

**REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM
SPECIAL VISIT**

to Weimar University

March 2-4, 2022

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

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SECTION I - OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution, Accreditation History, and Visit

Weimar University is a private, nonprofit, co-educational, self-supporting Seventh-day Adventist-aligned college. Weimar Institute was established in 1978 in connection with NEWSTART (an acronym for nutrition, exercise, water, sunshine, temperance, fresh air, rest, and trust in God), a sanitarium located in Weimar, California. It was closed briefly in 2008 but reopened in 2009 under new leadership. Seventh-day Adventists have long viewed the health ministry as an entering wedge to heal a hurting world. To train future “medical missionaries,” the curriculum was designed to integrate academic study with practical Christian witness through health evangelism, labor, and service.

At the time of its initial accreditation, the institution offered four-year baccalaureate degrees in Education (BA), Religion (BA), Natural Sciences (BS), and Business Administration (BA) and a two-year associate's degree in Nursing (AS). The institution also offered a one-semester certificate program – the HEALTH Program – which trains students to be health evangelists. Since initial accreditation, the university has expanded its undergraduate offerings. Two new four-year baccalaureate programs started in 2019 – a Christian Interdisciplinary (BA) degree with an emphasis in psychology and a nursing BS completion program. It now offers two graduate programs: an MA program in Counseling Psychology and Wellness and an MA in Biblical Mission and Wellness.

The Weimar University Nursing AS program obtained renewed approval in December 2019 for 5 additional years with the California Board of Registered Nursing. Both the AS and BSN programs have candidacy status for accreditation with the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). In 2020, the university also expanded its operations to include distance education, by obtaining approval to offer the HEALTH Certificate Program online.

Weimar offers a distinctive mission-driven co-curricular program that fulfills institutional learning outcomes called Total Community/Campus Involvement (TCI), which is a weekly half-day commitment by students, faculty, and staff in serving the needs of the local community. Weimar Institute's mission statement is: “To follow Jesus by developing leaders in comprehensive health evangelism through competent modeling and education, in both theory and practice.”

Students at Weimar University also have the unique opportunity to work at the clinic located on campus – Stallant Health Care. In addition to the clinic, students may also work, volunteer and/or complete educational/clinical experiences within the NEWSTART Lifestyle Program or the Depression and Anxiety Recovery Program where they have the opportunity to interact with patients from around the world, participate in research, and learn the unique health approach promoted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In October 2012, with the goal of obtaining WSCUC accreditation, Weimar applied for Eligibility as “Weimar College”. The WSCUC Eligibility Review Committee (ERC), conducted on October 9, 2012, declined Eligibility. In March 2014, Weimar reapplied for Eligibility as “Weimar Institute,” which was granted in October 2014 for a 5-year period. In March 2016, Weimar Institute submitted a Letter of Intent to Apply for Accreditation. In August 2016, it submitted a Seeking Accreditation Institutional Report (Visit 1). The WSCUC team site visit took place on October 12-14, 2016. In March 2017, WASC

Senior College and University Commission granted Weimar Institute Candidacy for a period of five years with specific recommendations on certain criteria. A Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 was conducted by the WSCUC team on October 22-25, 2018 to assess Weimar's compliance with the four WSCUC Standards.

A letter of March 4, 2019 served as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Weimar Institute by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting February 22, 2019. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 to Weimar Institute October 22-25, 2018. The Commission letter granted Weimar Initial Accreditation for a period of six years, while allowing the date of Initial Accreditation to be applied retroactively to January 1, 2018. Further, the Commission scheduled a reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in Spring 2024 and the Accreditation Visit in Fall 2024. It also scheduled both a Mid-Cycle Review to begin on May 1, 2021 and a Special Visit for Spring 2022 to address Weimar's update on strategic priorities including their investing in human resources; shared governance; financial sustainability; and enrollment planning. Meanwhile, Weimar Institute changed its name to Weimar University in May 2021.

In taking the action to grant Initial Accreditation, the Commission confirmed that Weimar has addressed the three Core Commitments and has successfully completed the institutional review process for Initial accreditation conducted under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. In keeping with WSCUC values, WI should strive for ongoing improvement with adherence to all Standards of Accreditation and their associated CFRs to foster a learning environment that continuously strives for educational excellence and operational effectiveness.

The Commission required Weimar to respond to the following issues, which will be addressed during the Special Visit:

1. Investing in human resources: The team recommends that Weimar invest in developing a sufficient number of qualified personnel to provide effective leadership that links on- the-ground operational functions to college senior-level administrative decision-making structures and processes (CFRs 3.7; 3.8)
2. Shared governance and faculty collective voice: The team recommends that Weimar continue to improve shared governance and to ensure that all appropriate constituencies have a voice in the college's decision-making through formal structures and consistent adherence to procedures (CFRs 3.7; 3.10).
3. Financial and enrollment planning: The team recommends that Weimar develop a three-year financial plan that includes realistic budgets, enrollment projections, and fund-raising goals which align with the college's strategic, academic, and operational plans (CFR 3.4).

B. Description of Team's Review Process

In advance of the visit, the team carefully reviewed the Weimar University Special Visit Report of January 7, 2022, with each member paying particular attention to their internal assignments (a first and second author was assigned for each section). Several preliminary team meetings occurred before the site visit commenced, with lines of questioning adding to the request for additional documents to improve quality of analysis. A total of 34 additional documents or reports were requested before or during the visit. These requests were quickly fulfilled by the University's ALO, Dr. Christina Harris. These included faculty and employee handbooks, financial and enrollment reports, institutional and board policies, and organizational charts, among others. In advance of the visit, Dr.

Harris notified the campus community of the WSCUC confidential email process and reminders were provided to faculty and staff at their respective meetings.

Member(s) of the WSCUC Team held meetings with key administrators, the board chair, and board of directors, and hosted separate open sessions for faculty and staff. Some lines of questioning pursued clarification of items in the report, focused on areas identified in the 2018 report, and/or pursued insights offered in the confidential email process. All lines of inquiry had a goal to explore areas of commonality and dissonance in formal and informal reports relative to WSCUC expectations.

The team met several times each day during the 3-day review to triangulate the data to clarify understanding. The team identified the areas of commendation and recommendation for reporting out on the final day. Subsequently, the team has worked virtually to write the report, balancing a review of institutional investment and performance in the context of WSCUC standards.

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

Weimar University submitted a comprehensive special report in response to the Commission Action Letter of March 4, 2019. The ALO Officer, Dr. Christina Harris, is thanked for her work in aligning the report with the assignment.

The introduction to the report focuses on the Core of Four (Health, Evangelism, Academic and Labor) – aspects of Weimar. As will be noted elsewhere, the report is robust in areas that focus on institutional mission and auxiliary enterprises relating to health and evangelism. For example, the Special Visit Report opens with a vision that the existence is “to HEAL a Hurting World”. While an entirely appropriate community value, as Weimar seeks to move from an Institute to University, added attention and focused expertise to meet WSCUC expectations needs to be a robust part of the institutional transition from a philosophical commitment to core health- and denominational-related values to a fully engaged academic prioritization as the University's *raison d'être*. The report included more details on missional matters – Total Community Involvement, chapel engagement, hydrotherapy treatments during Covid, etc. – than including traditional university reports of financial operations, faculty scholarship, and job postings for key position vacancies, for example.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF ISSUES UNDER THE STANDARDS

A. Investing in Human Resources

1. Issue/Recommendation

From the 2018 Accreditation Visit which called for a 2022 Special Visit, the following was written – “WSCUC Recommendation: The team recommends that Weimar invest in developing a sufficient number of qualified personnel to provide effective leadership that links on-the-ground operational functions to college senior-level administrative decision-making structures and processes (CFRs 3.7; 3.8).”

2. Evidence reviewed by the team on this issue

The team carefully reviewed the Weimar University Special Visit Report of January 7, 2022, with particular attention to the 3-page section focusing on this issue. Further evidence included the Faculty and Staff Handbooks (including salary scales and benefit offerings), as well as questions of the President, Interim VP Academic Affairs, Chief Financial Officer, and faculty and staff in

open forum meetings. Some lines of questioning pursued insights offered in the confidential email process, with a goal to explore areas of commonality and dissonance in formal and informal reports.

3. Analysis of the effectiveness of institutional actions taken in response to the Commission's concerns

The team enjoyed meeting members of the University community – senior leadership, board members, faculty, and staff. All evidenced commitment to the Weimar Institute and University enterprises. Progress has been made in hiring additional faculty and emerging mid-level staff to be developed into key roles necessary for University operations. Such positions include staffing in human resources, enrollment management, student development, and fund-raising, among others.

Notably, most examples of investment in “staff development” is rooted in hiring staff to be cultivated into specific roles. This is an understandable approach in hiring that requires a specific institutional values match (in this case, membership in the Seventh-day Adventist tradition). Yet, training people to be qualified to fill specialty positions should not be the primary focus of staff development which, more typically, is an institution-wide investment in individuals at all levels of the organization. In meetings, the funds reported for broad personnel development are for the 2022-23 academic year and a strategy for an ongoing program design has yet to be developed. So, there is small, but limited, progress to this area of special focus in the intervening years since the 2018 report.

Of notable concern is that faculty and staff salaries are not market-competitive, with staff salaries indexed to at least the minimum wage and faculty salaries to at least two times the minimum wage. While housing is offered at less than market rates and said to offset the high cost-of-living, not all faculty and staff choose this option and, in fact, there are not sufficient housing options for all to do so. Thus, matters of compensation equity should be reviewed for those who are not in university housing.

Further, several key personnel roles at executive levels are currently uncompensated which is not sustainable long-term, as senior leaders will eventually leave or retire in future years. The institution, while it has sufficient funds, has not chosen to allocate it to personnel budgets to hire qualified individuals who are not financially self-sufficient to work without salary and that is less likely for career academics to be hired (versus hiring senior leaders from medical and investment/financial fields). A corollary is that, for senior personnel to be compensated through other employment (particularly in medical fields) results in less-than-fulltime campus presence which creates further stratification of those who live/work/worship on campus and leadership who commutes to campus.

Health insurance benefits for faculty and staff are reliant on a non-traditional model of the institution paying penalties for noncompliance with regulations regarding required health insurance options. Instead, faculty and staff are insured through Covered California and MediCal programs. This is concerning from both a compliance and sustainability model. Any future changes in government programs could leave the University without an important investment in personnel. And, the current model works for certain family configurations but not for single individuals (who may not qualify for MediCal and are required to pay out-of-pocket for private

medical insurance) and, possibly for families where a Weimar spouse works offsite and the combined family income exceeds the MediCal salary threshold.

Finally, while there is good stability in executive leadership in most “C-level” roles – Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, and Chief Financial Officer – the lack of a permanent Chief Academic Officer is of concern from an accreditation perspective. An Institute can operate without a CAO; a stable University cannot. Further, while the position is under consideration, there appears to be a hesitancy to allocate sufficient funding to attract senior level candidates. The lack of timely posting of a comprehensive job description seems to be a factor in the timeliness of the recruiting and selection process.

4. Findings and conclusions about the institution’s progress in addressing the issue

The current faculty, staff, and leadership are clearly committed to the institution and its values. While some progress has been made in investing in training new hires for skill-specific roles, a comprehensive faculty and staff development program remains to be developed, funded, and implemented.

There seem to be varied levels of understanding of WSCUC-specific expectations as it relates to the CEO being full-time engaged with the institution. While the President reported during interviews that he works full-time for Weimar University, and has done so since 2015, including teaching 8-semester credits at the undergraduate level, there seem to be varied levels of understanding of WSCUC-specific expectations as it relates to the CEO being full-time engaged with the institution, with the most recent FY2020 (as well as previous) IRS 990 tax-filing reporting the President as working 20 hours per week at the institution. Based on interviews and reports, much of his work includes the Weimar Institute non-academic affiliates. In particular, a breadth of understanding of academic standards, academic program planning, and recruitment/enrollment/retention issues are at the heart of the University enterprise and require full CEO engagement, which is more than Weimar Institute. Further, the lack of prioritization of identifying a final candidate for the Vice President for Academic Affairs (plus the hesitancy to allocate an adequate salary budget to be competitive) highlights a risk area for the institution as it relates to compensation levels overall and unfunded executive roles, in particular.

Concerns were identified about the lack of traditional private health insurance and the institutional reliance on government programs. Finally, low salary levels as a tradeoff for some receiving subsidized housing on campus is not a sustainable model for hiring highly qualified personnel over time and raises equity issues for those who do not live on campus and/or single individuals as it relates to insurance qualifications.

B. Shared Governance and Faculty Collective Voice

1. Issue/Recommendation

In the Commission Action Letter of March 4, 2019 called for a 2022 Special Visit, the following was written – “WSCUC Recommendation: Shared governance and faculty collective voice: The team recommends that Weimar continue to improve shared governance and to ensure that all appropriate constituencies have a voice in the college’s decision-making through formal structures and consistent adherence to procedures (CFRs 3.7; 3.10).”

2. Evidence reviewed by the team on this issue

The team carefully reviewed the Weimar University Special Visit Report of January 7, 2022, with particular attention to the 8-page section and appendices focusing on this issue. The team also carefully reviewed the documents: Board Statement on Governance, Survey Instrument and Survey Results on Shared Governance, Shared Voice Committee Minutes, Faculty Governance, and the Policy Governance Model. Further evidence included the Faculty and Staff Handbooks, as well as questions of the President, members of the Board of Directors, Interim VP Academic Affairs, and faculty and staff in open forum meetings. Some lines of questioning pursued insights offered in the confidential email process, with a goal to explore areas of commonality and dissonance in formal and informal reports.

3. Analysis of the effectiveness of institutional actions taken in response to the Commission's concerns

It is evident that the leadership of Weimar University has sought to respond to the Commission's concerns. Much of the response to "shared governance" in the Special Visit Report evidenced surveys being disseminated for input – whether student satisfaction with courses; faculty and staff feedback on collaboration and administrative communication; etc. Notably, the survey results suggest that the Weimar community's understanding of shared governance is rather distinct from governance as a participatory decision-making process in higher education. Progress appears to be slow in implementing shared voice in the decision-making process. Some of this is related to the institution's values relating to "God-led leadership [being] ultimately held responsible for decision-making" (faculty response to a survey) which aligns with the narrative on shared governance in the Special Visit Report which approached surveys with faculty with these questions – "What does biblical shared governance mean to you? What would you expect from a biblical model of shared governance?" Notably, there was no evidentiary report that addressed the question "What does academic shared governance mean?" And, the lack of understanding of academic shared governance (an essential component of accreditation) includes an every-other year survey of students (alternated with the NSSE) and faculty and staff surveys of a similar ilk. Asking "how are we doing?" is not a demonstrated commitment to the hard work of shared governance. Clearly, ultimately the president is accountable to the Board of Directors. But, the accountability to WSCUC and generally accepted practices of shared governance within higher education hasn't yet been operationalized in a way that allows rich conversation and, perhaps, even dissent, but yet a voice for differing perspectives to be brought to the table for collaboration. When the administration forms the surveys, it's not clear how they would hear issues that weren't on their radar to ask about – whether students, staff, or faculty.

While the review team is fully committed to honoring the institution's religious beliefs regarding leadership, we are also fully committed to honoring the WSCUC requirement of shared governance. For the latter, some inhibitors preclude current success. Among the observations are the following:

- In a tight knit community with many faculty and staff having the University as employer, landlord, K-12 educators of their children, and neighbor while also their supervisor, there can be real or perceived conflicts of interest. In such settings, boundaries can default to the highest power differential – supervisor or leader to employee. Thus, shared governance is complicated by the multiplicity of an individual's roles in this tight-knit community and requires clear boundaries on areas of perceived conflicts of interest.
- For shared governance to be a success, it is important to consider if it is possible for a staff member to openly and professionally express an opinion of dissent with a senior

leader's proposal and not feel or be jeopardized. Some feedback in the confidential emails cited examples of perceptions that dissent was silenced and/or that dissenters were exited from the University for questioning leaders. While this could not be independently corroborated while maintaining the confidentiality of the signatories of such statements, what became clear is that shared governance is not fully built out at Weimar University, boundaries are not clearly acknowledged and protections built in, and that Weimar's model of shared governance is different from the higher education model of shared governance.

- Although inconclusive, the belief that some of the turnover in the Academic Affairs position was related to lack of senior leadership's understanding of expectations of academic decision-making and/or incumbents running afoul of powerful leaders means much work lies ahead.

4. Findings and conclusions about the institution's progress in addressing the issue

Shared governance is a hallmark of accredited academic institutions. And, members of the special visit team are experienced at navigating religious values and practices in the context of accreditation. Yet, religious values cannot trump accreditation requirements.

It is recommended that Weimar hire an independent consultant with significant experience in accredited religious institutions that have shared governance models consistent with higher education shared governance practices. This is essential to help the institution move to practices consistent with WSCUC definitions of shared governance, as well as general best practices across higher education. Because of the overlapping relationships, roles, and non-work-related lives, to assist with professional/personal boundaries and resolutions, the institution should consider appointing an ombudsperson who has no ties to the Weimar community (as defined in conflict-of-interest standards) to be an independent external third-party who will navigate concerns relative to workloads, employee evaluation, compensation, housing, and community relations.

C. Financial Sustainability and enrollment planning

1. Financial Sustainability

a. Issue/Recommendation

In the report of the WSCUC team visit of October, 2018, the team wrote "WSCUC Recommendation: In assessing financial stability, the team reviewed audited financial statements for the years ended June 30, 2017 and June 30, 2016, and internal financial statements for the year ending June 30, 2018. In its Action Letter of March 4, 2019 the Commission recommended that Weimar develop a three-year financial plan with realistic budgets, enrollment projections, and fund-raising goals. As of this current review, the institute has finished its fiscal year with surpluses for six consecutive years. In addition to revenue from the academic programs and the campus industries, Weimar is supported by a donor base that has contributed an average of \$2 million per fiscal year. While the ratio of annual fund donations to tuition revenues is higher than customary, the institute has been able to sustain this donation level going back to at least 2012. Weimar's financial model is not traditional but has consistently provided sufficient resources to fund its operations (CFR 3.4)."

b. Evidence reviewed by the team on this issue

The visiting team was charged with assessing Weimar's financial and enrollment planning. Weimar was asked to develop a three-year financial plan that includes realistic budgets, enrollment projections, and fund-raising goals which align with the college's strategic, academic, and operational plans (CFR 3.4). Further, the team was charged with evaluating Weimar's progress with executing their strategic plan and aligning their resources in support of college priorities (CFR 4.6). This review is included in Sections 3A (Financial Sustainability) and 3B (Executing the Strategic Plan) of this report.

The visiting team reviewed Weimar's Audited financials for fiscal years 2019, 2020, and 2021, as well as revenue and expense projections for four years beginning with FY 2022.

c. Analysis of the effectiveness of institutional actions taken in response to the Commission's concerns

In the team's analysis of the effectiveness of Weimar's actions taken in response to the Commission's concerns, Weimar's financials have shown improvement over the past three fiscal years through modest increase in tuition revenues and philanthropy, yet there still remain four areas of concern that could potentially place the institution in a financially unsustainable position.

- A significant portion of Weimar's philanthropy supports unrestricted operations. While this may not be unusual for non-profit universities, it does pose the risk of the continued ability to raise funds to support unrestricted operations year over year, even at current enrollment levels, let alone with growth.
- Weimar's financial model depends significantly on unpaid volunteers' work, including, but not limited to, the President, COO, CFO, and HR Consultant. These administrative roles generally demand much higher salaries and a sudden need for an external replacement in any of these positions could result in having to pay competitive compensation to attract the necessary talent, which would increase the current cost structure of the organization, deeming it financially unsustainable. Further, Weimar should confirm if "volunteers" could replace essential staff positions under California labor laws.
- Weimar's financial model also depends significantly on a current cost structure for salaries and wages set at minimum wage plus subsidized housing in Weimar-owned properties. The long-term viability of this approach is questionable because of the continued need for acquisition and development of property to support growth and the ability to retain talent. Growth will be tightly constrained due to available housing resources which are a significant factor in employee compensation..
- Weimar's financial model further depends on faculty and staff qualifying for government supported health care plans, with the institution paying an annual penalty for not providing a health care program. In the event it becomes mandatory to provide a private health care insurance program, the current cost structure could be impacted significantly.

The evidence on these issues is based on various interviews and taken into account with current audited financial statements. Further, the multi-year unrestricted budget does not

factor any of these possible risks of an immediate change to the current cost structure by way of contingencies or reserves.

Notwithstanding the above concerns, the Audited Financial Statements have demonstrated the institution's ability to improve its financial performance over the past three years. The increases in tuition revenue and philanthropy have placed Weimar in a positive financial position. However, the risks associated with concerns raised could quickly erode the gains demonstrated and impact their ability to maintain financial stability. An action plan with a timeline to address these risk concerns should be prepared and presented on the next WSCUC team visit.

d. Findings and conclusions about the institution's progress in addressing the issue

Based on our findings, our team concludes that Weimar should establish a Board-approved risk management policy that directs the administration to provide regular reports on the assessment of institutional risks and corresponding mitigation measures. Significant areas of risk exposure include: the reliance on low-cost government insurance in lieu of private insurance; the provision of low-cost housing in lieu of competitive salaries; uncompensated senior executives; and dependence on high levels of philanthropy for general operating expenses. (CFRs 1.7 and 3.4).

2. Enrollment Planning

A. Issue/Recommendation

The Commission Action Letter of March 4, 2019 recommended that, "Weimar develops a three-year financial plan that includes realistic budgets, enrollment projections, and fund-raising goals which align with the college's strategic, academic, and operational plans (CFR 3.4)." The Commission Action Letter further stated that a special visit should be scheduled for Spring 2022 to provide an update to its financial and enrollment planning.

B. Evidence reviewed by the team on this issue

In preparation of its virtual visit to Weimar and during its virtual special visit, the team members carefully evaluated the evidentiary exhibits and met with the various constituencies of Weimar to evaluate the institutional progress with regard to this WSCUC recommendation.

One of the institution's strategic goals, as described in its updated 2018-2023 Strategic Plan document, is to achieve planned institutional growth by strategically recruiting students to participate in currently existing and new programs and actively strive for increased retention. This is rooted in the institutional mission to increase the number of people prepared to heal a hurting world. According to the Strategic Plan document, the university plans to achieve the institutional growth by adding 30-50 FTE students each year, resulting in 175-240 students by the end of academic year 2021-2022:

EXPECTED GROWTH

The strategic plan is being undertaken with the following growth expectations, and the goal of reaching 175-240 students by the 2021-22 academic years.

School Year	Planned Enrollment Growth
2018-19	80 FTE Students Minimum
2019-20	30-50 FTE Students Added
2020-21	30-50 FTE Students Added
2021-22	30-50 FTE Students Added
2022-23	Review Enrollment Capacity

The Spring 2022 Institutional Strategic Plan provided to the team during the visit updated 2022-2023 enrollment projections to 190-240 FTE students.

At the same time an “Academic Plan” document was provided which gave guidelines for the logistics of implementing such a plan, yet a strategy was not included for the mix of academic programs and how these would be implemented.

C. Analysis of the effectiveness of institutional actions taken in response to the Commission’s concerns

In the team’s analysis of the effectiveness of Weimar’s actions taken in response to the Commission’s concerns, Weimar has made progress in enrollment planning. The enrollment growth plan of the university is reflected in its operational budget as well as in its strategic plan budget as evidenced in the submitted evidentiary exhibits. Weimar’s Board of Trustees Meeting minutes for the 2021 calendar year also document the trustees’ active engagement with the strategic planning process, in general, and the enrollment planning process, in particular. University’s Strategic Plan document with the key performance indicators (KPI), attrition, and retention rates documented for its undergraduate programs, and Spring 2022 Institutional Operational Plan also provide an update on Weimar’s progress towards achieving financial sustainability through enrollment planning.

During its virtual visit, the team met with the President, Director of Enrollments, Interim VPAA, CFO, COO, and program chairs to further understand and clarify Weimar’s progress as documented in its evidentiary exhibits. During the visit meeting, the Director of Enrollments explained the enrollment projections and enrollment planning process at Weimar, including the role of various committees and the individuals involved with the enrollment planning process. At the time of the visit, Weimar’s enrollment planning structure involves the Enrollment, Admissions, Strategic Planning, and Shared Voice Committees. The Enrollment Committee is charged with development of recruitment and marketing and consists of the Enrollment Director (chair), VPAA, Program Chairs, Division Deans, and representatives from the Student Services, and Admissions. The Admissions Committee includes the same membership plus the Campus Chaplain and is concerned with admitting prospective students and working with the program chairs in developing and implementing the admissions criteria.

According to the Enrollment Director, the projected enrollment growth of Weimar is based on the historical Weimar enrollment data, enrollment trends at other Seventh-day Adventist institutions, and intuitional surveys of future prospects and alumni. The university's enrollment strategy consists of social media advertising, in-person recruitment, and attending at least two large youth/ministry conventions. The university's enrollment strategy benefits from signed agreements with the Depression Recovery Program at Weimar, Beautiful Minds Counseling Service, and referrals from clinical supervisors at other Seventh-day Adventist Counseling Service Centers.

To achieve its enrollment projections, Weimar has started new certificate, undergraduate and graduate level on-campus programs, and online programs. In its near future, the university plans to expand its program offerings by adding a Physician's Assistant program. Weimar's enrollment strategy is also posited upon retaining most of its current student population by providing adequate and timely student advising, sufficient dorm allocations, and mission-oriented education. Weimar's last three academic years' undergraduate retention rate has been 71.7% (2018-19); 80.4% (2019-20); and 75.7% (2020-21). At the same time, its undergraduate attrition rate was 22.5% (2018-19); 20.9% (2019-20); and 25.4% (2020-21).

It is clear that the university's enrollment growth is currently constrained by the lack of available campus infrastructure. Weimar is in the process of addressing campus infrastructure issues and is soliciting the wider community's input through its program chairs and the Shared Voice Committee.

Because enrollment growth is often linked to an increased academic portfolio, what seems undeveloped is a strategy for the rollout of new programs – for example, is there to be a mixed portfolio of social sciences and health-related programs? Is there a scaffolding of programs that require labs versus lower cost programs that might be pathways to increased enrollments?

D. Findings and conclusions about the institution's progress in addressing the issue

The visiting team found that the university's operational and strategic plan budgets incorporate the projected enrollment growth. Yet, the data presented and the information gathered during the site visit do not adequately explain how the attrition projections are incorporated in the planning process. Further, the annual enrollment projections include a wide range of 30-50 new students. The university operational and strategic budgets fail to accommodate different scenarios based on this wide range of projected new and overall FTE students (175-240 students for 2021-2022, 195-240 students for 2022-2023).

Weimar has made progress towards enrollment planning to improve its financial sustainability and diversification of revenue streams through new initiatives, although there are a number of areas for continued improvement. To ensure long-term financial sustainability, the institution should develop a scenario based multi-year projection that allows them to test academic program scenarios, understand necessary academic investments, anticipate cash needs, and accommodate wide-ranged enrollment projections (CFR 3.4). The site team recommends that Weimar develop different operational budget plans for its immediate future. For example, to plan for scenarios based on 175 FTE students and 21% attrition rate and 240 FTE students and 25% attrition rate will provide different

outcomes and needs for institutional responses.. The university should also develop different “worst” and “likely” case scenarios for its long-term budget and strategic plan.

At the same time, a more comprehensive and strategic academic plan seems important for this next stage in Weimar’s growth – to ensure that new programs don't compete with existing programs for the same students, that there is a mix of resource-heavy and less costly programs, and that the institution is positioned to review programs 3-4 years after they are introduced to ensure there is sufficient demand and resources for long-term investment. The institution should perform appropriate market research to determine future demand of any new degree programs as well as to ensure no canbalization of existing programs."

The Strategic Plan should also address with specific timelines and related costs the development of scholarly research and professional development.

SECTION III – OTHER TOPICS

In addition to the issues related to this special visit, in its March 4, 2019 letter, the Commission required Weimar to respond to: strategic planning; and research, scholarship, and professional development. Although not the subject of this special visit, the team would like to comment on observations made during the visit so that the institution may use this information to prepare for their upcoming accreditation visit.

A. Executing the strategic plan

1. Issue/Recommendation

In the report of the WSCUC team visit in October, 2018, the team wrote “As Weimar continues to take a long-range look forward, it should involve its faculty, staff, and administrators in the development and implementation of policies and processes useful for supporting a collaborative culture of shared governance that informs campus-wide strategic planning. The revised strategic plan, updated July 2018, could benefit from further improvement in its long-term financial strategies and fund-raising goals with the added use of enrollment analytics to inform target enrollment projections; the continued development and use of metrics of measuring success (key performance indicators); and realistic, diversified, and concrete budgeting goals.”

Strategic planning, which is critical to mapping out the roadmap for financial sustainability, demands rigorous detailing of Weimar’s overall long-term institutional goals and aspirations. It requires the creation of specific institutional strategies, along with processes for implementing and monitoring them, while describing key performance metrics for evaluating outcomes. The plan must tightly integrate the critical academic goals with the realistic financial and operational resources likely available to the university to accomplish its strategic goals.

2. Evidence reviewed by the team on this issue

This team reviewed Weimar’s 2018-2023 Strategic Plan, which begins with describing its vision, mission, direction, and core values. After detailing the collaborative process that shaped the plan, it forecasts their enrollment growth. Next, it lists six strategic priority goals: 1. Prioritize mission maintenance by increasing enrollment without losing the mission focus; 2. Planned institutional growth by strategically recruiting students to existing and new programs, and increasing retention; 3. Increase infrastructure strategically to prepare the campus to serve more students, staff and faculty; 4. Secure financial sustainability using best practices; 5. Elevate

faculty and staff engagement to attract, retain, and develop faculty, while nurturing a campus environment that supports all employees; and 6: Strengthen communication and clearly demonstrate that the voice of all constituents matters. Goals are identified – some complete, others in progress, and others under study.

3. Analysis of the effectiveness of institutional actions taken in response to the Commission's concerns

In response to this team's analysis of the effectiveness of Weimar's actions taken in response to the Commission's concern, we find that Weimar's 2018-2023 Strategic Plan does not reflect careful nor systematic thought relative to its academic goals and their connection to long-term financial sustainability. It lacks clarity and reads as a collection of disconnected ideas, disassociated from the resources required to achieve them. The plan does not detail the strategic reasons for building new academic programs, the tactics to increase student enrollment, or a schema to hire critical new faculty and staff. It does not detail the building of an endowment nor the feasibility assessment of launching a capital campaign.

4. Findings and conclusions about the institution's progress in addressing the issue

Based on our findings, our team concludes that Weimar should establish a Board-approved risk management policy that directs the administration to provide regular reports on the assessment of institutional risks and corresponding mitigation measures. Significant areas of risk exposure include: the reliance on low-cost government insurance in lieu of private insurance; the provision of low-cost housing in lieu of competitive salaries; uncompensated senior executives; and dependence on high levels of philanthropy for general operating expenses. (CFRs 1.7 and 3.4).

In conclusion, Weimar leadership must make the creation of a robust multi-year strategic plan a significant institutional priority. This should include mapping aspirations to realistically achievable resources, scaffolding for potential growth, defining measurable outcomes, and monitoring of key performance indicators. University-wide buy-in and participation by all community members and stakeholders are essential. The national economic uncertainty within the higher education industry sector post-COVID, as well as the inherent risks within Weimar's financial model demand a much more careful strategic plan.

The Strategic Plan must cover not just Weimar University, the institution of higher learning, but also the host of auxiliary enterprises that support the academic programs, which include the NEWSTART Lifestyle Center, Weimar Academy, Weimar Elementary, Weimart, Weimar Lodge, Weimar Cafeteria, and Weimar Bakery.

Last, Weimar should model their DOE financial responsibility composite score for the next three to five years with sensitivity analysis for the variation in possible results of the annual fundraising for both capital and operational expenses.

B. Research, scholarship, and professional development

The team recommends that Weimar continue to sustain progress in clarifying and communicating expectations for research, scholarship, creative activities and professional development, and connecting them to the newly designed faculty ranking system (CFR 2.9).

SECTION IV – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Weimar Institute has a long history of work at the intersection of health and faith, rooted in deep reliance on scripture and religious tradition. While first offering unaccredited programs, the move toward academic accreditation was strategic in assisting students to transfer to other institutions and/or to be admitted to non-Seventh-day Adventist graduate programs. While a noble goal, Weimar University remains undeveloped in infrastructures expected by WSCUC.

With the launch of the quest for academic accreditation, Weimar appears to have relied on relational models of recruiting employees from those committed to the values-based and doctrinal aspects of Weimar Institute. What is lacking is an evidenced commitment to academic planning, the hiring of a qualified (and compensated) Vice President for Academic Affairs, the investment in faculty and staff (market-competitive salaries and benefits; professional development of each sector; and the ability to sustain beyond the initial hiring of previously-affiliated faculty). The team is concerned with conflicting information about meeting the WSCUC expectation of full presidential engagement – through 1099 reports, private business entities of the president, and a medical practice. The long-term sustainability of the financial model is concerning, as well as the lack of investment at all levels in moving Weimar University to a fully-developed academic institution. At present, the doctrinal/ values-based issues are deeply embedded but academic planning, standards, and resources appear sustainable with growth and the need to recruit doctrinally-sound personnel from beyond the current Weimar Institute affiliates. Without this, Weimar is stronger on indoctrination than it is on education. This is not a commentary on the classroom experiences of students, but rather, the institutional investment at the highest levels – President, Board of Directors, and other C-suite leadership – into the academic identity which differentiates the historic Weimar Institute from the goal of a fully qualified Weimar University.

Commendations

1. **Mission and Vision.** Weimar is commended for its clearly articulated mission and vision of health evangelism that is integrated and expressed throughout all levels of the institution. Weimar's staff, faculty, administration, and trustees are commended for their dedication and engagement.
2. **Quality and Commitment of Academic Chairs and Faculty.** Throughout the visit, the passion and commitment to student success by the chairs and faculty were noted with deep appreciation.
3. **Fiscal Performance.** We commend the improved recent three years' financial performance and fiscal responsibility through demonstrated growth in tuition, increase in donations, balanced budget, and expense management.
4. **Auxiliary Enterprises.** Many of the auxiliary enterprises of Weimar University enhance the University mission, enrich the student learning experience, and financial surpluses contribute to academic program funding.

Recommendations

1. **Strategic Planning.** A significant institutional priority is the development of a robust multi-year strategic plan. This should include mapping aspirations to realistically achievable resources, scaffolding for potential growth, defining measurable outcomes, and monitoring of key performance indicators. University-wide buy-in and participation by all community members and stakeholders are essential. (CFRs 3.4, 3.5, 4.5, and 4.6)
2. **Senior Academic Affairs Leadership.** The timely selection of a senior, qualified, and permanent leader of Academic Affairs is imperative to achieve consistent academic excellence. With multiple VPAA transitions since the last review, while present academic operations are stable, this role is necessary to provide vision, planning, program viability, and fiscal oversight of a growing list of academic programs. (CFRs 3.6 and 3.8)

3. **Board Structure.** Development of a Board committee structure is advised and, in some circumstances, required. Separating financial and audit oversight is required, as is a prescribed presidential review process. Committees allow the benefit of expertise and the flexibility of smaller working groups. (CFR 3.9 and WSCUC Governing Board Policy)
4. **Risk Exposure.** The establishment of a Board approved risk management policy that directs the administration to provide regular reports on the assessment of institutional risks and corresponding mitigation measures is advised. Significant areas of risk exposure include: the reliance on low-cost government insurance in lieu of private insurance; the provision of low-cost housing in lieu of competitive salaries; uncompensated senior executives; and dependence on high levels of philanthropy for general operating expenses. (CFRs 1.7 and 3.4).
5. **Clarity of Relationship.** The WSCUC expectation of clarity of relationship between the University and unaccredited academic entities must be clearly articulated on the University's website and in all related literature. (CFR 2.12).