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## **WSCUC APPROVES FIRST ROUND OF ACCREDITATIONS UNDER STREAMLINED ALTERNATIVE MODEL**

### **Eight Institutions Pioneer Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation**

At its February 2021 meeting the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) granted reaffirmation to the first set of institutions pursuing its alternate route to renewed accreditation, known as the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation (TPR). This streamlined approach, approved in June 2017, is available to high-performing institutions. The following eight pioneering TPR institutions were affirmed for the maximum ten-year accreditation period:

- California Institute of Technology
- California State University, Long Beach
- Loma Linda University
- Naval Postgraduate School
- Pardee Rand Graduate School
- Samuel Merritt University
- Soka University of America
- University of California, San Francisco

TPR is an alternative accreditation renewal pathway designed for institutions that demonstrate consistent evidence of healthy fiscal condition, strong student achievement indicators, and sustained quality performance. This new path is as rigorous as the regular institutional review with a special timeline during which institutions can focus on self-selected themes that advance their mission, coordinate with their strategic planning, and promote institutional improvement.

This initial TPR cohort reflects the breadth of WSCUC's institutional membership as it includes schools that are public and private, large and small, comprehensive, highly selective, and graduate, and specialized in fields as diverse as public policy, medicine and health, and naval leadership. To date thirty-one institutions (15% of the universe of 207 WSCUC-accredited institutions) have been approved to pursue the TPR, representing the inaugural institutions and others (including Cal Arts, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, CSU Northridge, Pepperdine and Stanford Universities, Occidental, Pomona and Whittier Colleges, University of Hawaii at Manoa, University of San Diego, and University of Southern California) engaged now in review.

WSCUC Chair Phil Doolittle said, "TPR speaks to the partnership between institutions and WSCUC. This differentiated process and project focus make sense for institutions with strong track records of performance and outcomes. It's the kind of flexible, responsive approach that WSCUC values."

The design process for the new TPR approach began in 2014 when there were calls for risk-sensitive approaches to accreditation, including from the US Department of Education, American Council on Education, and others. WSCUC conducted a development and review process, including open discussions at its annual Academic Resource Conference, a working group of institutional representatives, and written feedback from the region.

Jamienne S. Studley, WSCUC President, added, "Our growing use of student success outcomes and benchmarking data helps WSCUC concentrate on improvement, results and burden reduction. We appreciate the collaboration of the first TPR schools to turn this innovation into reality."

Peer review team reports and Commission Action Letters for these and every WSCUC-accredited institution are available to the public in the institutional directory on the WSCUC website at [Find an Institution](#).

#### **Comments on TPR from Institutional Leaders:**

"The TPR process allowed ... engaged participants to focus on a continuous quality improvement initiative, rather than answering questions related to compliance."

Chancellor Sam Hawgood, UCSF

"For us, the most meaningful aspect of participating as a TPR pioneer has been the way we have marshalled our collective resources as a campus, threading our themes together in ways that highlighted all campus stakeholders. We see the value in Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation."

President Jane Close Conoley, CSU Long Beach

"The deep dive into our theme was transformative for our institution. This innovative and efficient TPR process permitted us to select and focus on a theme that has changed our future by synchronizing accreditation with institutional planning."

President Richard H. Hart, Loma Linda University

"Participation in the TPR aided us in executing and responding to a new strategic plan [and] allowed us ... to stay focused on our specific strategic goals. We are a stronger University for having had the benefit of this process, and we are tremendously appreciative of the effort expended to create this experience."

Vice Admiral Ann Rondeau, President, Naval Postgraduate School

"I want to compliment WSCUC on the TPR process. It focused the attention of both Caltech and the review team on areas where the accreditation process could really add value. This made for a more interesting visit for the review team and I hope a more valuable accreditation process for the institution."

President Lawrence Bacow, Harvard University. Chair, Cal Tech TPR review team

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