

October 1, 2018

Lori Beth Way
San Francisco State University
Dean of Undergraduate Education and Academic Planning
Accreditation Liaison Officer
1600 Holloway Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94132

Dear Lori:

The WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) has completed its Mid-Cycle Review of San Francisco State University (SFSU). The purpose of the Mid-Cycle Review is to "identify problems with an institution's ...continued compliance with agency standards" while "tak[ing] into account institutional ... strengths and stability" (Code of Federal Regulations, §602.19(b)).

Areas examined. The Mid-Cycle Review focuses on factors related to the WSCUC Standards and includes student achievement, enrollment changes, financial indicators, and institutional information. Data are gathered from your institution's annual report and from public sources. Below are the factors examined, the relevant CFR, source of the data, and the reference point for making comparisons.

Factor	CFR	Source of Data	Data Point
4 year graduation rate	1.2	College Navigator	Regional average: 39%
6 year graduation rate	1.2	College Navigator	Regional average: 59% Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions: minimum 25%
6 year graduation rate disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender	2.10	College Navigator	No specified data point
Enrollment changes	3.4	WSCUC Annual Report	WSCUC practice: 20% increase or decrease

Pell grant recipients	1.4	College Navigator	Regional average: 39%
Median graduate borrower debt	1.6	College Navigator	Regional average: \$21,522
Student default rate	1.6, 3.4	College Navigator	California Student Aid Commission: less than 15.5%
Student/faculty ratio	2.1, 3.1	College Navigator	No specified data point
Faculty/degree ratio	2.1, 3.1	Calculated from College Navigator	WSCUC practice: minimum 1

A review is also conducted of the institution website's student achievement link, submitted in the annual report, to determine whether:

- student achievement data are easy to find
- data include:
 - retention rates, aggregated and disaggregated and for multiple years
 - graduation rates, aggregated and disaggregated and for multiple years
 - brief and focused evidence of student learning (i.e., typically learning outcomes assessment results)
- data and evidence are displayed in a user-friendly way

A review is made of the institution's updated Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI) to determine:

- whether learning outcomes have been developed (for programs and general education)
- where outcomes are published, what evidence is used to assess outcomes, who interprets results and what the process is, and how findings are used
- when was/is the date of each program's Program Review

Results. Below are the findings from SFSU's review, beginning with a summary of the basic data points:

Data Point	Source	CFR	Region Mean Or Data Point	Institution Value
4-year graduation rate	College Navigator	1.2	39%	18%
6-year graduation rate	College Navigator	1.2	59%	54%
Enrollment changes	WSCUC Annual Report	3.4	No more than 20% increase or decrease	

				3.24%
Percent of students receiving Pell Grants	College Navigator	1.4	39%	43%
Median graduate borrower debt	College Scorecard	1.6	\$21,522	\$17,250
Cohort default rate	College Navigator	1.6; 3.4	Less than 15.5%	5.3%

WSCUC staff notes the following for SFSU:

SFSU has strong evidence of several factors including many Pell Grant students, a lower median graduate borrower debt, and an impressive cohort default rate. The most glaring difference is in the 4-year graduation rate of 18% compared to 39% for the region. While this appears to be a very negative figure, WSCUC has developed a Graduation Rate Dashboard (GRD) reflecting more accurate rates. The GRD will not be used for the Mid-Cycle Review until next year but the figures are relevant for understanding the 18% number for this year's review. According to WSCUC analysis, the overall average unit redemption rate for SFSU is 86% compared to 81% for the region and an overall absolute graduation rate for SFSU of 49% compared to 59% for the region. The 49% is much higher than the 18% found in IPEDS which reflects a more accurate picture. However, while not as negative as IPEDS, SFSU needs to continue focusing on improving retention and graduation rates.

The Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators shows program reviews being conducted of all departments but some have not had a review since the early 2000s and many in the last ten years. Please provide information on what kind of cycle is being used to conduct program reviews.

I was not able to easily find information about retention and graduation rates and evidence of student learning. I wrote you today and you provided links to your institutional research and another section of your website on these areas. Please make both of these more accessible when one opens the web page. The purpose of this requirement is so that students can easily find this information when deciding where to attend university. In looking at the assessment reports at one of the links you provided, I noticed that most were done in 2012 or 2013. Please provide information on the cycle being using to conduct these assessment studies which are helpful indicators of student learning results. Please provide further requested information in this and the prior paragraph to me by October 31, 2018.

Next Steps. WSCUC staff did not identify issues with SFSU's continued compliance with WSCUC standards beyond the requests of the prior two paragraphs. We updated the accreditation history to reflect this conclusion from the MCR and notified the Commission.

If you have feedback for us regarding your experience of the Mid-Cycle Review process, please share that feedback with me. As always, please contact me if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Richard Osborn
Vice President