

# WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) Accreditation Visit

## Campus Brief

We are looking forward to welcoming the WASC Review Team to UCR on October 24-26. The reaffirmation of accreditation process is an opportunity to reflect on our challenges and successes and to demonstrate our commitment to continual, evidence-based, improvement at all levels of the institution.

This document is divided into several sections to help you prepare for your session with the WASC Review Team.

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If you have questions about this document, the schedule, or any other aspect of the visit, please contact:

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All of the documentation related to our WASC Accreditation Visit is available here:

[http://wasc.ucr.edu/timeline\\_reaccre.html](http://wasc.ucr.edu/timeline_reaccre.html)

## **WASC Accreditation Visit, October 24-26**

### **Open Sessions:**

**Staff: October 25, 9:00-9:55 AM, INTS 1113**

**Faculty: October 25, 11:00-11:55 AM, INTS 1113**

**Students: October 25, 2:00-2:55 PM, INTS 1113**

**Final Feedback Meeting with WASC Team: October 26, 11:30 AM-12:00 PM, INTS 1113**

**Confidential email address: [ucr@wscuc.org](mailto:ucr@wscuc.org) (see Appendix 1 for instructions on using the confidential email address)**

**Website: [http://wasc.ucr.edu/timeline\\_reaccre.html](http://wasc.ucr.edu/timeline_reaccre.html)**

### **I. What is Accreditation?**

“Accreditation” is review of the quality of higher education institutions and programs. In the United States, accreditation is a major way that students, families, government officials, and the press know that an institution or program provides a quality education.

- Students who want federal (and sometimes state) grants and loans must attend an accredited college, university, or program.
- The federal government requires that a college, university, or program be accredited to be eligible for federal grants and loans or other federal funds.
- State governments require that a college, university, or program be accredited when they make state funds available to students or institutions and when they allow students to sit for state licensure examinations in some professional fields.

- “[About Accreditation](#),” Council for Higher Education Accreditation

### **II. WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) Accreditation Process**

UCR’s accreditor is the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC).

(for simplicity, we will use the acronym “WASC” when referring to our accreditor and the accreditation team throughout this document)

The WASC accreditation process is aimed at:

- Assuring the educational community, the general public, and other organizations and agencies that an accredited institution has demonstrated it meets the Commission's Core Commitments to Institutional Capacity and Educational Effectiveness, and has been successfully reviewed under Commission Standards.
- Promoting deep institutional engagement with issues of educational effectiveness and student learning, and developing and sharing good practices in assessing and improving the teaching and learning process.

- Promoting within institutions a culture of evidence where indicators of performance are regularly developed and data collected to inform institutional decision making, planning, and improvement.

- [From the WASC Handbook of Accreditation](#)

The WASC Review Team wants to know that we are thinking deeply as a community about the issues brought up in the Lines of Inquiry (themes outlined by WASC before the visit, for more information see [below](#)) and that we are working on plans to address those issues. They are not looking for a particular “answer” in response to these issues, but an approach to continual institutional improvement that is sustainable and supports our campus [Mission](#) and [Strategic Plan](#). This visit and our preparation and responses to it are an opportunity for reflection and for receiving valuable feedback from professionals affiliated with our peer institutions. While some of the Lines of Inquiry listed below are ongoing challenges, this visit, the ideas our community shares around these issues, and the guidance from our Review Team will help us continue to improve in these areas.

**III. The WASC Review Team for our reaccreditation visit is:**

- David Lassner, Interim Chancellor, University of Hawaii at Manoa (Chair)
- Sharon Hamill, Psychology Professor, California State University, San Marcos (Assistant Chair)
- Thomas McCarron, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs, San Diego State University
- Patricia Turner, Vice Provost and Dean, Undergraduate Education, University of California, Los Angeles
- Sutee Sujitparapitaya, Associate Provost for Institutional Analytics, San Francisco State University
- Christopher Oberg, Vice President/COO, WSCUC (Institutional Liaison)

**IV. UCR’s WASC Timeline**

[UCR’s last reaffirmation of accreditation was in 2010](#). Our current reaffirmation process began with an [interim report filed in February 2015](#) largely focused on assessment of undergraduate programs, general education, and graduate programs. [Beginning with a kick-off meeting in Fall 2016](#), UCR’s reaccreditation workgroup produced a draft of the [Institutional Report](#), a [Self-Review Under the Standards](#), and an [Inventory of Educational Effectiveness](#). After a campus-wide comment period in Fall 2017, these materials were submitted to WASC on January 31, 2018. After reviewing these materials, the WASC Review Team outlined six Commendations and fourteen Lines of Inquiry in a videoconference Offsite Review with UCR leadership on April 10, 2018. The [Offsite Review Summary of Lines of Inquiry document](#) also requested [eleven additional documents which were submitted on August 15](#) by a subcommittee of the reaccreditation workgroup and others as the work was largely completed during the summer months. See the full team list [here](#).

**V. Additional Outcomes Post Institutional Report**

It has been an exciting eight months since we submitted our Institutional Report and UCR has had several noteworthy outcomes during this time period.

- Two Nobel Laureates joined the UCR faculty: physicist [Barry Barish](#) and chemist and UCR alum [Richard Schrock](#).

- This spring, [UCR received recognition for the graduation success of our students who receive Pell Grants](#). Third Way's analysis revealed that UCR enrolled and graduated more students who received Pell Grants than any other research university in the US. This builds the Education Trust's previous designation of UCR as a ["Top Performing Institution" for black student success](#) and in March 2017 and in December 2017, as a ["Top Performing Institution" for Latino student success](#).
- In 2018, UCR has had significant success both in moving up university rankings, but also in helping to push the national conversation around what qualities should be used to compare and rank universities. New rankings and formula changes are starting to highlight access and success for all as important features of universities and our ranking has improved accordingly.
  - [Money Magazine ranked UCR number 32 out of 727 colleges across the US](#). Their ranking formula gives weight to six-year graduate rates, number of Pell-eligible students, affordability, and alumni salary information.
  - [Washington Monthly ranked UCR number 28](#) out of all institutions and 15 among public universities. Their ranking formula gives social mobility 1/3 of the ranking weight.
  - [UCR jumped 39 positions in the 2019 US News and World Reports rankings](#), from 124 the previous year to number 85 among all institutions and number 35 among public universities. This jump reflects changes in the US News ranking methodology which no longer uses acceptance rates and instead includes social mobility.
- [UCR initiated several efforts to diversify incoming faculty cohorts](#) and for the past three hiring cycles has successfully increased the percentage of faculty members who identify as underrepresented minorities to 22-25%. Historically, that percentage has hovered around 10-13%.
  - UCR received competitive funding from the UC Office of the President (UCOP) to pilot the Provost Diversity in Engineering Fellowship (PDEF) through which three engineering professors who identify as women and come from underrepresented groups were successfully recruited.
  - UCR has just received UCOP funding to utilize and build upon the lessons learned from PDEF to recruit a diverse group of Mathematics candidates.
  - UCR's Center for Ideas and Society received a UCOP grant to help retain faculty members from underrepresented groups by creating supportive faculty research communities through five-year long interdisciplinary working groups.
- [In a transformational effort that included almost every sector of our campus](#), UCR successfully lowered its new California resident freshman to transfer student ratio from 4.46:1 in Fall 2016 to an expected 2.58:1 ratio in Fall 2018. We anticipate this ratio will drop further to 2.25:1 in Winter 2019.
- We are now beginning to reap the benefits of the transition to the Banner student information system which has enabled the integration of new data-informed efforts to support student success and timely progress to degree.
  - UCR is currently piloting [Civitas Illume](#), a predictive analytics platform that uses student information system data and historical performance data to help identify students who might face persistence issues and to help devise effective outreach to assist those students. The suite of tools also helps us to identify courses that are bottlenecks or

hindrances to degree completion so we can think more strategically about curriculum, course scheduling, and scaffolding of degree requirements.

- UCR is also piloting [EduNav SmartPlan](#), a dynamic degree planning tool, which will help students find the shortest path to graduation while taking into account students' unique goals and experiences. It will also help students make more informed decisions about adding and dropping courses as they are able to see how one course builds on another and the impact of scheduling changes on their time to degree.

This brief cannot include all of the many successes of our students, staff, and faculty, but the milestone achievements outlined above are the result of the efforts of our entire campus to build a university where everyone succeeds together.

## **VI. How can you participate in the Accreditation Visit?**

- Reflect on the Commendations and Lines of Inquiry outlined below. Make sure to share your points of view with the team relating to these topics both in terms of what we are doing well and what areas could use additional effort and campus focus.
- Attend and participate in the WASC visit. We need our whole community engaged in the visit to give the WASC Team the clearest and most comprehensive picture of our campus, our goals, and our needs for the future.
- Encourage your staff and peers to actively participate in the visit and in the informational pre-sessions.
- Encourage those who cannot attend the visit to submit feedback to the confidential email address: [ucr@wscuc.org](mailto:ucr@wscuc.org)

## **VII. Offsite Review Summary of Lines of Inquiry**

For the full document, please see click [here](#). We have shortened some of the Lines of Inquiry for the purpose of this document.

The remainder of this document outlines the Commendations and Lines of Inquiry provided by the WASC Team during the Offsite Review. Lines of Inquiry are the topics that the WASC Team would like to discuss with our campus during the accreditation visit.

### **a. Commendations from the WASC Review Team:**

1. Growth in Research: UCR reported an impressive 43% increase in federal research awards from 2012 to 2015 at a time when total federal research funding dropped by 8%.
2. Retention and Graduation: UCR demonstrates a strong improvement in student retention and graduation and efforts in narrowing achievement gaps.
3. Student Well-being: There is significant evidence that UCR is clearly attentive to the well-being of its students. Examples include, at the undergraduate level, the investment in student success center and at the graduate level, the development of the GradSuccess program.
4. Operating Reserves: UCR has accumulated significant operating savings which provides it the opportunity to fund \$110 million for faculty expansion and other institutional priorities.

5. Social Mobility: UCR's commitment to the education of historically underrepresented groups, including first generation college students, in support of students' pursuits to improve their social and economic standing (social mobility) is laudable.

6. Medical School: UCR has contributed significantly to the public good by undertaking the formidable task of starting a Medical School to help address the health care needs of the community you serve.

**b. Lines of Inquiry from the WASC Review Team:**

(The relevant Additional Documents are linked although a document was not requested for every LOI.)

0. The Team observed a significant disconnect between the "Institutional Report" (Report) and the "Review Under WSCUC Standards" (Review).

*The writing of the report and review were staggered during a challenging and tense time for our campus in which we implemented or were adjusting to a new student information system, a new personnel system, a new budget model, rapid faculty expansion (largely through cluster hiring), and an unexpectedly large incoming cohort of freshmen in Fall 2016. This campus situation was compounded by turnover in the staff responsible for the report and review. Thus, the bulk of the review was compiled during the greatest periods of campus change, while the institutional report was largely completed as the rate of change had eased. We are evaluating our accreditation infrastructure and processes to better position the campus for future reaccreditation reviews. We were also very glad to have the opportunity to fill in gaps with the eleven additional documents provided on August 15.*

1. Mission and [Strategic Planning](#): The Team observed that the campus does not appear to have a mission statement other than the general mission of the UC System and that the current strategic plan (2010-2020) is nearing its end.

*[UCR's mission statement](#) is: "The University of California, Riverside will transform the lives of the diverse people of California, the nation, and the world through the discovery, communication, translation, application, and preservation of knowledge – thereby enriching the state's economic, social, cultural, and environmental future." The Accreditation Visit will serve as a platform to begin our next round of strategic planning.*

2. [Response to Previous Commission Action Letters](#): Although there was a brief mention of the recommendations from previous Commission Action Letters in the report, the Team did not get a clear picture on how UCR responded to each of the specific items.

*Unfortunately, this section of the report was insufficient and we were pleased to have the opportunity to provide a detailed account of each action item and UCR's response in the additional documents request.*

3. [Diversity of Faculty and Staff](#): The Team would like to understand the quantitative progress that has been made over the past years toward increasing diversity among faculty, staff and administration to reflect the composition of the student body.

*UCR has been working on diversifying the faculty and staff for many years and there are numerous programs designed to help recruit and retain diverse cohorts of new hires. A few examples include mandatory diversity training for faculty and staff search committees, Affirmative Action Compliance Liaisons on all search committees, required diversity statements for all faculty hires, and the many*

*campus training opportunities for staff, faculty, and supervisors to learn more about creating an inclusive working environment for employees of all backgrounds.*

4. [Assessment and Program Review](#): The Report acknowledges that assessment is “uneven” across the campus in that some programs are actively engaged in the process and others are not.

*Assessment is not a static process at UCR. Rather we aim to improve our processes with each assessment cycle. Undergraduate program assessment occurs through annual reports on Program Learning Outcomes Assessment and the periodic Senate Program Review process. Fewer than ten programs fail to turn in their annual report each year and our primary goal for undergraduate review is to help support faculty members to make this already strong process more effective and tailored to program needs.*

*Graduate assessment occurs annually as faculty members assess student learning through mechanisms such as qualifying exams, mentoring sessions, and thesis and dissertation documents. Graduate Program Learning Outcomes are evaluated every 2-3 years, and Graduate Programs are also reviewed periodically by the Academic Senate. Similarly, our goal with graduate assessment is to support faculty members in the creation and use of effective and efficient assessment tools to document the work being done.*

5. [Degree Completion](#): The Team would like to better understand the method to determine average time to degree completion.

*Time to Degree (TTD) measures the amount of time that students take to complete their degree. TTD is an additional metric that helps our campus to evaluate how long, on average, it takes a student to complete their degree. TTD also serves UCR as a metric that signals possible obstacles to timely degree completion.*

6. [Faculty/Staff Hiring](#): The Report makes several references to an increase in faculty but we find limited explanations of what metrics or considerations, if any, were deployed to determine where the hiring should take place. At the AV (Accreditation Visit), the Team will be evaluating available evidence to better understand how decisions are made to make new faculty and staff hires.

*Both the new budget model and the cluster hiring initiative have influenced the way faculty hiring decisions are made. Cluster hiring was largely organized around thematic research areas. Currently, Deans control the bulk of the funding required for faculty hiring and report their proposed plans to the Provost annually after reviewing and evaluating departmental requests. Staff hiring is even more distributed and based on unit needs and available funding.*

7. [Information Technology](#): The Team was unable to determine the extent to which campus IT resources support the holistic mission of the campus in at least the core mission of teaching & learning, research and administration.

*Information Technology Solutions (ITS) has undergone major restructuring over the past two years and supported both the Banner student information system and UCPath personnel and payroll system transitions. ITS consistently supports UCR’s core mission by maintaining a broad teaching and research technology portfolio, ensuring campus cyber security, and helping to drive innovation through supporting programs like predictive analytics, new student computing and printing options, and increased support for online and hybrid learning.*

8. **Campus Communication:** The Team would like to better understand the present systems for communication and the plans to improve them.

*Campus leadership has worked to improve communication through the Chancellor's Campus Conversations, town hall meetings, regular written updates from members of leadership, social media participation, the Chancellor's open office hours, and the Provost's brown bag lunches. Just as important is creating opportunities for campus input and feedback through surveys on key decisions and initiatives, having open meetings, and a commitment to considering input from all areas of campus on all major issues.*

9. **Shared Governance:** Comments in the Review indicate that at least some members of the campus have concerns about the effectiveness of shared governance processes.

*The report and review were largely conducted during a time of great change for our campus. Over the past year and a half, the relationship between the Academic Senate and the administration has improved and the campus continues to work hard to cultivate a strong, consultative relationship and ensure that the Senate's deep experience is brought to bear on all major issues.*

10. [Assessment in Non-academic Units](#): The Team is interested in what work is being done in other non-academic units such as the library, IT, research support, facilities, and institutional research.

*Currently, non-academic units are assessed through their "key performance indicators" (KPIs) during the budget process. Non-academic units also conduct various assessments individually, such as the BAS client survey. The campus goal is to make this assessment process more useful to units and to provide the support needed to easily report on non-KPI assessment practices.*

11. [New budget model](#): We would like to know the details of the new (2016) budget model and its impacts, including the outcomes associated with incentivizing such as increasing graduation rates, recruiting/instructing additional students and effect of features such as rolling unspent funds.

*The new budget model is substantially simpler and more transparent than the old incremental budgeting approach, and sends money to where it's needed to fund instruction and student support. To further improve the model, the Vice Chancellor of Planning and Budget has begun a feedback process to help address some of the adverse incentives and outcomes such as the overconsumption of campus services that are no longer billed on recharge and the insufficient central funds to support strategic initiatives.*

12. [Financial Assumptions Underlying the Multi-Year Campus Financial Plan](#): We would like to validate the assumptions that underlie the multi-year financial plan as outlined on the last page of the Report.

*UCR's operating budget model is based on a variety of economic indicators, some of which are used at the system level (such as State support and tuition increases, salary and benefit plan changes/cost increases), and others that are campus-specific (such as Contract and Grant awards, Auxiliary enterprise sales, and how many students UCR can accept). The operating budget model is based on UCR's financial schedules and outcomes between 2012 and 2017. State budget considerations are built into the model based on historical trends and ongoing conversations between UC and the State. Planning assumptions for the UCR operating model are consistent with UC system-wide budgets and assumptions.*



13. [Leadership Churn](#): A number of comments noted the substantial leadership churn that has taken place on campus. The Team would like to understand the causes of that churn and whether the campus community feels the period of instability has passed and the campus is now stabilized.

*Among the 15 leadership positions comprised of the Provost, Vice Chancellors and Deans, there were 10 leadership changes, many of which were deans, during the three-year period of 2013-16. This, no doubt, contributed to the impression of “leadership churn.” We hope that the community feels that the leadership team has been significantly more stable in the year and a half since that time and that the resignations and recruitments we have experienced since are within the normal flux of any organization.*

## Appendix 1. Confidential Email Account Notification

To the UCR Community:

The University of California, Riverside is hosting a site visit by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) on October 24-26, 2018 in order to renew our accreditation. UCR's status as an accredited institution signals to others the high quality of our educational programs and makes our campus and students eligible for federal (and sometimes state) grants and loans.

It is vitally important that as many community members as possible meet with the WSCUC Team to provide an accurate picture of UCR and ensure that the Team's report is based on broad campus representation. Therefore, the WSCUC Team will hold the following open meetings with students, staff, and faculty to provide an opportunity for informal input from all members of the campus community about their experiences at UCR:

Staff: October 25, 9:00-9:55 AM, INTS 1113

Faculty: October 25, 11:00-11:55 AM, INTS 1113

Students: October 25, 2:00-2:55 PM, INTS 1113

There will also be an opportunity to hear feedback from the WSCUC Team at the end of the visit, although there will not be an opportunity for questions or comments from the campus community at that time. All are welcome to attend:

Feedback from the WSUSC Team: October 26, 11:30 AM-12:00 PM, INTS 1113

To prepare for the visit, we are hosting the following informational sessions listed below. If you plan to attend the open meetings with the WSCUC Team, or if you are scheduled for one of the closed meetings, we encourage you to attend one of these sessions:

Thursday, October 11, 3:00-3:45, INTS 1113

Wednesday, October 17, 11:00-11:45, HUB 269

Monday, October 22, 4:00-4:45, HUB 269

WSCUC understands that not everyone who may wish to participate can attend the open meetings, and has therefore established a confidential email account to give everyone the opportunity to communicate with the Team. The email account is created by a WSCUC staff member and only authorized WSCUC staff and team members have access to it. The emails are not viewed by any representative of UCR. The email account is created for our site visit only and will be closed once the WSCUC team leaves the campus. Only comments made before or during the visit will be considered as part of the review process.

To write to the WSCUC Team, please address your email to: [ucr@wscuc.org](mailto:ucr@wscuc.org)

Students, in particular, are encouraged to comment on issues of academic rigor and consistency, availability of student support services, accuracy of information provided by the institution, and other matters related to the quality of the educational experience. The team is also interested in hearing from students enrolled in online courses and programs and from students at off-campus sites.

Institutional reports, on-campus interviews, open sessions, and email comments become part of the information collected and reviewed by the team. Please note that team members will not respond individually to comments provided through any of these venues, including the confidential email account. However, the input from comments, along with other forms of information, will be considered as the team undertakes its work and develops recommendations to the institution.

The team is not able to meet individually with members of the campus community, so please do not use the email account to request private appointments.

Thank you in advance for your help with this very important event for our campus.

Sincerely,

Cynthia K. Larive  
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

Richard A. Cardullo  
Professor and Howard H. Hays Jr. Chair, University Honors  
WASC Accreditation Liaison Officer

**Appendix 2. General Schedule for WASC Accreditation Visit**

Any updates to the schedule will be available at: <http://wasc.ucr.edu/2018schedule.html>

<b>Wednesday, October 24</b>	<b>Meeting A Room</b>	<b>Meeting A</b>	<b>Meeting B</b>	<b>Meeting B Room</b>
7:45-7:55 AM	HH 1127	Orientation Meeting with ALO		
8:00-8:55 AM	HH 1127	Meeting with UCR Chancellor		
9:00-9:25 AM	HH 1127	Break or additional orientation		
9:30-10:25 AM	HH 0154	Chancellor's Executive Team		
10:25-10:45 AM	HH 1127	Break		
10:45-11:40 AM	HH 0154	WSCUC Steering Committee		
11:40-1:00 PM	HH 1127	Lunch in executive session		
1:00-1:55 PM	HH 4148	Meeting with Chief Financial Officer	Senate Leadership	HH 0154
2:00-2:55 PM	HH 4148	Meeting with Chief Information Officer	Undergraduate Assessment	HH 0154
3:00-3:25 PM	HH 1127	Team debriefing in executive session in team room		
3:30-4:25 PM	HH 2120	Senate Committee on Planning and Budget	Graduate Assessment	HH 0154
4:30-5:25 PM	HH 4148	Meeting with Provost/EVC		

<b>Thursday, October 25</b>	<b>Meeting A Room</b>	<b>Meeting A</b>	<b>Meeting B</b>	<b>Meeting B Room</b>
8:00-8:55 AM	HH 4148	Diversity	Institutional Research	HH 2120
9:00-9:55 AM	INTS 1113	Staff Open Meeting	GE/Core Competencies Assessment	HH 4148
10:00-10:55 AM	HH 1127	Team debriefing in executive session in team room OR hold for scheduling		
11:00-11:55 AM	HH 0154	College Faculty Executive Committee Chairs or Vice Chairs	Faculty Open Meeting	INTS 1113
Noon-12:50 PM	HH 1127	Lunch in executive session		
1:00-1:55 PM	INTS 1109	College Deans		
2:00-2:55 PM	INTS 1113	Open Meeting - Students		
3:00-3:55 PM	HH 2120	Chief Student Affairs Officer		

<b>Friday, October 26</b>	<b>Meeting A Room</b>	<b>Meeting A</b>	<b>Meeting B</b>	<b>Meeting B Room</b>
11:00 AM	HH 4148	Pre-Exit Meeting with UCR Chancellor regarding Team Commendations and Recommendations		
11:30-12:30 PM	INTS 1113	Exit Presentation with UCR Community		