81 part-time faculty. Faculty size has increased due to the introduction of the undergraduate majors in three areas and general education (CFR 3.2). There

are plans to grow the core faculty to 120 by the time the full complement of undergraduates has matriculated on campus in the 2016-2017 academic year. AUA has also restructured into three colleges and a single school, leading to greater opportunities for collaboration and dialog between full time and part-time faculty.

Great attention has been paid to creating structured time for faculty development, not only to learn about assessment and how to incorporate it into classes, but also to deepen understanding of Boyer's four types of scholarship, a paradigm that was adopted by AUA as part of its efforts to advance its goals for cultivating a community of scholars (CFR 2.8, 2.9, 3.3). In this way, AUA faculty are best able to match their strengths with the research needs of Armenia, in keeping with AUA's mission. Prominently displayed posters on campus provide definitions of the four types of research, and point to the importance placed on research and on the efforts to cultivate a community of scholars (CFR 2.8, 2.9).

The growth in faculty and the reorganization that has taken place have led to the creation of new initiatives that can be helpful in the continued development of a rich community of scholars. Examples abound. Even though the intense time and effort the faculty put into constructing the undergraduate programs took some precious time away from research activities, their collaboration brought synergies and a closeness that had not been achieved in the past. Also, because there is a larger number of faculty, the intensive service obligations of faculty members of the past should now begin to lessen; central administration also has taken on a few more tasks to help lighten faculty load. This has led to more time to develop new courses including interdisciplinary courses. Faculty who solely taught graduate students in the past now can begin to teach undergraduates and vice versa. This brings the opportunity for more curricular innovation. Similarly, faculty and scholars have had more opportunities to engage in capstone experiences with their graduate students and to collaborate on research projects with both other faculty and alumni (CRF 2.4).

There are now also many opportunities to gain external support in the form of grants for research. Funding is largely from governmental and non-governmental organizations outside of Armenia including USAID. Grant writing has remained largely the purview of faculty in individual schools and departments but should spread as more interdisciplinary activities take root. Though there has not yet been money to open a sponsored research office, creation of such an office would have the potential for identifying more opportunities that might bring both greater international visibility to the AUA faculty, and more cross national scholarship. Similarly, a growth in grants could provide many more important opportunities for students to participate in research of real significance, allowing them to apply the skills

and perspectives learned in their studies at AUA. As the undergraduate program scales and develops, the opportunity for a large number of talented undergraduates to participate in research also is enhanced. Depending on the funding sources, such grants might provide revenue that could help with stability in the operating budget. Similarly, since there are now more full time faculty, and it is anticipated that contracts for some core full time faculty will be increased from two to three years in 2014, there may be opportunities to take on even more significant projects of greater length; talented undergraduates, who will be at AUA for four years, could be recruited as research assistants.

At this juncture, although research has been taken into account in hiring and promotion decisions, its extent and type, as defined by the Boyer model, has not (CFR 3.3). Doing so will only enhance the quality of the faculty. Similarly, though it is clear that much faculty development time has been spent on understanding the four elements of the Boyer research model, there has been limited funding for faculty who wish to present their research in venues outside of Armenia. There also has been limited funding for faculty and researchers to attend classes or conferences external the university or in Armenia to learn new research techniques, and keep up with their disciplines. In response to this problem, it is notable that the interim president has created five new research prizes of \$2000 each that will be awarded competitively each year (CFR 2.8). Two prizes also will be given for excellence in teaching (CFR 2.8). Three of these prizes, two for research and one for teaching, are in the process of being endowed by an anonymous donor. AUA is encouraged to continue to find additional funding to support these types of activities.

Over the past several years, there has been an increase in the percentage of faculty who are both in residence and who are full time. (There has been a strong desire to have a dean of business who is in residence in Yerevan, but this has yet to occur). This can create more bonding amongst the faculty as they work together on behalf of AUA.

There also has been a desire to have longer-term faculty contracts. Most faculty, whether full or part time, are on yearly renewable contracts. About 10-20% of faculty are on two-year contracts with the intention that three-year contracts will be introduced in 2014. This is a critical introduction that should strengthen the community of scholars. Without it, there is the potential that the research that is being done will not be of the highest caliber as often research takes more than two years to conceptualize and complete, whether it is funded or not.

Going forward, it will be important to ensure faculty development activities in the research arena, and to begin to evaluate research, of any of the four Boyer types, in the context of hiring, reappointment and promotion decisions (CFR 3.3). Right now there have been few promotion decisions, but this will increase substantially in the future. AUA is cautioned to think now about how to handle promotions for faculty who participate in interdisciplinary projects and not to concretize the type of "academic and departmental silos" found in research universities in the United States.

Finally, the AUA might wish to consider adding a research day for students and faculty to share their individual and joint scholarship. Other academics or interested persons--alumni, and government officials residing in Armenian could also be invited to come to campus to learn of the types of things that are occurring.

In sum, AUA has made important strides in advancing its community of scholars. The team urges AUA to continue to advance the objectives associated with this theme, expecting that such emphasis will continue to strengthen and enrich AUA's realization of its mission in important ways.

### **C. The Expansion into Undergraduate Education**

Following up on its strategic plan, AUA began admitting undergraduate students in 2013. That year, 280 undergraduates entered the university and AUA's plan calls for adding an additional 300 undergraduates each year. For fall 2014, applications for undergraduates rose by 50%, and the number of undergraduates entering the university exceeded targets with more than 300 enrolling. Because of the interest among students in AUA, admission standards have risen and the university has taken a broad, sophisticated approach to admissions criteria that include test scores, extra-curricular activities, and grades. Expanding to include undergraduate students, and adding three majors—Business, Computational Sciences, and English and Communication—has been a major change for the university, which has been all graduate since its inception in 1991 a graduate institution. The transition to include undergraduates has gone exceedingly well. Implementation was swift and exacting.

Expanding the university through the addition of undergraduate students has led to important structural changes aimed at ensuring a coherent approach to general education. Among these is the appointment of an associate dean for general education and the formation of a General Education Committee. Both of these have played critical roles in creating means through which faculty can share standards, teaching practices, and assessment. Also, more faculty teaching at the university are now taking on additional

assignments and shifting their roles from part-time faculty to full-time core faculty and additional faculty have been appointed (CFR 3.1, 3.2). This, in turn, has led to standardized workloads and clearer expectations regarding the relation among teaching, research, and service (CFR 3.3). Thus, in several ways, the addition of undergraduate students and programs has helped the university also pursue its goals of cultivating a community of scholars and increasing its educational effectiveness. Going forward, the university may want to focus further on the balance between teaching, service and scholarship to ensure that faculty are well supported in all three areas.

The addition of undergraduate students and creating a general education curriculum has provided many challenges, but they have also provided the university with key opportunities. The new undergraduate curriculum and new courses have helped strengthen the focus on learning outcome assessment, and have brought faculty together to consider the alignment of university-wide outcomes with those in designated majors and graduate programs. These university-wide program goals include (1) developing articulate and conscientious leaders and problem solvers, and (2) providing students with a broad foundation of knowledge and skills. For each of these goals, faculty have considered student, employer, and alumni expectations and have developed specific learning outcomes to address communication, problem solving, critical thinking, social responsibility, environmental awareness, information literacy, and sensitivity to diverse cultural perspectives (CFR 2.2, 2.3). It will be important for the university to continue its focus on developing a program review process to ensure that strategic planning, resource allocation, and faculty engagement rests on the links among assessment at the program and institutional level, on the collaboration between student support services and academic affairs, and on the AUA commitment to developing further a community of scholar (CFRs 2.7, 2.10). The university has capitalized on the opportunities presented by the challenge of offering undergraduate degrees to develop a clear mission and sense of its role as a comprehensive university, and the program review process is a further step in that direction (CFR 4.2, 4.3).

The university also recognizes that there are ongoing challenges, which they also present as opportunities, which have evolved from the addition of undergraduate students and programs. One of these challenges is related to the expectations and standards with which undergraduate students enter the university and the academic standards held by faculty. The university recognizes that some adjustments have needed to occur, in Freshman English, for example, and these adjustments have been made with careful attention to learning outcomes. Going forward, as more undergraduate students enter the university, it will be important for faculty and curriculum committees to monitor student work

and to share expectations related to university-level work. The team was pleased to learn that already, the faculty teaching in general education meet monthly, and the faculty teaching English composition meet weekly (CFR 2.4). Additionally, the university may want to consider additional support—supplemental instruction, tutoring, learning communities, etc.—for incoming students as well as to continue their consideration of admissions criteria. The team was impressed, however, with the curriculum that has been developed in Freshman English and the degree to which it helps students improve their writing while thinking about the goals of a liberal arts education.

The university deserves significant credit for undertaking the development of co-curricular programs, as well as for several other innovations. Among these are the creation of the Center for Student Success and the appointment of a Student Services Coordinator. The Center for Student Success held more than 30 workshops for students in 2013-2014 alone, and has also implemented means through which the university can better gauge the experience that undergraduate students have at the university. Information gained through these surveys and course evaluations provide an important baseline of data on which the university can build over time. Additionally, students taking Freshman English are required to attend at least two of Center workshops during the semester. It will also be critical for the university to use that data in conjunction with student learning outcome data and disaggregated student data to determine how best to align its resources to ensure student success (CFR 2.11, 2.13).

AUA has noted that the retention rate of its incoming freshman class in fall 2013 is lower than they had expected: 85%. Already, however, the university is considering how this rate may be improved, and as they do so, it will be important to track overall retention rates from year to year and, ultimately, to determine how the freshman-to-sophomore retention rate predicts persistence and degree completion. As the university notes, there are some factors, such as the universal conscription in Armenia for 18-year-old males, they cannot control, but they have clearly demonstrated that they are placing an emphasis on factors that can improve student success. They also note that the application rate for 2014 was 50% higher than in the previous year, and that students who do leave to complete military service may return to finish their degrees (CFR 2.10, 2.13).

AUA's move to expand to include undergraduate students is bold, and they have clearly undertaken this expansion thoughtfully. They have made significant changes on many levels not only to accommodate the students they now enroll, but also to lay the foundation to build more effective programs over time. As they note, increasingly students in Armenia and elsewhere can choose to attend institutions globally, and to make use of online offerings, and so it is, as they also note, critical to build a strong culture of

student success at AUA. It appears they have done that even though they are still in the very early stages of this expansion. Additionally, the team noted that there are active discussions among students and faculty regarding increasing diversity at AUA both by bringing in international students and providing opportunities and pathways for undergraduate to take part in study abroad experiences (CFR 1.5).

Adding 300 undergraduate students a year will dramatically impact the character of AUA over the next few years. The approximately 600 undergraduates currently at the university have already brought with them energy, enthusiasm and commitment. Because of this additional energy and the active engagement of undergraduates, AUA will be a very different institution in 2017 when the first baccalaureates are awarded than it is today. What is impressive is the degree to which the university has taken thoughtful steps to build on its past success as a graduate institution to ensure that those undergraduates are well prepared to succeed at high levels.

#### **D. Effectiveness of the Program Review Process**

##### *a. Academic Program Review*

Academic program review is a well-established, meaningful process at AUA. Indeed, the seriousness with which AUA engages program review was recognized by the CPR team, which commended AUA for a process that is “thorough and effective,” a conclusion that was echoed by the Commission in its action letter (CFR 2.7, 4.4).

At AUA, all academic programs are subject to program review (CFR 2.7). This includes AUA’s three new undergraduate programs as well as its two non-degree instructional programs, the Acopian Center for the Environment and AUA Extension. Graduate level program review is conducted on a five year cycle, giving rise to a sustainable pace of about two reviews per year and completion of the current cycle in 2016-17. AUA’s three new undergraduate programs will undergo their first reviews in 2017-18, a date strategically chosen to follow the first graduating class. AUA’s plans for periodically reviewing the general education program are less clear, and this is something AUA will want to consider. Significantly, AUA has timed its program review cycles so that all reviews will be completed in time to inform the Strategic Planning effort scheduled for 2017-18 (CFR 4.1). This kind of thoughtful planning is hallmark of AUA’s educational effectiveness processes and practices.

Since program review was first initiated in 2006, AUA has systematically evaluated the efficacy of the process, revising practice as warranted (CFR 4.1). In 2012, following completion of the second cycle of program reviews, AUA undertook a serious review of the program review guidelines and process. Led by the faculty, and informed by feedback from academic programs, internal reviewers, practices at other institutions, and the 2009 *WSCUC Resource Guide for Good Practices in Academic Program Review*, this broadly inclusive and collaborative process generated important changes to program review policy and practice. These included a change in emphasis from “input” to “output”-based evaluation, placing a strong focus on the results of annual student learning assessment (CFR 2.7, 4.3). As the team learned during the visit, this addition to the program review process has benefitted programs in at least two ways: it has simplified preparation of the self-study, as relevant evidence for the self-study is gathered annually rather than periodically; and it has enriched the self-study, making it more fully representative of the program’s educational activities.

Programs are also now asked to prepare a multi-year assessment plan, connecting objectives stemming from the review to subsequent annual assessments. In this way, program review is designed to be an ongoing process, with recommendations playing out through subsequent annual assessment cycles. Discussions during the site visit suggest that faculty appreciate this aspect of program review; it sustains a focus on continuous improvement and ensures regular attention to important goals that should be reviewed more frequently than five-year intervals. Significantly, this structure also guarantees that programs “close the loop,” a key short coming AUA intended to address as part of the reaffirmation process.

Following implementation of the revised policy in 2012-13, additional revisions were enacted for implementation in 2014. This included a shift in oversight and coordination of the review process from the Faculty Senate’s Curriculum Committee to the Provost’s Office, a change which involved the loss of Senate involvement in the program review process. During the visit, the team understood there to be some interest in reconsidering Senate involvement in program review, with this interest reflecting the perceived benefits of Senate involvement to programs and the process (CFR 3.11). An additional revision to the program review process, recommended by the Education Policy Subcommittee of the Board of Trustees, was to include on review teams at least two members external to AUA. Going forward, AUA is encouraged to continue to examine the effectiveness of its program review process, continuing to seek faculty input as it has previously (CFR 4.1).

Institutional support for program review has also been enhanced. The IRO has simplified program access to relevant documents and data. The IRO and OAA also orient faculty to the process and support development of the self-study (CFR 2.7, 4.5).

Discussions with AUA stakeholders, and the review of relevant AUA documents, demonstrate very clearly that program review has substantive impact on academic programs. Self-studies are developed by faculty, with input from students, alumni, and employers, and involve consideration of student success metrics as well as student learning outcomes (CFR 2.7). A wrap up discussion involving at a minimum the provost, the program chair, and the chair of the external review team, prioritizes recommendations stemming from the review. These recommendations are then enacted with support from the administration (CFR 4.2). As a result of program review, programs have revised program learning outcomes, developed and piloted rubrics, identified new sources of student learning evidence, and substantially revised program curriculum to improve student development of key outcomes including writing and analytic skills (CFR 2.7). Importantly, programs are also systematically assessing, in subsequent annual assessment cycles, the impact of program revisions initiated as a result of program review.

*b. Periodic Review of Academic Support Units and Student Services Programs*

Following recommendations of the CPR team and the Commission, AUA has taken important steps to establish a review process for academic support units (CFR 2.11, 4.5). In 2013-2014, the OAA, in collaboration with the heads of the academic support units, developed guidelines, templates, and a schedule for an annual review process. Importantly, the guideline development process provided these units with the opportunity to review and revise mission statements and objectives, further focusing and clarifying their work. Reviews are scheduled to begin in 2014-2015 for six of the seven units, including Information and Communication Technology Services, the Center for Student Success, the Office of Admissions, the Office of the Registrar, the Institutional Research Office, and the Alumni and Career Development Office. The seventh unit, the library, initiated the review process in 2013-2014, using survey data to examine several objectives.

As currently developed, the review of academic support units does not include a more comprehensive, periodic review that builds on the results of annual reviews. Looking forward, AUA will want to extend its initial work to develop a coupled annual assessment and periodic review process, much as has been done for academic programs (CFR 2.11, 4.5). As with academic programs, periodic review will provide

units with the opportunity to systemically examine mission, goals, successes and areas for continued development with the benefit of input from experts external to AUA and in light of AUA's institutional goals as well as larger trends in higher education.

Academic support units are also encouraged to consider whether evidence beyond that gathered through surveys will generate actionable information in support of continuous improvement (CFR 2.11). For units with instructional responsibilities or that support student learning, direct evidence of student learning may be particularly relevant. Over the long term, developing assessment tools beyond surveys may help stem the development of survey fatigue at AUA.

### *c. Conclusions*

In many ways, AUA's academic program review process is a model; it is designed to fit the size and organization of AUA, giving rise to a sustainable process that has impact. This includes systematic integration with the annual assessment process to ensure programs iteratively "close the loop," cyclically taking action in response to findings and following up with assessment. The process is also firmly institutionalized (CFR 2.7, 4.4). Now in the third cycle of program reviews, programs and faculty are familiar with the process, describing it as "a great learning opportunity" and one that has been "very productive" for AUA's programs.

The team is impressed with the thoughtful design of these core quality assurance processes, their intentional connection to AUA's larger strategic planning cycle, and the robust nature of the related institutional support provided by the OAA and IRO. The team is also impressed with the considerable attention AUA has given to improving the academic program review processes over time, and anticipates that similar attention will be paid to the development of assessment practices in academic support units in the coming years.

Less well developed is the use of program review findings to support evaluation, planning and resource allocation in relation to institutional goals and outcomes. This is understandable as, for instance, AUA is still in the process of aligning program and institutional outcomes, a necessary precursor to more systematic evaluation. As AUA moves forward, it will want to connect these primarily program-level activities to larger institutional planning processes, as a means to evaluate AUA's success in achieving institutional goals and outcomes and in support of higher level planning and decision making at time scales that are shorter than the seven year strategic planning process (CFR 4.2). Relatedly, AUA might

also consider updating its Board of Trustees annually on its annual assessment activities, including emerging trends in student learning and success and examples of the impact of these efforts on student learning and service provision, as a supplement to the Trustees' attention to academic program review. As AUA invests considerable resources, including faculty, staff, and administrative time, in effective quality assurance systems, it would seem important for Trustees to understand the positive impacts these activities have on AUA's realization of its mission, including promoting educational excellence.

#### **E. Student Success**

At the time of its CPR, AUA was exclusively a graduate institution, offering master's degrees in eight disciplinary areas in demand by students and reflecting the emerging needs of Armenia. Undergraduate education was in a planning and development phase, with the WSCUC review focused on AUA's capacity and readiness to undertake this transformative step. Thus, graduate student success formed the basis for the Commission's recommendations stemming from the CPR.

Now with a year of undergraduate education completed, student success at AUA looks quite different. In its institutional report, AUA articulated a multi-dimensional view of student success, encompassing academic achievement in relation to explicit outcomes, timely degree progress, high retention and degree completion rates, and high degrees of student, alumni and employer satisfaction. Through the institutional report and discussions with faculty and staff, AUA also described the support structures, practices and processes, essential to realizing these goals (CFR 2.11). These included learning environments and co-curricular support services tailored to student needs as ascertained through strategic, actionable assessment, opportunities for applied learning experiences like internships and study abroad, and timely and effective advising by faculty and staff (CFR 2.10, 2.12, 2.13, 4.6).

By many measures, AUA is successfully achieving its goals for student success. Even at the undergraduate level, where the data are too new to draw any firm conclusions, AUA's success in this area is reflected in the faculty and staff's dedication to determining and responding to undergraduate needs, many examples of which are described in the institutional report and were discussed during the visit. AUA has also moved forward in addressing the Commission's recommendations, finalizing a set of university-wide objectives for student learning, with the alignment of program-level outcomes underway (CFR 1.2). The subsections that follow more fully describe this progress for graduate and undergraduate education separately.

*a. Graduate Student Success*

As reported in the CPR, AUA has strong retention and graduation rates at the graduate level. First year retention rates average around 90%, and three-year retention rates ranging from 86 to 94%. Rates are disaggregated by degree, gender, and citizenship, and progress is being made in integrating geographic region of origin (within the Republic of Armenia) to these data sets, consistent with Commission recommendations. Similarly, AUA is making progress implementing time-to-degree metrics. Faculty examine these metrics, and others documenting admissions and market trends for graduates, during the program review process, enabling degree-level attention to issues of institutional importance (CFR 2.7, 4.4, 4.5).

AUA has also taken important steps to identify a set of meaningful comparator institutions, against which to benchmark its progress (CFR 4.4). As described in its institutional report, this has proved challenging as AUA is quite distinctive in many dimensions. AUA is now exploring Council of Graduate School data sets for possible relevant benchmarks, a development the team encourages.

As described in its institutional report, AUA graduate students, alumni and employers reports high rates of satisfaction with AUA and the preparation of its graduates for post-graduate employment. Discussions with alumni during the site visit confirmed these results; graduate alumni are overwhelmingly satisfied with their education and have established themselves in impressive fields and careers (CFR 4.8). Other stakeholders recognized AUA graduates as a top choice for Armenian employers in terms of job recruitment. The institution has an excellent reputation, attracting top students in Armenia (CFR 4.8). No doubt, this has had a positive impact on the career success and loyalty of alumni, 70% of whom remain in Armenia after graduation.

Efforts are underway to establish alumni reunions, and a related culture of philanthropy. The first event of this sort, a 20 year reunion, raised an estimated \$100,000 in scholarship support. There also was a reunion in New York City for the approximately 20 graduates living there. This is to be commended for many reasons. To build a culture of philanthropy at AUA will require engaged alumni. Loyal, engaged alumni represent the future leadership of the institution. Alumni are most influenced by: appreciation, affiliation and agency, so the advancement of these activities will be beneficial not only in terms of immediate fund-raising support for the university but also long-term satisfaction of alumni. AUA is strongly encouraged to expand these efforts.

Although AUA is making important progress in support of student success, what is less clear is the extent to which institutional or even programmatic goals for student success have been elaborated as reference points for drawing conclusions about achievements and identifying areas for continued attention. Looking forward, the team encourages AUA to pursue its plans to implement the new statistics on time-to-degree and region of origin, to articulate definitions and goals for student success, and to evaluate the extent to which it is satisfied with its achievements in this area (CFR 2.10, 4.5). Commendably, the data AUA gathers are highly relevant to evaluating the extent to which AUA is achieving its mission and, the team anticipates, to AUA's emerging goals for diversity.

*b. Undergraduate Student Success*

To meet the needs of its new undergraduate population, AUA strategically invested in foundational resources and services. Steps taken included renovating the Office of the Registrar, the AGBU Papazian Library, and the cafeteria, construction of a fitness center, expansion of AUA's IT capacity, and acquiring dorm space to accommodate the small fraction of students requiring living accommodations (CFR 3.5, 3.6). AUA also implemented important support services specific to undergraduate needs, including a Student Success Center. The center provides a tremendous array of offerings, including math and writing seminars, career advising, information on internships, and general support for student interests (CFR 2.13). In addition, the center director serves as the staff liaison to the undergraduate student council, which was established by the first cohort of freshmen in 2013. In general, student feedback is extremely positive about the center.

Discussion with undergraduates revealed a high degree of satisfaction with these resources.

Sophomores, who had been surveyed about challenges in their first year, were pleased to see their input being used to improve experiences for the 2014 freshmen class (CRF 2.11, 4.6). Looking forward, students expressed desire for additional career advising, as well as an increased emphasis on study abroad. AUA is keenly aware of these needs, some of which will be addressed by the planned expansion of the Alumni Relations and Career Development Office. The team also learned that alumni have already been engaged in student mentoring, a development that the team applauds (CFR 2.13).

Although there is much to celebrate about the undergraduate program, freshmen retention rates were lower than AUA anticipated, with 85% of students returning for their sophomore year. For an institution experienced in graduation education only, this statistic for its inaugural class is respectable. Indeed, it suggests that AUA anticipated and met the needs of its first class of undergraduates to a substantial degree. Most importantly, however, AUA is actively engaged in trying to elucidate the specific causes of

attrition in order to address them, both in terms of improving the match between student preparation and educational expectations as well as to adjust curriculum and services to address student learning and support needs (CFR 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 4.3, 4.6).

Unsurprisingly, preliminary analyses suggest multiple factors contributed to the 15% attrition rate, including a lack of college preparedness by some freshmen, especially in the area of math. Another major factor cited was Armenia's universal military conscription for 18-year old males. AUA's faculty have already made data-informed adjustments to the math curriculum, and it is anticipated that students who have stepped out for military service will return following the completion of their two years of service. Looking forward, it will be important for AUA to factor this kind of step out into its enrollment planning in order to meet its long term enrollment goals. It also will be important to maintain contact with students completing their military service in order to insure that they return to the AUA to finish their degree.

AUA is also working to increase awareness of educational expectations among potential applicants at the high school level, as a means to improve alignment of student and faculty expectations for student performance. Freshmen enculturation will also benefit from the guidance of upper classmen. Recognizing this, AUA is already involving its continuing students in freshmen orientation and is planning to implement a peer mentor program. The team commends AUA's efforts in all these areas, and encourages AUA to continue to pursue its data-driven approach to elucidating student retention trends, and more generally understanding the factors that facilitate undergraduate student success (CFR 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 4.3, 4.6). The fact that AUA reports a 50% increase in the number of freshman applicants is very encouraging and provides promise for the institution's long-term prospects.

AUA is fortunate to have an impressive student body that is committed to academic excellence. And although they are paving new ground, the undergraduates are interested contributors to the development of their undergraduate education, to the university as a whole, and are enthusiastic about working in partnership with faculty and staff to develop a strong community committed to academic excellence (CFR 2.5, 4.1, 4.8). The faculty and staff of AUA are equally dedicated to their success, a commitment repeatedly expressed by individuals during the visit and one reflected in the significant set of support services and methods for assessing student needs that have been implemented thus far. Going forward, AUA is encouraged to continue to develop its support for undergraduate success, and, as appropriate, to continue to seek opportunities to partner with its undergraduates in its efforts to assess undergraduate needs and craft opportunities to enhance student educational and career goals (CFR 4.8).

### *c. Conclusions*

AUA is a remarkably student and learner centered institution. Faculty and staff spoke with equal commitment and passion about AUA's students and what they are learning, including the significant intellectual achievements of its graduates. AUA has and continues to develop a comprehensive infrastructure to support and enhance graduate and undergraduate education, and to promote student success. This includes establishing new processes, committees, administrative positions, services, and tools directed at undergraduate student success (CFR 2.10, 2.13), and the ongoing development of quality assurance processes that demonstrably lead to improvements in curriculum, pedagogy, and the larger learning environment (CFR 4.4, 4.6, 4.7).

Remarkable work has also been done around student learning assessment and program review, and the planned initiation in 2014 of the annual reviews of student support services will further enhance AUA's ability to identify and address student needs in support of student success. Very few institutions have come as far, as quickly.

To make the most of these efforts from an institutional planning perspective, AUA is encouraged to develop a clear, common set of goals for student success, undergraduate and graduate, and, building on the thoughtful work taking place at the level of programs and units, to engage in data-driven discussion about the extent to which AUA is meeting these goals (CFR 1.2, 4.1). The multi-dimensional conceptualization of student success articulated in AUA's institutional report may be a useful starting point. Clarifying goals in this regard, particularly at the undergraduate level, will support planning and resource alignment at both the unit/program and institutional levels (CFR 4.2).

## **F. Evaluation Under the Standards**

### *a. Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives*

AUA has undergone impressive growth since its inception. It is a mature institution in many ways. There is a mission statement that is inspiring and particularly appropriate for a new American university in Armenia (CFR 1.1). There are appropriate documents that protect academic freedom, elucidate academic standards for students and faculty and ensure integrity (CFR 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9).

There are two committed boards: The first is located in the United States (AUAC) and is made up primarily of individuals of Armenian descent. Some members are current or former professors at University of California campuses. The AUAC board, according to its by-laws, now is chaired by the

immediate past provost of the University of California System. The Armenian Government also requires an Armenia-based board (AUAF). There is purposeful overlap in the membership of both the AUAC and the AUAF. Both boards are very committed to the growth and development of AUA and many individuals have served on these boards since AUA's inception. The American board is particularly supportive financially (CFR 1.3).

As the institution and boards are well aware, there has been regular turnover in the most important positions in central administration. The president, provost and vice president for advancement, for example, who were new at the time of the CPR visit in spring 2012, have all departed. At that time, there also was not a resident Business dean and this position was still to be filled as of the EER. The president and provost have been replaced with interim appointees; both are devoted to AUA, have served in the positions of provost and dean in the past and are highly qualified for the positions that they occupy.

A new vice president for advancement, with excellent, relevant credentials, has been appointed. She had her first day during the EER visit and will reside in Southern California. There is great excitement about her potential. A search for a permanent president and provost will commence immediately.

Of particular concern to the administration has been the difficulty in finding a qualified dean of the School of Business and Economics who agrees to reside in Yerevan. The current dean resides in the United States. At the time of the EER, the interim provost indicated that a highly qualified candidate for the post had been identified. But it was not yet clear if an offer would be extended or accepted.

AUA has undertaken the implementation of its educational objectives seriously. Particularly impressive is the effort expended in measuring student achievement and assessing educational outcomes for graduate students at the course and program levels. Assessment efforts at the undergraduate level are already underway. Appropriate policies are in place to ensure equitable treatment of students and achievement of educational objectives, including but not limited to policies for the credit hour, student transfer, and student complaints (CFR 1.7). AUA also has a well-developed institutional research office which helps with assessment, and provides data and supports studies on student retention (CFR 1.7). Indeed, AUA has shown commitment to ensuring educational objectives through the addition of staff to its institutional research office, and through the assessment of co-curricular activities to be initiated in 2014-2015 (CFR 1.2, 1.8). Given that AUA has just finished its first year of undergraduate education, it has less data on undergraduate outcomes but its commitment is no less impressive. Looking forward,

AUA is urged to take the next step and to begin to think about assessing objectives at the institutional level.

AUA's policies on diversity in the student body, faculty and staff are less developed. Greater clarity is needed as to what constitutes diversity in Armenia and for AUA's aspirations. Unlike in the United States, there is virtually no racial or ethnic diversity in Armenia as the population is 95% Armenian. The existing student body is diverse by socio-economic status and location (rural versus urban) though many noted that it was difficult to recruit qualified students from rural areas due to a lack of English language skills. (Impressively, this is beginning to be addressed by the AUA Extension Center that is extending English Language training and access to libraries in rural schools.) Students, faculty and administrators spoke with passion of their hopes to bring greater diversity into the classroom and provide opportunities for students to experience more of it. The strategy for increasing diversity noted most often would be to recruit a larger cadre of foreign students of different national origins, and ethnicities. Students also mentioned their strong desire to experience greater diversity by studying abroad themselves. Needed is a definitive statement of the ways in which diversity actually will be defined, measured and implemented and of the strategies for improving the diversity profile (CFR 1.5). Added to the portfolio for institutional research should be the yearly analysis of extent to which these diversity related goals are being met. AUA might also further enrich the diversity-focused aspects of its curriculum.

To its credit, AUA has begun to study when and why there are differences in measures of student achievement, such as retention, for different groups within its student body (CFR 1.5).

Since its inception, AUA has been challenged by fiscal instability. The budget is constrained and this circumstance has, in turn, partially hindered the development of longer-term contracts for faculty, necessitating more reliance upon part time faculty. Also impacted has been the proposed development of an office for sponsored research, which remains to be funded. However, as a result of the beginning of the undergraduate program, the fixed costs of running AUA have been spread across a greater number of students, and the structural budget gap has been reduced. The AUA budget is not tuition dependent. A break-even budget is reliant on both the good will of a small number United States-based philanthropists, who have enthusiastically supported the AUA since its inception, and on endowment earnings, the latter of which should grow substantially by the conclusion of the already-initiated "25 by 25" campaign to increase AUA's endowment by \$25 million. The AUA staff and boards are well aware that the number and sources of philanthropic gifts must increase, that further action must be taken to

reduce AUA's dependency on such a small number of persons, and that AUA's structural deficit must be eliminated (CFR 1.8, 3.5).

*b. Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions*

Until fall 2013 AUA offered master's degrees in seven fields appropriate to its mission. Fall 2013 saw the inauguration of three undergraduate degrees in Computational Science, Business and English and Communications. A MS in Economics was also initiated in fall 2013. In support of the expansion, additional faculty members were hired and institutional capacity was added to support a general education curriculum. Transitioning from a quarter-based to a semester-based academic year, AUA took pains to ensure that all programs met WSCUC credit hour policy and conformed to recognized length and standards of instruction for both graduate and undergraduate degrees. Syllabi were adjusted appropriately (CFR 2.1, 2.2a, 2.2b, 2.5).

The AUA community has worked diligently and invested resources in developing and implementing robust assessments of student learning. Attention is paid to alignment of goals and outcomes at the institutional, program, and course level (CFR 2.2, 2.3). Iterative assessment of the graduate programs is well in place; similarly careful plans have been developed for assessing the three new undergraduate programs (CFR 2.4, 2.6). AUA acknowledges that in practice, annual assessment reports have not uniformly been submitted across the graduate programs; a situation that is not uncommon for any institution of any size embarking on systematic assessment of student learning. Nevertheless, the tools, resources, and infrastructures are in place to make the assessment of student learning sustainable at AUA (CFR 2.4, 2.6).

Although in its earliest stages, the general education program has been carefully conceived and is supported by an associate dean and a General Education Committee (CFR 2.2a).

All AUA degree programs are subject to systematic program review. The university is now in its third cycle of review for the graduate degree programs. Program review includes evidence from direct and indirect assessments of educational effectiveness, which includes external stakeholders and constituencies (CFR 2.7).

Results of program reviews have validated educational outcomes at the AUA and have provided the blueprints for future improvements via the "wrap-up" meetings with university administrators that chart next steps for each program (CFR 2.0, 2.7).

AUA has plans to begin assessing its student support functions in academic year 2014-15 (CFR 2.11). The institution's theme regarding a community of scholars demonstrates that scholarship is valued and increasingly promoted at AUA (CFR 2.8). AUA uses the Boyer definition of research and promotes innovation and scholarship in all aspects of faculty activity (CFR 2.8). Promoting student-faculty collaboration on research and scholarship has become a priority goal for AUA (CFR 2.9).

AUA continues to build capacity to collect and analyze student data. Since the CPR visit, the IRO has been strengthened and databases have been expanded in order to better support student success in learning and in retention/graduation (CFR 2.10). The AUA website contains useful information about academic programs and requirements, and advisors work closely with at-risk students (CFR 2.12).

With the addition of undergraduate programs, AUA has moved to augment student support services to meet the needs of a new student body (CFR 2.13).

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

Since the CPR, AUA has given careful thought to resources and organizational structures to ensure institutional sustainability. The institution can be commended for its effective consolidation of departments, the establishment of new infrastructures, such as the Office of Assessment and Accreditation, and for supporting and institutionalizing student learning and assessment (CFR 3.8). Specifically, AUA has demonstrated strength in building administrative support to free up faculty for the delivery of educational objectives (CFR 3.1, 3.4), while maintaining strong collaboration between the faculty and the administration, to ensure appropriate faculty control and involvement (CFR 3.11).

Since assuming his role, the interim president has also devoted a great deal of time to assessing faculty and staff, reviewing policies and procedures, including faculty salaries and promotion requirements, and identifying improvements to operations (CFR 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4). His goals include strengthening teamwork at AUA and increasing the efficiency of administrative processes (CFR 3.8).

In terms of faculty, AUA has made tremendous strides in recruiting new faculty, developing the skills of current faculty (CFR 3.4, 3.11), instituting new policies, and providing ongoing faculty support (CFR 3.3). As a result, AUA possesses adequate, committed and mission-aligned faculty (CFR 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.6). As noted in the institutional report, faculty orientation is one area for continued development, particularly given the rate at which the faculty has and will continue to grow to deliver undergraduate education

(CFR 3.4). Going forward, AUA will also want to ensure that faculty numbers continue to grow in proportion to the demands of undergraduate education, and to ensure that faculty have adequate time to address all aspects of their appointments including research and service (CFR 3.2, 3.3).

AUA maintains a clear and defined focus on academics. This includes clear roles, responsibilities, and lines of authority in support of planning and decision making. For instance, AUA has very clear process for establishing new academic programs (CFR 3.8). There is also an enhanced office of institutional research to ensure proper reporting and to provide data in support of planning and decision making (CFR 3.2., 3.8). As a result, the institution assiduously gathers evidence of student learning and success to inform changes to courses, programs and instruction.

AUA's admission team met the enrollment targets for its first undergraduate class. Undergraduate applications subsequently increased by 50%, with the number of graduate applicants increasing by 15%. Although these achievements are impressive, there does not appear to be a strategic undergraduate or graduate enrollment plan in place for the future, beyond the institution's strategic goal to reach 1600 students by 2017, of which 75% will be undergraduates (CFR 3.5). Understandably, the staff have dedicated much of the last couple of years to establishing policies, procedures and systems for recruitment of new undergraduates. In order to maximize the potential revenues associated with both undergraduate and graduate enrollments, as well as to diversify the student body, the development of such a plan is advised.

In terms of information technology, AUA provides ample access to resources sufficient in scope, quality and kind to support its academic endeavors (CFR 3.6). This includes a 30-minute response time to requests for technology support, campus wide WiFi accessibility, significantly increased storage and server capacity, regular upgrades and training on all equipment, and a commitment to innovation. The IT resources are also sufficiently coordinated and supported to fulfill its educational purposes (CFR 3.7). In fact, with the completion of its newest academic building, AUA possesses 30 technology-integrated classrooms that have improved overall institutional efficiency and enhanced the educational experience.

AUA has made substantial progress towards financial sustainability (CFR 3.5). This has been done through increased tuition revenues, endowment growth, deficit reduction, and streamlining its infrastructure. In addition, AUA has developed a well-defined financial plan for advancing institutional goals, and the CFO meets regularly with the board's Budget and Finance Committee to monitor its goals. AUA has already achieved a fifth of its \$25 million endowment campaign, which was established

specifically to support the annual operating budget for undergraduate education. To keep pace with the growing undergraduate population, while maintaining the quality of the graduate programs, AUA should carefully monitor its financial performance, including progress toward its endowment goal, so that it can continue to invest in the appropriate expansion of the faculty, administrative staff, student support services, library capacity, technology, and classroom space (CFR 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7).

In terms of governance, AUA has two governing boards - one in the U.S. and one in residence. Both are strong and stable, as well as devoted to the institutional mission (CFR 3.9). This seems to be an advantage to the institution, one that might be further leveraged, especially as it relates to future philanthropic support and the continued growth and evolution of the board. Toward this end, AUA may want to consider recommending to the board that some of AUA's emerging alumni be considered for leadership. Discussions about recent alumni reunion activities indicated a ready and willing constituency that is waiting to be better engaged.

AUA has recently experienced turnover or absence in key administrative roles (CFR 3.10), reflecting in part the challenge of identifying highly qualified individuals committed to long term residence in Armenia. Identifying strategies to promote stability in executive leadership will be important to AUA's long term success. The deep commitment of AUA's faculty, staff, and students to AUA's mission may be an unrealized asset in this regard, as there is much to be said for joining such a highly dedicated, collaborative community.

*d. Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement*

AUA's institutional report provides a clear description of the structures, timelines, and processes that have been put into place to ensure that planning is informed by academic priorities and measures of educational effectiveness (CFR 4.1, 4.3). It is also evident that faculty along with university leadership have played key roles in the development of these assessment processes (CFR 4.6), and that the assessment of student learning has led directly to changes intended to improve student learning and success (CFR 4.7).

The team's experiences during the visit, along with the institutional report, demonstrate clearly that there is a strong commitment, by faculty and administrators (CFR 4.6), to institutionalizing learning and improvement (CFR 4.4). The university has also developed effective plans to extend its capacity to undertake institutional research. A wide range of stakeholders has been involved in discussions about

the university's direction and mission (CFR 4.4, 4.5, 4.8). The implementation of undergraduate education has been particularly galvanizing in this regard.

Going forward, the commitment to organizational learning and improvement will depend on the culture of the institution, but also on the long-term commitment to AUA of senior administrators. This will be an important step in helping AUA maintain its very strong culture of learning, and it will also be important during this transition time, from an interim to a permanent president, that the Board provide what support it can to ensure that the ongoing progress is not hindered.

### **SECTION III – FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW AND THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW**

#### **A. Summary**

As with the CPR visit, the team very much appreciated the well-organized visit that facilitated candid, collegial conversations with AUA's leadership including the board's senior officers, faculty, staff, students and alumni as well as with relevant government representatives. Through these conversations, the team learned much about the institution that greatly enriched its understanding beyond that gained from AUA's EER institutional report. The team also deeply appreciated the opportunity to better understand AUA's context in the larger history of Armenia and the Armenian people.

As noted previously, the reaffirmation process has had a significant, positive impact on AUA's quality assurance systems, and more generally on its understanding of its educational effectiveness. AUA's themes provided an effective framework for a deep examination and, ultimately, far reaching enrichment of AUA's educational effectiveness, and a transition to a remarkably learning/learner-centered university. AUA's launch of an undergraduate program generated synergies, perhaps unanticipated, that greatly advanced and continue to advance AUA's ability to articulate, align, and systematically and collaboratively examine faculty intentions for student learning and success at all levels of the institution. With few exceptions, faculty and staff were able to describe in detail the ways in which their efforts to assess student learning, and understand the factors that affect student success, have impacted programs, students, and the institution as a whole (CFR 2.4, 2.5, 2.11). Examples of student work and discussions with students illustrated high levels of academic achievement (CFR 2.6), and faculty described the successes of their students as recognized by employers and by disciplinary associations. At all levels of the institution, AUA's capacity for and ability to gather and use evidence to

inform planning and decision making has grown. Strengths and areas for continued attention have been identified, and AUA's ability to realize its mission has been strengthened in significant ways.

## **B. Commendations**

In light of these important advancements, the team commends AUA for the following:

1. The extraordinary progress made since the last visit. In a short time, AUA has implemented three undergraduate degrees, general education, and has done it in a way that has added value to the university. The addition of undergraduate education has brought energy and vibrancy to AUA. At the same time, AUA has maintained and extended the quality of its graduate programs. Faculty and students in these programs continue to play a critical role in shaping AUA's mission as the university makes important contributions in Armenia and beyond.
2. Remarkable students, including the new undergraduates, who are committed to academic excellence. AUA's undergraduates are also deeply committed to developing undergraduate education, to the university as a whole, and they are enthusiastic about working in partnership with faculty and staff to develop a strong community committed to academic excellence.
3. Building a faculty and staff that are passionate, and whose dedication to the university is unparalleled. The faculty and staff are committed to excellence and high levels of achievement for themselves and their students.
4. Implementing a comprehensive infrastructure to support and enhance undergraduate education, and promote student success. This includes establishing new processes, committees, administrative positions, services, and tools to support student success.
5. The remarkable work done around student learning assessment and program review. Very few institutions have come as far, as quickly. AUA faculty and staff have been deeply engaged in assessment and have used assessment to build community around intellectual engagement and academic excellence. They are building an exemplary culture of assessment.

## **C. Recommendations**

In light of AUA's advances, and the institutional knowledge already realized, the team recommends the following as a means for AUA to continue to benefit from the work initiated through the reaffirmation process:

1. Continue to define, attend to, and cultivate a vision for and commitment to diversity that reflects the interests of its faculty, students, and staff in the context of AUA and the larger world (CFR 1.5, 3.2).
2. Continue to develop the program review process to ensure that strategic planning, resource allocation, and faculty engagement rests on the links among assessment at the program and institutional level, on the collaboration between student support services with academic affairs, and on the AUA commitment to developing further a community of scholars (CFR 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 3.11, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.6).
3. Continue to implement the policy on faculty scholarship, based on Boyer's four types of scholarship, providing appropriate resources and support, and to advance its plans for developing faculty career paths (CFR 2.8, 2.9, 3.3).
4. To keep pace with the growing undergraduate population, carefully monitor AUA's financial performance, including progress toward its \$25 million endowment campaign goal, and the appropriate expansion of the faculty, administrative staff, student support services, library capacity, technology, and classroom space (CFR 3.1 3.2, 3.5, 4.2).

## **Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators Review**

### *Degree Programs*

- 100% of degree programs have formal learning outcomes. This includes 8 masters, the three new B.A. degrees, and GE.
- 100% of programs – undergraduate and graduate- publish formal learning outcomes in the catalog, and on the program website. Four of eight master’s degrees also publish them in the Program Student Handbook.
- 100% of programs undergraduate and graduate are using multiple forms of both direct and indirect evidence to determine student achievement of intended outcomes.
- 100% of programs involve multiple faculty in interpreting the evidence.
- 100% of programs respond to assessment findings with actions that vary with the program (to some degree). Actions include modifications to instruction, hiring, faculty professional development, course sequencing, etc.
- 100% of master’s programs have undergone program review in last three years; one review is currently in progress. Those for new programs are scheduled.

### *Non-degree & Support Units - Adapted form for use with non-degree and support units.*

- 100% of units have formal objectives.
- 100% of objectives published internally.
- Nearly all units use surveys exclusively as source of data. One uses focus groups and benchmarking; another uses admissions numbers and demographic data.
- 100% of units have at least two people interpreting evidence, often a “team”.
- 100% identify how data to be used for improvement.
- All units have yet to undergo a program review, except AUA Extension Center which was last reviewed in 2010, and is currently in review.

## **1 - CREDIT HOUR AND PROGRAM LENGTH REVIEW CHECKLIST**

Under the federal requirements referenced below, 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 WSCUC 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.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Policy on credit hour	Is this policy easily accessible? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Where is the policy located? University website
	Comments: <a href="http://aqa.am/policies/#?id=385">http://aqa.am/policies/#?id=385</a> Online Policies database: <a href="http://aqa.am/policies/">http://aqa.am/policies/</a>
Process(es)/ periodic review of credit hour	Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the institution adhere to this procedure? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The university's academic calendar is designed to assure that standard course blocks (M/W/F, T/R as well as evening courses) meet the credit hour policy requirements. The calendar is proposed by the Registrar, reviewed by the Faculty Senate, and approved by the Provost.</li> <li>• The Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate approves all new courses and reviews them for consistency with all policies including credit hour.</li> <li>• The Registrar sets the academic schedule taking into account seat-time requirements of the credit hour policy.</li> <li>• Program Chairs review and approve all syllabi for compliance with all policies including the credit-hour policy. A checklist was created to assist program chairs in this process.</li> <li>• The IRO archives all syllabi</li> <li>• The Office of Assessment and Accreditation performs random checks of syllabi for class meeting times</li> <li>• The Academic Program Review Process includes a review of all program activities for compliance of all policies including credit-hour.</li> </ul>

Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: <a href="http://registrar.aua.am/schedule/">http://registrar.aua.am/schedule/</a>
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	How many syllabi were reviewed? N/A
	Type of courses reviewed: <input type="checkbox"/> online <input type="checkbox"/> hybrid
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS <input type="checkbox"/> MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)?
	Are students doing the amount of work per the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: N/A at AUA
Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated) <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	How many syllabi were reviewed? 1
	What kinds of courses? Teaching Internship
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS <input type="checkbox"/> BA/BS X MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? Teaching English as a Foreign Language
	Are students doing the amount of work per the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: Currently there are no internships, etc. at the bachelor's level.  See 3. Evidence and Attachments Table of Contents, Selected Syllabi - LL.M. Capstone and MA TEFL Practicum
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	How many programs were reviewed? 11
	What kinds of programs were reviewed? Graduate and undergraduate in select disciplines
	What degree level(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> AA/AS X BA/BS X MA <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral
	What discipline(s)? humanities, social science, health, business, engineering, law
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of an acceptable length? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: <a href="http://aua.am/catalog/">http://aua.am/catalog/</a>

Review Completed By: Cecile Lindsay  
Date: September, 17, 2014

## 2 - MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT REVIEW CHECKLIST

Under federal regulation §602.16(a)(1)(vii), WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's recruiting and admissions practices.

Material Reviewed	Questions and Comments: (Enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections of this table as appropriate.)
**Federal Requirements	Does the institution follow federal requirements on recruiting students? x YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:  AUA has no outside recruiters.
Degree completion and cost	Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree? x YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree? x YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:  Typical length of program listed on each program's webpage and outreach materials. <a href="http://aua.am/academics/">http://aua.am/academics/</a>  i.e. LL.M. <a href="http://law.aua.am/llm/">http://law.aua.am/llm/</a> MPH <a href="http://sph.aua.am/mph/">http://sph.aua.am/mph/</a> English & Communications <a href="http://aua.am/ba-english-and-communications/">http://aua.am/ba-english-and-communications/</a>  Tuition and Fees: <a href="http://admissions.aua.am/tuition/">http://admissions.aua.am/tuition/</a>
Careers and employment	Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? x YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable? x YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:  70% of AUA graduates remain the country after graduation. Typical career paths are listed on each programs webpage and outreach materials <a href="http://aua.am/academics/">http://aua.am/academics/</a> i.e.

	MS in Economics <a href="http://cbe.aua.am/ms-economics/">http://cbe.aua.am/ms-economics/</a> Political Science and International Affairs <a href="http://psia.aua.am/">http://psia.aua.am/</a>
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\*\*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 requirements 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: Sheryl Bourgeois

Date: September 17, 2014

### 3 - STUDENT COMPLAINTS REVIEW CHECKLIST

Under federal regulation\*§602-16(1)(1)(ix) WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s student complaints policies, procedures, and records. (See also WSCUC Senior College and University Commission’s Complaints and Third Party Comment Policy.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections of this table as appropriate.)
Policy on student complaints	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Is the policy or procedure easily accessible? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO  Where?            On line, on the university web site and in the university catalogue
	Comments:  Ethics & Grievance Committee <a href="mailto:Ethics@aua.am">Ethics@aua.am</a> .  Grade Appeal procedure in Grades Policies <a href="http://aua.am/policies/#?id=483">http://aua.am/policies/#?id=483</a>  Also in Catalog <a href="http://aua.am/catalog/">http://aua.am/catalog/</a>  Whistleblower policy and procedures <a href="http://aua.am/ethicspoint/">http://aua.am/ethicspoint/</a>
Process(es)/ procedure	Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO  Please describe briefly:
	Does the institution adhere to this procedure? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: See also  <a href="http://aua.am/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/STUDENT_CODE_OF_ETHICS.pdf">http://aua.am/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/STUDENT_CODE_OF_ETHICS.pdf</a>  Ethics & Grievance Committee Rules of Procedure: <a href="http://aua.am/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/EthicsandGrievanceCommitteeRulesofProcedure.pdf">http://aua.am/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/EthicsandGrievanceCommitteeRulesofProcedure.pdf</a>

Records	<p>Does the institution maintain records of student complaints?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Where? These records are collected by the Ethics Committee and then stored in the Institutional Research Office (IRO).</p>
	<p>Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Please describe briefly: The Ethics Committee tracks complaints, of which there are very few, over time.</p>
	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Records are maintained in the IRO.</p>

Review Completed By: Geoff Chase

Date: September 17, 2014

**4 – TRANSFER CREDIT REVIEW CHECKLIST**

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

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections of this table as appropriate.)
Transfer Credit Policy(s)	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for reviewing and receiving transfer credit? x <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Is the policy publically available? x YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, where? On the AUA website <a href="http://aia.am/policies">Http://aia.am/policies</a>
	Does the policy(s) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education? x YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments:  <a href="http://aia.am/policies/#?id=413">http://aia.am/policies/#?id=413</a>

\*§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 WSCUC Senior College and University Commission’s Transfer of Credit Policy.

Review Completed By: Deborah A. Freund

Date: September 17, 2014