

**Team Report
Middle States Commission on Higher Education**

**NAME OF INSTITUTION
Franklin University Switzerland Visit October 11-14, 2020**

Section A: Institutional Representatives

FUS REPRESENTATIVES

Institutional representatives at the time of the visit:

President/CEO

P. Gregory Warden,
President of Franklin University Switzerland

Chief Academic Officer

Sara Steinert Borella,
Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs

Chief Financial Officer

Tomaso Rizzi
Vice President of Finance and Administration

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Kim Hildebrant
President of Anchorage Group, PLC

MIDDLE STATES REPRESENTATIVES

Alan Mathios
Role: Chair
Title: Professor
Institution: Cornell University

Hasanna Tyus
Role: Team Member
Title: Registrar & Institutional Research Officer
Institution: Institute of World Politics

Peter Woolley

Role: Team Member

Title: Founding Director, School of Public and Global Affairs

Institution: Fairleigh Dickinson University

Iman Megahed

Role: Team Member

Title: AVP for Digital Transformation and Chief Knowledge and Strategy Officer

Institution: American University in Cairo, The

Jennifer Jensen

Role: Team Member

Title: Deputy Provost for Academic Affairs and Professor of Political Science

Institution: Lehigh University

Sandra Crenshaw

Role: Team Member

Title: Associate Provost

Institution: Arcadia University

Charles Mann

Role: Team Member

Title: Vice President for Finance and Treasurer

Institution: Hood College

Section B: Institutional Context

Overview

Franklin University Switzerland, which just celebrated its 50th anniversary, provides students with a cross-cultural, multinational learning and living environment. The goal is to prepare students to become passionate and responsible leaders in a changing world. Approximately two dozen permanent faculty, two dozen adjunct faculty and 55 staff support approximately 300 students. This is a tight knit community as teamwork and common purpose helps the faculty and administrative team cover the breadth of services necessary in today's complex university setting. FUS educates its undergraduate students through a core curriculum that includes a first-year experience, language, quantitative reasoning, writing, global responsibility, and an Academic Travel program. Students choose among 17 majors including Art, Communication, Economics/Finance, Humanities, Management, Math/Science, or Political Science/Psychology.

Franklin University Switzerland's signature undergraduate program, the Academic Travel Program, is unique--a claim that many institutions make about their programs, but one which often translates to merely "uncommon." In this case, the distinction is well deserved. The Academic Travel Program integrates two weeks of required academic travel into each semester, allowing FUS undergraduates to learn in several continents during their time as students. The Academic Travel Program is very well integrated with FUS curriculum goals and the institution's broader mission. Students are required to take 4 semesters of academic travel and have the opportunities to take academic travel courses every semester should they choose.

FUS is dually accredited, meeting both the accreditation requirements of the Swiss University Conference as well as MSCHE. It has in recent years developed master's programs that allow it to be recognized as a university by the Swiss accrediting agency. The number of graduate students is quite limited but is likely to grow over time. The undergraduate population is comprised of both degree-seeking students and non-degree students who spend a semester or year at FUS through a pre-matriculation or study abroad program. Our meetings with the students throughout the visit confirmed that students develop nurturing relationships with faculty and staff and have a positive view of their educational journeys – be them for the four years or just a semester.

The geographic and cultural diversity of the student body is impressive. The 300 or so students represent 61 nationalities, and as a consequence FUS pays careful attention to creating an inclusive and supportive environment for the student body. In 2019, approximately one-half of the undergraduate students were American and approximately 30 percent were European. The new task force focused on equity and inclusion is an important new initiative that aims to bring this diverse community together in an even tighter bond with each other.

Stability of Leadership and Self-Study Focus

The administration has been stable with experienced professionals in place to help guide the strategic planning and decision making. President Greg Warden has been in his position for almost a decade and the President's cabinet continues to evolve and has a number of members with long term experience at FUS. From our discussion with members of the Board of Trustees (a significant

number of them were present during the meeting) it appears that they support the President and the strategic plans evolving from the leadership of the university. The President and the Board of Trustees have openly discussed transitions in leadership and President Warden has generously agreed to continue, at minimum, for an additional year after his current contract expires at the end of this academic year.

The approach taken by the team for self-study was to focus on three primary areas that are essential for the future success of the university. The first priority is to enhance integrated, interdisciplinary, and international academic and co-curricular programs. The second priority is to implement strategic enrollment management, and the third priority is to foster institutional sustainability and innovation. These priorities clearly touch on all of the seven standards of excellence and the requirements of affiliation that Middle States considers in its accreditation actions.

A Culture of Assessment

In addition to identifying the strengths of FUS, the self-study is clear and transparent about the challenges. A culture of assessment has been established and assessment is used to inform and improve programs. Franklin University Switzerland is in an enviable position. With a mission that distinguishes itself from many other institutions of higher education, it has been able to develop institution-wide learning outcomes that both fit the institution and describe carefully the benefits of a FUS education. FUS has been able to craft institution-wide learning outcomes that are very specific to this institution. Franklin has clearly articulated educational goals at the institution and degree/program levels, which are interrelated with one another, with relevant educational experiences, and with the institution's mission. Franklin has established processes for the review of courses, majors, and capstones, as well as institution-specific programs such as Academic Travel.

Assessment of all programs, including academic programs, student support programs and administrative units is proving ever more important as the fixed costs necessary to provide the breadth of services to students are spread over a relatively small student body. Assessing how best to allocate resources to support the curricula, the travel program, faculty research, the staff, and the co-curriculum programs is essential for an institution of this size. The self-study demonstrates that assessment is taken seriously with a 'closing the loop' perspective. Examples include the assessment of the writing program and the creation of the Academic Literacies Program, optimal Math sequencing, and a host of other assessment practices focused on specific learning goals, co-curricular program elements, and a number of actions to assess and respond to the financial stressors facing FUS.

At the same time, there is still room for Franklin to strengthen its assessment efforts and increase the focus on direct measures of learning. There are some general education learning goals that need to be assessed relative to the course requirements. For example, although there is student learning outcome regarding scientific reasoning--which FUS frames as "engaging knowledgeably in debates about the natural world (scientific literacy)"--there is no clear requirement that students take a course in science. However, through other key elements of the curriculum we are confident that FUS is meeting the scientific reasoning component of the general education criterion. One way FUS could better document assessment in this area is by analyzing the courses taken by students to be sure that the scientific literacy is covered through student selection of courses. In

addition, the small class sizes, and the unique travel experiences that students have lend themselves to qualitative methods of assessment and deep reflection on how courses satisfy particular learning goals. Asking students to systematically reflect on how course work directly connects to learning goals may help reveal how well they are being incorporated into the courses, majors and programs of FUS. Overall, Franklin University Switzerland is a small institution that puts the student at the center of its work; this is where deep, qualitative assessment can be exceptionally helpful in both documenting the university's strengths and also shining a light to where improvements can be made.

Academic Programs and Academic Travel

FUS has a strong linkage between its academic curricula, its mission and strategic plan, linkages on which the institution has apparently worked hard on in the past several years. The strategic priority and distinction of an international, interdisciplinary, and innovative academic experience is reflected in the catalog, coursework and faculty activities. The core curriculum which includes travel, writing, a first-year seminar, an array of courses on "global responsibility," quantitative methods, and a heavy emphasis on modern languages all combine to reflect a seriousness of academic vision and purpose. The faculty who deliver this curriculum are sufficient in number, are passionate about educating students, and well-credentialed.

The Academic Travel Program appears to be a key cornerstone of the undergraduate curriculum. Following advice after the review of FUS's 2010 Self-Study, the University undertook to more deeply integrate the Travel Course into the curriculum by providing periods of credit-bearing formal preparation before and reflection after the travel period. Students are now required to complete at least four such courses (with some reduced requirement for transfer students). Having students have meaningful travel experience that is integrated into the curriculum every semester is quite the undertaking. An even-more complete assessment of how this influences student learning and student satisfaction could be undertaken. In our interviews with the faculty and students there were compelling stories of how well the academic travel program supports learning. Faculty made clear during interviews that the Academic Travel component of the curriculum is rigorous; several indicated that Franklin could do more to present the program as a serious academic component of a Franklin degree, in addition to a travel opportunity. The review team agrees. More formally demonstrating the value of this program could not only lead to even further refinements of the program but then could be featured to greater effectiveness in marketing and enrollment strategies. Moreover, given the strategic emphasis on development and philanthropy, the unique nature of this program is ripe for perhaps even naming the program with a significant endowment gift. The large cost of this program both in terms of administrative time, faculty time, and direct expenditures supporting student travel could be translated into a gift proposal that would support the faculty, the students, and the staff with significant budget relief. Finally, in many universities there is a challenge to provide equal access to travel for students from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Another strength of the travel program is that the costs of travel are covered by the program providing equitable access to all students. This should be highlighted and featured in promotion material.

Enrollment Challenges, Financial Stability, and Institutional Planning

The self-study does not shy away from presenting the challenges facing FUS. Like many small liberal-arts colleges and universities, maintaining optimal enrollment is, and has been, a significant challenge for FUS. For example, the self-study indicates that for FY 2019-2020 there were 289.7 FTE students compared with 300 in FY 2018-2019 and compared with 325 in FY 2017-2018, representing well over a 10% decline over a few years. This decline, combined with increasing financial aid per student, has created reductions in revenue. As noted in the self-study and supported by the evidence inventory, the FUS ratio on the Financial Responsibility Test fell below 1.0 for FY 2018-2019, although the score increased to 1.9 for 2019-2020, per the institution's own calculations. The self-study and our extensive interviews during the visit indicate that a number of initiatives are underway designed to address the revenue decreases and the drop in enrollment. These include diversification of revenue streams, a focus on advancement, and specific strategies to increase enrollment.

Undergraduate Enrollment

FUS had a stated goal of enrolling five hundred undergraduate students. We are glad that FUS recognizes that this is not a realistic near-term goal, certainly in the face of generally declining undergraduate enrollments and in a difficult global climate. The institution has put considerable thought into developing both its majors (notably psychology) and its minors, and this work has had enrollment benefits; at the same time, Franklin University Switzerland is a small institution, and its unique mission will not be strengthened if it reduces quality in exchange for more offerings. FUS would benefit from careful review of retention and persistence data; while attracting new students is one way to grow enrollment, another way is to retain current students, and FUS recognizes that it can improve in this area. A retention committee, with a small commitment of resources for its work, could help the university focus and coordinate its efforts in this area.

FUS has a stated near-term goal to enroll 350 students, and the self-study outlines a number of actions that make this goal potentially achievable. The development of new partnerships with the College of Charleston in South Carolina, Emerson College in Boston, and Chapman University in California can help contribute to new enrollments as does the new study abroad program in Zurich. Longer term existing relationships with institutions like USC and others contribute to enrollments of non-degree seeking students and are likely to revive after COVID.

We see opportunities for marketing and communications to play a more supportive role in achieving the goals of the admissions team. Throughout the visit the team was impressed with the quality of the student experience and believe that a number of strategies can be employed to convey this to prospective students. The Academic Travel program properly holds a prime spot in many communications and there are creative ways to further enhance this message. Messaging about the very strong bonds between faculty, staff, and students can be told from each group's perspective perhaps in videos and narrative. There are formal communications that might appeal to the parents of prospective students including messages about safety, the high quality of health care and insurance coverage (including mental health services available in the community) and the fact that staff get to know students at the individual level. FUS has recently earned several top rankings around ethical value (9th in the world) and a very high ranking in industrial application

and impact. While there are press releases about this there are ways to better integrate these rankings into the admission website. Communicating about programs that so effectively combine ethics and business touches on some of the most important topics of the day and deserve to be highlighted.

Overall, the team found that enhanced marketing and communications goes across many standards and we have tried to include some collegial advice about this in different sections of the report. However, given the importance of admissions (for both the undergraduate and graduate programs), special attention should be paid to the collaboration between the communications staff and the admissions staff.

Graduate Enrollment

The number of graduate students remains low. Continued strategic planning around graduate enrollment is important. The self-study makes clear that continuing and developing graduate programs is an important and necessary step from the Swiss accreditation perspective. Since the writing of the self-study there have been a number of positive developments. The doubling of the size of the MSIM program in this last year is encouraging, as is the beginning of a new program in political economy and the new successful program with South Korea. While these programs are not designed to become large, growth from the current levels can help bring a more diverse set of enrollments and raise additional revenue. This is especially important during the period where the one-semester visiting students are likely to be lower because of COVID. Continuing with these strategies to increase the size of these programs is essential and may include examining how the mission statement and focus of FUS is perceived by potential graduate students. Another benefit of these graduate programs are the connections that are developed with influential international organizations. These can be leveraged to make FUS more attractive as a study abroad program. As just one example, consider how many undergraduate students might want to spend a semester abroad focused on climate change with the opportunity to also spend two weeks in Geneva working directly with graduate students and faculty on these issues.

For both graduate and undergraduates, enrollment trends must be continuously monitored and carefully scrutinized. New global risks pose challenges for universities that depend on international travel for students to enroll. Unpredictable safety issues and risks such as the recent coronavirus indicates the need for significant reserves as there may be additional short-term dips in enrollments beyond the general trends occurring in the educational marketplace.

Managing Personnel Resources

The employees of FUS are deeply committed to the institution. Even in a period of global crises and economic hardship that has led to workload burdens the faculty and staff remained supportive of the institution. During the visit, the team interacted with faculty, staff, and administrators who are highly skilled have done much for the institution. The talent at FUS was obvious to the review team.

It is the rare institution of high education that easily accepts a need to right-size. Franklin has had decreases in its undergraduate enrollment for several years. Several major support offices are

staffed with part-time personnel, being stretched to accommodate the demand on their services. While adjunct faculty hiring has been affected by enrollment declines, the overall student to faculty ratio has been declining due to fewer students. It appears to the team that there are hard questions facing FUS, and the institution would benefit from carefully reviewing the need for replacing faculty members in the same areas as they depart the institution. Enrollment growth would help protect all personnel from potential cuts. Should this enrollment growth not occur, Franklin will need to take a hard look at its staffing levels for both faculty and staff

The New Building

Interviews with FUS leadership team members made clear that the FUS plan to invest in a new building is a sensible financial and strategic choice. This will allow FUS to reduce its leased (and more expensive) housing in Lugano. The investment in facilities allows for even further enrollment growth perhaps even up to an enrollment of 500 students. Moving from the current enrollment to this ambitious potential enrollment will depend on a wide variety of factors and could well be the focus of a future self-study. In the meantime, how best to utilize the excess capacity to further the student experience will present an interesting opportunity and allow for experimentation on the intersection of space and student well-being. The new multi-use building, set to be completed in fall 2021, presents a great opportunity to further enhance the student experience. Not only will a new building provide needed student amenities such as a designated student lounge (a need currently served by the cafeteria and other spaces), it will include residential housing for undergraduate students. Due to significant donor support, extremely favorable finance terms, and the fact that opening up new apartments for students will allow FUS to repurpose funds spent on leased residence halls, there is very little risk associated with this large capital expenditure. There is considerable excitement about this project by many.

Philanthropy

The unrestricted donation of \$2,000,000 for FY 2019-2020 and the renewal of that donation for the FY 2020-2021 has helped provide important short-term relief, allowing for a balanced budget in the most recent fiscal year and has provided the time for longer term strategic planning to take hold. It has helped the aforementioned financial vulnerability score and brought some stability to the current budget. The \$2,500,000 endowed professorship is a wonderful accomplishment. Near the end of the self-study there is a statement that the advancement goal is \$8,000,000. It would be helpful to more clearly tie specific goals with particular academic initiatives. While funds are often fungible, some are not, and so tying specific targets in advancement directly to the goals in the strategic plan will be helpful. Articulating targets for support of financial aid, for the Academic Travel Program, for faculty research etc. can bring a compelling narrative to proposals. Additionally, specifying a target for an annual fund to support operations would be helpful.

At the same time, there is recognition that while increasing philanthropy is part of long-term strategic planning, solely relying on these unusually large unrestricted gifts to balance budgets is not a long-term strategy. In fact, FUS is engaged in a number of strategic planning initiatives aimed directly at the financial threats to the university. While it is too early to assess the success of these the self-study articulates a recognition of how important this planning is for the future success of FUS. It was also encouraging to see that despite the COVID pandemic, and despite complex issues

with international travel, enrollments held relatively stable during this challenging time. This speaks to strategic actions taken by the team in response to the pandemic and the thoughtful strategic adaptations to the new normal.

Section C: Standards for Accreditation

Standard I: Mission and Goals

The institution's mission defines its purpose within the context of higher education, the students it serves, and what it intends to accomplish. The institution's stated goals are clearly linked to its mission and specify how the institution fulfills its mission.

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

Based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with campus constituencies to validate and verify compliance during the on-site evaluation visit, the team draws the following conclusions relative to this standard.

Summary of Findings

The mission statement for FUS is clear, relates directly to and guides the strengths of the University and is widely distributed in physical and digital formats, even appearing on the walls of the buildings. The revision of the mission statement in 2013 followed the inauguration of President Warden in 2012. The revision evolved from an inclusive broad strategic planning process which focused the institution on what FUS strives to do best. Key stakeholders were involved in its development and served as a very useful way for a new President, along with the community, to engage together on the future of FUS. Encouraging further statements by each stakeholder group: students, staff, professors, trustees, and alumni was a very clever way of ensuring stakeholder involvement in the process. Both the mission statement and the stakeholder statements were approved by the individual constituents, the Cabinet, the President and the Board of Trustees. Few institutions have used stakeholder statements of support for a vision in this manner. FUS strives to have the mission understood by the broader communities of Lugano and Ticino. Given the success of developing vision statements by other stakeholders perhaps FUS should strive to add a community vision statement of the list. This is more complex than direct stakeholder statements but could be a productive way to increase understanding as the community would articulate what it expects and what value it derives from FUS.

Given the relationship between the mission statement revision and the strategic planning process in 2013 it is somewhat surprising to see that the planning for the 2018-2023 did not include discussions or lead to further refinements of the mission statement. Having said that, one of the FUS stated next steps is to now revisit the mission statement and perhaps include sustainability efforts with respect to the environment incorporated more directly in the mission. Ideally, this would have occurred when developing the strategic plan but there are some advantages to doing this now as the university gets further into the implementation stage of the plan rather than waiting until the development of the next plan in 2023.

It is easy to see the relationship between the mission/stakeholder vision statements and the goals outlined in the strategic plans, both the 2013-2019 strategic plan and the new 2018-2023 strategic plan. The goal of supporting academic excellence by enhancing integrated, interdisciplinary, and international academic and co-curricular programs directly flows from the mission and vision statements. The second goal is focused on enrollment management for the short and mid-term so to secure the necessary resources and meet academic and community needs. The third goal is very broad and include nine sub plans designed to promote innovation in curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programs so to meet the future needs of students. All nine of these are clear and related to mission and vision are appropriate for higher education, and realistically articulated.

The self-study makes clear that advancement/philanthropy will be playing an increasing role in helping FUS align mission and goals. There have been clear successes, especially with the recent large gifts for unrestricted funds and the \$2.5 million gift for an endowed chair. It would be helpful to more clearly tie specific fundraising goals with particular academic initiatives. While funds are often fungible some are not and so tying specific targets in advancement directly to the goals of the strategic plan will be helpful. As the development office continues to mature articulating fundraising goals for financial aid, the Academic Travel Program, faculty research etc. can bring a compelling narrative to proposals.

The University wide learning goals are also directly related to the mission and vision statements. While assessment of specific student learning outcomes is addressed in other sections of the team report is it clear that at a broad level these goals for learning are supported by administrative, educational, and student support programs. Table 1.1 in this section demonstrates that alumni have different levels of agreement with how well they acquired different skills with lowest scores on STEM type skills. This does not necessarily imply, however, that there are not administrative, educational and student support programs that serve these learning outcome goals (which is the criteria for standard 1). Instead it may speak to the nature of the core curriculum and how well majors combine with the core to provide coverage of these skills. FUS indicates that it will use this knowledge to improve scientific literacy and math competencies in future curriculum development.

STANDARD I EVALUATION

Collegial Advice

- *FUS might add a community statement to the set of vision statements by stakeholders. This could provide a framework for creating a better understanding of how FUS supports the communities of Lugano and Ticino, including opportunities for student engaged learning. It is also an opportunity to have a clearer understanding of what the community expects of FUS.*
- *Breaking the student community statement into an undergraduate statement and a graduate student statement might be helpful so to bring equal attention to both populations.*

- *FUS should continue to tie mission and vision statement refinement directly to strategic planning. This was done for the 2013-2019 strategic plan and appeared to lead to productive discussions of the mission and the development of the vision statements. As new programs and plans emerge from the new strategic plan further refinement may be necessary.*
- *FUS should closely align its advancement efforts with specific aspects of the mission and goals to create compelling narratives that can be used in proposal development.*
- *FUS should be sure that its mission and vision statements are perceived to be as relevant to graduate students as they are undergraduates.*

Team Recommendation(s)

- There are no Team Recommendations for this standard

Requirements

- There are no Requirements for this Standard

Recognition of Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices

- *The mission statement for FUS is clear, relates directly to and guides the strengths of the University and is widely distributed in physical and digital formats, even appearing on the walls of the buildings.*
- *Vision statements by each stakeholder group: students, staff, professors, trustees, and alumni is a very clever way of ensuring stakeholder involvement in the process.*
- *It is easy to see the relationship between the mission/stakeholder vision statements and the goals outlined in the strategic plans, both the 2013-2019 strategic plan and the new 2018-2023 strategic plan. The broad goal of supporting academic excellence by enhancing integrated, interdisciplinary, and international academic and co-curricular programs directly flows from the mission and vision statements. Nicely done.*
- *The wide stakeholder involvement in the development of the 2013-2019 strategic plan served as a very useful way for a new President, along with the community, to engage together on a vision for the future of FUS.*

Requirements of Affiliation #7 and #10

In the team's judgement the institution appears to meet Requirements of Affiliation #7 and #10

Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

Based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with campus constituencies to validate and verify compliance during the on-site evaluation visit, the team draws the following conclusions relative to this standard.

Summary of Findings

FUS genuinely pursues high standards for ethics and integrity across most of its functions. It also takes great strides in demonstrating and communicating its commitment to ethics as an integral part of their institutions culture. Furthermore, it is a member of several professional associations such as Council of International Schools (CIS); International Association of College Admissions Counseling (IACAC); and the National Association of Admissions Counseling (NACAC) all of which requires that it abide by ethical codes for these organizations, including NACAC's code of Ethics and Professional Practices (CEPP).

Commitment to academic freedom, freedom of expression, and intellectual property rights both for faculty and students is clearly indicated in their nurturing of "critical thinkers who are culturally literate, ethically aware and intellectually courageous". For faculty, the Faculty Manual positions academic freedom, and freedom of expression as basic faculty rights and demonstrates this by subscription to two key statements on Academic Freedom of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). As a true testimony, promotion and/or contract renewal are clearly attributed to other factors. For students, tolerance for freedom of expression is assessed using Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) with results that are less than the average for US 4-year private universities.

Strongly related, is FUS's emphasis on intellectual property rights as indicated through a well-articulated statement of Franklin's stance on cheating and plagiarism. In addition, they provide the needed tools to support efforts in this regard by availing legal access for library resources, workshops and courses by the Writing and Learning Center (WLC) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) on plagiarism and proper citation.

FUS is also remarkably earnest in its efforts to foster a climate of respect among FUS community members. This is emphasized at all levels from their mission statement, values, institutional priorities, code of student conduct and university-wide student learning outcomes.

The mission statement lays direct emphasis on “A Franklin education produces critical thinkers who are culturally literate, ethically aware and intellectually courageous. We prepare students to become **responsible**, compassionate, and collaborative leaders in an increasingly complex and interconnected world”. Their Institutional Priorities, identified the goal of “fostering a campus community that values inclusiveness, respect, trust and wellness”. This focus on maintaining a culture of respect is cascaded to their 2018-23 strategic plan where they aim to create an environment in which all students, faculty, and staff feel they belong. University-wide student learning outcomes, also include Social Responsibility which is pursued through 18 required credits in their core curriculum linked to “Global Responsibility”. The Student Code of Conduct emphasizes the respect for self and other; respect for diversity of all kinds; respect for local laws and customs; respect for all university rules and policies.

Furthermore, they vividly demonstrate a culture of respect at different points in the student journey, such as the student orientation, presidential dialogues, and co-curricular activities such as Arab Night, Latin Night and Queer Prom.

Critical to any institution is how grievances are addressed. The self-study presents a number of cases where FUS handled grievances directly at the Cabinet level, with a focus on the assessment of their procedures, policies, resources as well as visibility with the keen intent to improve and close the loop. The last revision of grievance policies ended in the spring of 2019 and was conducted for all constituents, students, staff and faculty, out of fairness and consistency.

FUS carefully addresses conflict of interest through clear definitions of terms, contexts, policy and procedures. The Staff Handbook and the Faculty Manual contain several statements relating to conflicts of interest in different contexts. These have been compiled together in the document Summary of Conflict of Interest Statements. Conflicts of interest in relation to the role and decisions of the Board of Trustees are also addressed effectively.

Moving to fairness in employment practices, FUS has policies concerning employee hiring, evaluation and dismissals and provides clear definitions of terms, contexts and procedures to ensure ethical and impartial practices in human resource management. These policies are covered transparently in the Staff Handbook. For faculty, the Faculty Manual indicates that non-renewal may only be applied in cases of poor performance, economic distress of the institution or fundamental curricular restructuring with a requirement to officially inform terminated employment of the reasons behind the decision. Furthermore, both the Faculty and Student Handbooks have similar statements relating to equal opportunity and employment practices. FUS regularly assess and review employment policies. There have been updates and changes to the faculty handbooks over time and it is important that faculty are informed of these changes and any processes related to employment practices.

FUS admissions and financial aid selection and evaluation processes, procedures, requirements and options are objective and transparent. Admissions decisions are based on four key criteria: academic potential, interpersonal and leadership skills, teamwork skills and multicultural awareness. They promote affordability and accessibility by availing scholarships and financial aid

for all students, regardless of their nationality, as evidenced by their distributed to 86% of their incoming class per semester. Merit-awards are automatically considered during the application process as well based on high school GPA.

Focusing on communication, FUS strives to ensure accurate communications to the community and the public. This applies to all forms or publications, electronic media, PR material, and policies. Responsibility for the quality of information disseminated is distributed among the source offices. Admissions, scholarship and financial aid information, is also communicated effectively through a range of written and electronic communications including the website, webinars, the Admission Ambassador Program, Higher Education publications and on-line education portals, industry guides for college students, viewbooks, and institutional brochures.

STANDARD II EVALUATION

- **Collegial Advice**

- ***Establishing an Information and Data Clearing House as part of an Institutional Research function:*** FUS information quality is diversified based on the source office. While this is practical, it usually leads to differences in data resulting from different definitions and extraction/reporting mechanisms which can lead to confusion. Creating and institutionalizing a quality assurance entity or function can be useful in this regard. This is usually the responsibility of an Institutional Research office.
- ***Adopting Direct Assessment Mechanisms:*** FUS depend extensively on indirect assessment methods, mainly through soliciting input from constituents through surveys. While this is imperative, mixing this with other forms of direct assessment could have a positive impact as it would be more factual than perception-based. This very well may be qualitative in nature given the small class sizes and the overall size of the student body.
- ***Investing in Human Resources:*** FUS currently embeds human resource management into the position of the Vice President for Finance and Administration. This can create a perception of conflict between financial interests and staff and faculty human resource development. It is understood that human resource professionals that match well with a shared governance university structure may be difficult to recruit in Lugano and comes with budget implications - but we urge FUS to continue to attempt to fill this position especially if FUS grows as hoped.
- ***Enhancing Inclusiveness and Equity:*** FUS has a unique international student population which comes with its opportunities and challenges. Among these challenges is the need for continuous and directed effort towards enhancing the culture of inclusiveness and equity particularly among students. This has already been identified by FUS students and faculty alike as a key concern that they collectively aim at addressing.

- **Team Recommendation(s)**

There are no Team Recommendations for this standard

- **Requirement(s)**

There are no Team Requirements for this standard

- **Recognition of Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices**

- *Their approach to embedding values of ethics, respect and social responsibility in all aspects including academics, student life and across all constituents of students, faculty, and staff is highly commendable. They not only cover it in their formal channels and vehicles such as their mission, values, priorities, university learning objectives but they also pursue and demonstrate it passionate and effectively.*

Requirement of Affiliation #8 and #11

In the team's judgement the institution appears to meet Requirements of Affiliation #8 and #11, in part.

Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence of all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

Based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with campus constituencies to validate and verify compliance during the on-site evaluation visit, the team draws the following conclusions relative to this standard.

Summary of Findings

FUS has strong linkages among its academic curricula, its mission and strategic plan, linkages on which the institution has apparently worked hard in the past several years.

The strategic priority and distinction of an international, transdisciplinary, and innovative academic experience is reflected in the catalog, coursework and faculty activities. The signature Academic Travel Program, in particular, reflects FUS's strategic niche and purpose. This is supplemented and reinforced in the co-curricular *Tutte le strade* events. The core curriculum which includes travel, writing, a first-year seminar, an array of courses on "global responsibility," quantitative methods, and a heavy emphasis on modern languages all combine to reflect a seriousness of academic vision and purpose. Those who deliver this curriculum are sufficient in number and well-credentialed. They are regularly reviewed and have resources for professional development and research. In fact, budget support for faculty development increased significantly despite challenges and demands for budget elsewhere.

Faculty competence in scholarship is reflected in the steady number of conference presentations and publications. In addition, some faculty are winning grants. We do note that the budget for faculty development has been recently reduced because of financial pressures from the Covid environment, but we note equally that in-person travel to international conferences has largely stopped and the cost of virtual conferences is a fraction of that. Thus, the reduced budget should, in the near term, make little impact on the level of faculty participation in conferences.

Following advice after the review of FUS's 2010 Self-Study, the University undertook to more deeply integrate the Travel Course into the curriculum by providing periods of credit-bearing formal preparation before and reflection after the travel period. Students are now required to complete at least four such courses, making the curriculum stand out.

In line with the Strategic Plan, FUS has initiated reviews of proposals for new majors and minors to ensure adequate markets and resource allocation. Similarly, after apparent student dissatisfaction with the MSIM, faculty made changes to course offerings and added internship opportunities. We look forward to seeing the (small) enrollments increase as a result.

The faculty Curriculum Committee meets regularly and frequently to supervise revisions in programming, recently making changes to the International Management major, the Visual and Communication Arts major, reviewing proposed changes in the Fashion Studies major and revising the Psychology major. In doing so, they seem to have made important decisions to drop a partnership (that supported the VCA major) and add one to support the psychology curriculum. In addition, a number of new minors have been approved: Media Production and Publishing, Postcolonial Studies, and Film Studies. All of these appear to have been carefully thought through, using an inventory of available resources and recognizing that new investment must be minimal without clear indications of return.

STANDARD III EVALUATION

- **Collegial Advice**

- *A focused effort on demonstrating the learning that occurs in the Academic Travel Program could yield great insights into how to continuously improve the program and might also be a vehicle for demonstrating to prospective students the value of the educational experience offered by FUS. Having a yearly poster session where all students share their learning outcomes in a structured set of presentations could be a compelling way for students to reflect and for faculty to engage in direct evaluation and assessment. It might provide students insights into which future travel experiences might fit their particular interests and goals. Filming this could provide important input content for enrollment and marketing and help fundraising goals. Requiring students to integrate SLO's into the presentation would bring visibility and understanding to such goals and help guide their future academic pursuits.*
- *The community of faculty, students, alumni and donors might benefit by a systematic tracking of the faculty research directly connected to the Academic Travel Program. Documenting this research integration would be helpful and insightful.*
- *Similarly, the community and curriculum might benefit by systematic, recorded feedback from admissions representatives (both faculty and staff) in direct interactions with prospective students and parents about both what is academically attractive and what they perceive to be academically lacking as they consider the University.*
- *If the faculty truly believe in the value of the Academic Travel Program, then perhaps this should be a primary learning experience presented to prospective students in a variety of ways.*

- **Team Recommendation(s)**

There are no team recommendations for this standard

- **Requirement(s)**

There are no team requirements for this standard

- **Recognition of Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices**

- *FUS can be pleased by the strong linkages forged in recent years among curricula, mission and strategic plan. In addition, an emphasis and investment in faculty development shows clear returns and promises more. FUS faculty should be commended for the purposeful increase in publication and grant-writing.*

Requirement of Affiliation #8, #9, #10, and #15

With this chapter, in the team's judgement the institution appears to meet Requirements of Affiliation 8 (in part), 9 (in part), and 10 (in part). Along with the other relevant sections of our team report, in the team's judgement the institution meets the Requirements of Affiliation 8,9,10, and 15.

Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

Based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with campus constituencies to validate and verify compliance during the on-site evaluation visit, the team draws the following conclusions relative to this standard.

Summary of Findings

1. The institution recruits students who have the capabilities to succeed at the institution. The institutional website clearly states admission policies for prospective students seeking admission to both undergraduate and graduate degree programs. A broad range of academic and co-curriculum structures are in place to support student success and retention.
 - a. Information concerning policies and procedures related to financial aid, scholarships, loans, repayment, and refunds is widely available through the institution's website and in the online Academic Catalog. The website also provides detailed instructions for applying for need-based financial aid via the FAFSA and non-US Financial Application.
 - b. Students that require additional support are identified during the admissions process. Once identified, students engage in personal one-on-one meetings with support personnel. Academic support is provided through the Library and Writing and Learning Center programming (Academic Literacies Program and tutoring in various areas).
 - c. The institution offers a four-day orientation program for first-time students and their parents. During this time, students begin the visa process, are assessed in math and English, register for classes, and are introduced to the campus and surrounding community. Under the purview of the Office of Student Life, the institution has a First Year Experience program, health services, and other co-curricular support services that guide students throughout their education experience.

- d. Professors that teach the First Year Seminar serve as advisors to incoming students until they declare their academic major. Academic advising and planning for all students is also conducted by the two-person staffed Registrar's Office. Academic Year 2019 and 2020 MSCHE Annual Institutional Updates indicate the institution's retention rate for full-time undergraduate students is 66.70% and 65.50% respectively. The six-year graduation rate for first time, full time freshman entering in 2013 is 64%. While lower than the six-year graduation rates at their aspirational institutions, the University's graduation rates have increased steadily over the years. FUS acknowledges the need to strengthen its retention efforts, and is beginning to take steps to formalize their retention assessment practices. Since 2010, the institution has made career service improvements. The 2018-2023 Strategic Plan includes initiatives to create a comprehensive Career Center that will increase support for student development and career preparation. Post-completion placement and career services has recently moved from Student Life and Engagement and is now under the direction of the Office of Advancement. While this transition was a strategic initiative to encourage alumni networking and giving, services that prepare students for life after graduation (career readiness) are still available.
2. Adherence to policies and procedures for the evaluation and acceptance of transfer credits are the responsibility of the Registrar. Three-credit, Academic Travel courses are required of all FUS students to ensure they receive an experiential learning component.
3. The institution has policies and procedures in place to ensure the safe and secure maintenance and appropriate release of student information. Policies and procedures for the release of student information and records are in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
4. The institution's student life and extracurricular activities are regulated by the same academic, fiscal, and administrative principles and procedures that govern all its other programs.
5. N/A
6. Student support services are assessed periodically and are used to enhance the services provided. Assessments are documented through department and program assessment plans and reports and student satisfaction and engagement surveys.

STANDARD IV EVALUATION

- **Collegial Advice**

- *The institution has a thorough process for transitioning and supporting first-year students. The Team suggests that the University conduct an institution-wide assessment of academic and career advising processes and support programs, and level of student satisfaction beyond the freshman year. Utilize data to enhance advising and support services for*

sophomores and juniors. Further efforts to support sophomores might improve retention rates which would help with enrollment.

- *Develop a campus-wide retention plan to identify potential “stop outs” early, collect data to get a clear understanding of why students are leaving, and develop interventions to retain students through graduation.*
- *Given the increased investments in development and career services there may be innovative ways to combine these investments to support students throughout their time at FUS. One can imagine a set of alumni programs designed for each particular group of students. For Freshman one can imagine alumni and senior students connecting and providing guidance on what they wish they knew when beginning their education at FUS. For sophomores one can imagine alumni providing broad guidance on how they found the careers that matched their interests. An event for juniors could be focused on networking skills, how to act professionally, and how to set oneself up for success. A senior event could be focused on celebration with a focus on having seniors understand the value and importance of being alumni and supporting their alma mater. This type of support for students might not be that resource intensive given the focus FUS has on enhancing career services and philanthropy. Moreover, donors love to meet students and see first hand the impact FUS is having on their lives. The more opportunities prospective donors have to interact with students the more engaged they are likely to be in fundraising appeals.*

- **Team Recommendation(s)**

There are no recommendations for this standard

- **Requirement(s)**

There are no requirements for this standard

- **Recognition of Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices**

None Noted

Requirement of Affiliation #8, #9 and #11

In the team’s judgement the institution appears to meet Requirement of Affiliation 8, 9, and 11 (in part

Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their programs of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education.

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

Based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with campus constituencies to validate and verify compliance during the on-site evaluation visit, the team draws the following conclusions relative to this standard.

Summary of Findings

Franklin University Switzerland is in an enviable position. With a mission that distinguishes itself from many other institutions of higher education, it has been able to develop institution-wide learning outcomes that both fit the institution and describe carefully the benefits of a FUS education. Too often institution-wide learning objectives are so uniform across campuses that they can seem quite generic. Because of the specific mission of this institution, with a relatively small number of academic programs and particular emphasis on the humanities and social sciences, FUS has been able to craft institution-wide learning outcomes that are especially well suited to this institution. Franklin has demonstrated clearly stated educational goals at the institution and degree/program levels, that interrelate with one another, with relevant educational experiences, and with the institution's mission.

Ten years ago, Franklin was one of many, many institutions to be charged with a progress report to demonstrate its assessment of student learning. Franklin has done much to strengthen its assessment of student learning since its 2010 review. Over the past decade, Franklin has implemented organized and systematic assessments, conducted by faculty university leaders, that evaluate the extent of student achievement of institutional as well as degree and program goals.

An institution working to develop a culture of assessment often follows a typical progression. Efforts in assessment begin with the articulation of general goals of a curriculum should do; over time, these evolve to become more clearly defined learning objectives. Then a university, and its programs, move toward assessment, often utilizing indirect assessment tools, and then developing direct measures of assessment. Assessment is at first likely to take place in fits and starts; over time, as a culture of assessment takes hold, assessment efforts become more regularized both in systematic approach and standardized intervals.

Within such a progression, Franklin appears to have made significant progress toward establishing a culture of assessment. In addition to the institution-wide learning outcomes, there

are learning outcomes for specific programs and for general education requirements. Franklin has established processes for the review of courses, majors, and capstones, as well as institution-specific programs such as Academic Travel. At the same time, there is still room for Franklin to strengthen its assessment efforts. Indirect assessment measures play a significant role in program assessment; this is not in itself a bad thing, but Franklin could look to strengthen its use of direct assessment measures. In some cases direct assessment templates are used, Franklin could establish a continual review of these templates and other assessment tools, to develop more sophisticated measures of assessment. One benefit of direct assessment measures is that they might well yield the sort of information that would help market FUS to prospective students. In an era when prospective students and their families seek to understand the concrete benefits that an institution offers, student learning assessment offers one way to demonstrate the advantages of a Franklin education.

In many ways, Franklin's small size puts it in an enviable position with regard to its opportunities for assessment. All too often, institutions move to adopt quantitative assessment scales and strict templates because more nuanced assessment tools are infeasible with a large student population. FUS should be wary of the opportunities it might lose if it applies stricter templates and numerical standards than it might need. With a small number of students in any given major within a graduating class, Franklin is in a position to articulate clear standards and then develop qualitative assessment tools to determine whether students are meeting these outcomes.

Franklin has provided evidence of assessment in some areas of general education, such as written communication and quantitative reasoning. Franklin's materials as a whole have provided evidence of assessment in other areas of general education – such as critical analysis and reasoning – even if there is no set of committee minutes to document this assessment. In some areas of general education, however, Franklin would benefit from providing better documentation of its assessment efforts.

STANDARD V EVALUATION

- **Collegial Advice**

- *Franklin should ensure that current and future graduate programs are assessed as rigorously as undergraduate programs. This will help ensure that Franklin develops the strongest possible programs and provides the best education for its graduate students.*
- *The team encourages FUS to examine ways to integrate the Academic Travel Program with undergraduate research. For example, FUS might consider a post travel assignment where students via a poster session or other scholarly output articulate how their experience supported the FUS learning goals. This would force students to become even more familiar with the learning goals, self-articulate how the travel program align with these learning goals. This could then lead to further followup research ideas. The poster session event can be a productive way to help students choose particular travel programs in the future, can be promoted and filmed as a*

promotion for marketing and enrollment goals, and can help FUS see which learning goals are likely being met by the travel program and which ones are not. Moreover, faculty evaluation of the posters can provide feedback as to whether those learning goals articulated by the students are presented in a way consistent with the intended goal.

- *A similar project can be developed for the capstone requirement. That is align the requirement in a way that forces students to articulate how the project met the broad SLOs*

- **Team Recommendation(s)**

There are no requirements for this standard.

- **Requirement(s)**

There are no requirements for this standard.

- **Recognition of Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices**

- *Franklin should be recognized for its well-defined institution-wide learning outcomes, which express so well the benefits that a Franklin education brings to its graduates.*

Requirement of Affiliation #8 AND #9

In the team's judgement the institution appears to meet Requirement of Affiliation 8 and 9

Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

The institution's planning processes, resources, and structures are aligned with each other and are sufficient to fulfill its mission and goals, to continuously assess and improve its programs and services, and to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges.

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

Based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with campus constituencies to validate and verify compliance during the on-site evaluation visit, the team draws the following conclusions relative to this standard.

Summary of Findings

- Over the past five years, Franklin University Switzerland (FUS) has experienced a 22% decline in enrollment from 385.7 FTEs in FY 2015 to 299.7 FTEs in FY 2019. Being a tuition dependent institution, the declining enrollment has significantly challenged the University's long-term financial sustainability. Total net assets have declined four of the past five years according to the combined financial statements for Franklin University Switzerland and Franklin University Switzerland, Inc. In FY 2019, the organization realized a total loss in net assets of \$1,922,240. At year end, net assets without donor restrictions were -\$1,138,958 and total net assets were \$5,233,138.
- With declining net assets, the institution has realized a negative Composite Financial Index (CFI) score for the past three years. Further, the organization's auditors, KPMG, issued a going concern disclosure to the FY 2019 financial statements due to the "losses from operations and a net capital deficiency". Management's response to the disclosure is to increase enrollments in the traditional undergraduate program, reduce tuition remission, increase investments in the new graduate studies and Executive Education programs, and increase the school's presence in China and South Korea. The University also reports that a donor pledged a \$2,000,000 unrestricted gift towards the Capital Campaign in October 2019 to support operations in FY 2020. Another \$4,000,000 unrestricted gift is expected from the same donor in FY 2021.
- FUS participates in multiple audits to satisfy regulatory requirements in the United States and in Switzerland. The United States based entity is audited by Funaro & Co. in New York; the Swiss statutory audit, the combined audits and a comprehensive report on internal controls are performed by KPMG Lugano in accordance with US Generally Accepted Accounting Principles; and, the Independent Standard Compliance Attestation Report is conducted by Wheeler, Wolfenden and Dwares in Delaware.
- At the conclusion of the annual audit, the Vice President for Finance and Administration revises and extends a comprehensive five-year business plan. This plan is shared with the auditors and the bank. Along with financial aid, the most significant expenditure is salaries and benefits. Preserving faculty and staff positions have been a priority despite declining enrollments and the resulting financial challenges. While there have not been

any layoffs, the University has restructured positions and departments. Still, several areas of the administration are not optimally staffed, and salaries have not kept pace with market rates.

- The Board of Trustees has fiduciary responsibility for the University. In 2017-2018, the Board divided the Finance and Audit Committee into two separate committees. The Finance Committee is responsible for the University's finances and long-range financial plans, whereas the Audit Committee is responsible for risk management, internal and external audits, and overall financial compliance.
- The University is guided by the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan, which was updated in January 2019. This plan focuses on three priorities: 1) supporting academic excellence; 2) implementing a multi-year enrollment plan; and 3) developing initiatives designed to foster institutional sustainability and innovation. FUS utilizes a zero-base budgeting process to allocate resources consistent with these strategic priorities. Department heads are required to submit all items for their budget, with rationales and justifications, via simplified templates in October for the next fiscal year. The Office of Finance and Administration then generates budget iterations to the President, and seeks clarification as needed from department heads. A proposed budget is subsequently submitted to the Board of Trustees in the spring for approval; however, the budget is often refined afterwards based on actual enrollments.
- FUS recently drafted its first Facilities Master Plan, which reflects the priorities and collective considerations of students, faculty and staff. This plan provides the foundation for the orderly development of the two campuses over the next five years. Currently, the Board of Trustees has approved construction of a new building that will provide residential spaces for 69 students, a student center, classrooms, offices, a fitness center and underground parking. The project is budgeted at CHF 21,000,000, with CHF 3,500,000 from the institution and CHF 17,500,000 from debt financing. When the new facility opens in fall 2021, the University will have the flexibility to discontinue some of their existing property leases if enrollment numbers do not warrant the number of dormitory rooms.
- Based on the FY 2019 financial statements, the University's Financial Responsibility Score, as calculated by the U.S. Department of Education, fell below 1.0 thus requiring the issuance of a letter of credit. The last time FUS fell below the "pass zone" was in FY 2015.
- Since the site visit was delayed six months due to the COVID-19 pandemic, FUS shared the following enrollment and finance data for FY 2020:
 - FTE enrollment for FY 2020 declined further to 289.7 students.
 - An unrestricted gift of \$2,000,000 was received, which significantly improved the University's financial position. Per the unaudited financial statements, undesignated

- net assets increased by \$530,972 to -\$787,986. FUS also received \$2,482,441 in restricted gifts which helped increase total net assets by \$1,915,295 to \$7,148,433.
- Due to the relatively large increase in total net assets, the CFI score improved to 3.3
 - Based on the University's calculations, the Financial Responsibility Score improved to a passing 1.9.
 - The auditors will not include a going concern disclosure in the FY 2020 financial statements.
 - The updated five-year business plan projects a deficit of \$350,508 in FY 2021 based on an FTE enrollment of 264 students, an overall discount rate of 52.03%, and \$4,520,966 in gifts and grants. Small surpluses are anticipated for the next four years assuming an increase in enrollment (i.e. 304 FTE students in FY 2022, growing to 343 FTE students in FY 2025), a lower discount rate (i.e. 47.42% in FY 2022, growing to 48.74% in FY 2025), and consistent support from gifts and grants (i.e. \$2,000,000 each year).

STANDARD VI EVALUATION

- **Collegial Advice**

- *The team suggests that the institution continue right-sizing its faculty and staff levels based on current enrollment levels, while maintaining a quality student experience.*
- *The team suggests that the institution continue developing an efficient and effective fundraising strategy to build the endowment for long-term financial sustainability.*
- *The team strongly suggests that the institution significantly enhance its recruitment and marketing strategies in order to achieve the FTE enrollment projections outlined in the five-year business plan. If it is so the FUS has a unique position in the higher education market, and we think it does, then every effort should be made to present this to prospective students.*
- *The team suggests that the draft Facilities Master Plan be finalized.*
- *The team suggests the University conduct an economic impact study to demonstrate its annual financial contributions to the local community and thus further develop a strong "Town-Gown" partnership.*

- **Team Recommendation(s)**

- *The institution should provide further evidence of:*
 - 1) *adequate fiscal and human resources, including physical and technical infrastructure, to support operations.*

- 2) *enrollment management planning linked to budget development.*
- 3) *strategies to address enrollment decline.*
- 4) *the assessment of the adequacy and efficient utilization of institutional resources required to support the institution's mission and goals.*

- **Requirement(s)**

There are no requirements for this standard.

Recognition of Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices

- *FUS is to be commended for developing new partnerships in the United States and Asia aimed at increasing enrollments.*
- *FUS is to be commended for its recent advancement efforts to include a \$2,000,000 unrestricted gift for the Capital Campaign in FY 2020, \$4,000,000 in FY 2021 and \$2,500,000 for an endowed faculty position.*

Requirement of Affiliation #11

In the team's judgement the institution appears to meet Requirement of Affiliation 11.

Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

The institution is governed and administered in a manner that allows it to realize its stated mission and goals in a way that effectively benefits the institution, its students, and the other constituents it serves. Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, religious, educational system, or other unaccredited organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose, and it operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet this standard.

Based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with campus constituencies to validate and verify compliance during the on-site evaluation visit, the team draws the following conclusions relative to this standard.

Summary of Findings

Since 2017, Franklin has prioritized reframing its senior governance structure to establish efficient pathways for decision-making and collaboration. Shared governance also is a highlighted commitment of the Franklin community, as is evidenced in university committee membership and community involvement in university processes such as strategic planning and budgeting.

The Bylaws and Organizational Structure of the University reflect that the University has clearly articulated its governance structure with specific roles and responsibilities assigned. The structure is recognized and respected by the various stakeholders as reflected to the team in the interviews during the visit. The operational affairs of the University are vested with the President who is accountable to the BOT under the University's Bylaws. The BOT's Bylaws outlines the appropriate role of a BOT of a University to ensure proper planning and monitoring of the activities of the University. To ensure proper leadership, the President is annually evaluated by the Presidential Development Committee of the BOT. The BOT's responsibilities include monitoring the strength of academic programs and authorizing degrees while reviewing and approving operating and capital budgets and monitoring financial performance. Interviews with the BOT indicate a commitment to this role. The Bylaws vest the BOT with the responsibility of ensuring that the University fulfills its mission and with fiduciary responsibility for the institution and its success.

The Bylaws also require that the BOT avoid conflicts of interest and provides a mechanism to mitigate the same in including a detailed Conflict of Interest Policy. The current Board composition includes individuals from various backgrounds that appear consistent with the needs of the University and with Middle States' Standards.

The President, who is appointed by the BOT, is entrusted with keeping the BOT informed of the financial results of the organization and is given the appropriate authority and autonomy by the governing documents to fulfill his responsibilities. The BOT recognized the need to both entrust the President with these responsibilities and appropriately monitor and evaluate his performance

in fulfilling the duties. The current President's CV indicates that the President has the appropriate leadership experience and credentials consistent with the University's mission. The same can be found in the CV's of the executive leadership team who provide the President with support in effectively discharging his duties.

The governing documents of the University (Bylaws and related Policies), Staff Handbook, Faculty Manual, and Student Handbook indicate a strong commitment to shared governance. Such initiatives require coordinated commitment and effort, with shared governance and responsibility starting with the President's autumn address that leads to inclusive discussions across the community. The consistent communication that emerges from shared governance structures is reflected in an involved, 6-month reporting process on the university's strategic goals.

Given the size of the faculty and staff, Franklin should explore the matrix of positions and service on university committees, considering both faculty and staff expertise. The university's commendable commitment to shared governance requires continued growth of knowledge of the work of the committees among all sectors of the community.

STANDARD VII EVALUATION

- **Collegial Advice** (*Non-binding suggestions for improvement. Where appropriate, team members might consider including a limited number of suggestions as they relate to this standard and the priorities the institution has selected.*)
 - Review assessment process of senior leadership toward improvement and collaboration.
 - Review expectation and frequency of service on university committees to ensure commitment to shared governance with robust faculty and staff engagement.

Team Recommendation(s)

- There are no Team Recommendations for this standard

Requirements

- There are no Requirements for this Standard

Requirement of Affiliation #12, #13 AND #14

In the team's judgement the institution appears to meet Requirement of Affiliation #12, #13 and #14

Section D: Requirements of Affiliation

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet all of the Requirements of Affiliation based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with campus constituencies.

Section E: Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Compliance Requirements

In the team's judgment, the institution appears to meet all accreditation-relevant federal compliance requirements. This judgment is based on a review of the Institutional Federal Compliance Report, evidence, and interviews with campus constituencies.

Federal Compliance 8: Title IV Program Responsibilities are fulfilled based on the evidence supported. FUS are facing challenges in this regard and due to their effective leadership, they were released from the need for a Letter of Credit (LOC) after their audit indicated that they were financially responsible. They indicated that they submit to the DOE an agreed upon procedure engagement where their auditors perform the same tests and these are shared with DOE with KPMG's audit statements.

Another minor opportunity for improvement is that related to Federal Compliance 8: Assignment of Credit Hour. This is fulfilled according to FUS confirmation and having clear standards and requirements published for transparency is recommended.

Section F: Verification of Student Achievement Data and Institutional Data

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I. Student Achievement Data

In the team's judgment, the institution's approach to implementing its student achievement goals appears to be effective, consonant with higher education expectations, and consistent with the institution's mission. This judgment is based on a review of the institution's student achievement information provided in the self-study report, evidence inventory, and interviews with campus constituencies. In addition, in the team's judgment, the institution's student achievement information data that it discloses to the public appear to be valid and accurate in light of other data and information reviewed by the team.

II. Verification of Institutional Data

Much of the verification of data and the narrative in the self-study is addressed earlier in the report but it is useful to summarize the breadth and nature of the team visit. First, to verify the narrative in the self-study, FUS provided a very well-organized evidence inventory, which was thoroughly updated after the delay in the visit due to COVID. The institution was very responsive to any and all requests the team had for additional information. All of this evidence was provided through uploads to the web portal which all members of the evaluation team had access to. Taken together

the information provided to the team was complete and helpful in forming a draft report prior to the visit. During the visit the team met with a broad group of stakeholders, ranging from students, full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, the key governing bodies, members of the board of trustees, a wide variety of administrators including those responsible for campus life activities, assessment activities etc. While not an exhaustive list the schedule included meetings with:

- President on each day of the visit
- Co-chairs of the self-study steering committee and the members of the steering committee
- President's cabinet
- Members of the working groups for the different standards.
- Faculty
- Students
- Administrators focused on the student experience
- Administrators focused on Admissions and Marketing
- Administrators focused on Finance and Administrators Focused on Academic Affairs
- Board of Trustee Members

The team confirms that data and other information provided by the institution are valid and conform to higher education expectations.

Section G: Review of Third-Party Comments

There were two third party comments submitted to the team just prior to the team visit. In response to this the team requested additional information to be uploaded to the evidence inventory. Specifically, the request for additional information included information on how the senior leaders of the university are evaluated and information on the processes used to make the decision to reorganize the reporting structures between departments and upper management. Prior to the complaints being received the team members were focused on some of the specific issues raised in the third-party comments. The third-party comments also were relevant to some of the discussions and questions the team posed in a number of interviews.

NOTE: Section G should not include a summary of the third-party comments.

Section H: List of Additional Evidence

Additional Information that was requested included:

Additional Enrollment Data Over a Longer Period of Time
CV of the President
How the Board Evaluates President
Business Plan for 2020-2025

Assessment Process for the Deans and Vice Presidents
Evidence Describing the Processes Used Concerning the 2019/2020 Reorganization into Academic Units
Un-audited combined financials for 2019-2020
DOE composite score calculations
FUS and COVID developments
Housing and Revenue Expense and Occupancy report as part of business plan
Additional information on Chapter 6
Enrollment Survey Summary of Comments
Student Survey – Branding and Enrollment 2020
Student Quarantine Video
MSIM Assessment 2019
FUS Org Chart Sept 20
MSIM Year End Program Evaluation 2018-2019
MSIM Year End Program Evaluation 2019-2020
Publications Linked to Academic Travel
Faculty Publications 2018-2020
Division Restructuring

Section I: Self-Study Report and Process Comments

The team thanks the institution for the work involved in writing the self-study, the assistance in preparing for the preliminary site visit, and for the highly organized support for the team virtual visit. Throughout the entire process FUS has been extremely responsive to requests for information, requests for organizing the meeting times across times zones that spanned 6 hours, for organizing a very complete evidence inventory, and for quick and responsive answers to any questions that were raised. A special thanks to Leslie Tedoldi, who as a key point of contact arranged the logistics of the preliminary in person visit and the team virtual visit. And a special thanks to Nigel Butterwick and Sara Steinert Borella who were responsive and helpful to the team chair in answering any questions that arose during the pre-visit period and during the virtual visit.

The self-study was complete and insightful and helped the team understand the institution including the challenges it faces. The team hopes that FUS benefits from the insights they have garnered from writing the self-study, from the value of having an organized system for the evidence inventory, and most importantly from the content of the team report.

As a reminder, the next steps in the evaluation process are as follows:

- 1) The team report is sent to the President to be reviewed only for factual errors (not for response to any content). The President returns the document with proposed factual changes and then the team chair uploads the report to the Commission.

- 2) The institution replies to the team report in a formal written Institutional Response addressed to the Commission.
- 3) The team Chair submits a Confidential Brief to the Commission, summarizing the team report.
- 4) The Commission's Committee on Evaluation Reports carefully reviews documents including the institutional self-study document, the evaluation team report, the institution's formal response, and the Chair's Confidential Brief to formulate a proposed action to the Commission.
- 5) The full Commission, after considering information gained in the preceding steps, takes formal accreditation action and notifies the institution.