REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING TEAM

CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW

To American University of Armenia

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Reaffirmation of Accreditation

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I.   OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A.   Description of Institution and Visit

The American University of Armenia (AUA) opened September 21, 1991, the day

Armenia declared independence from the former Soviet Union. As a partner in this national

birth, AUA's mission is to bring American style education to Armenia, with the goal of

preparing Armenian citizens and those of the region to address the needs of sustainable

development in an environment that values and develops academic excellence, free inquiry,

integrity, scholarship, leadership, and service to society (CFR 1.1).

In keeping with this mission, AUA enrolls approximately 400 students pursuing master's

degrees or graduate-level certificates within academic programs in the areas of Industrial

Engineering and Systems Management, Computer and Information Science, Public Health,

Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Law, Business Administration, Political Science and

International Affairs, and Environmental Science and Conservation.   Research and scholarship

beyond the classroom is supported by seven research centers that bring together students, faculty,

and external stakeholders in projects that address national needs.

Now entering its third decade, AUA has achieved significant success in fulfilling its

mission. In its first 20 years, AUA reports graduating over 1800 students, 70% of whom are

currently employed in Armenia. AUA also enjoys impressive retention and graduation rates for

what is still a relatively new institution, with first year retention rates of 92-93% and three year

graduation rates of 81 to 87% according to the most recent data available (2006-2008).

AUA's success in delivering its mission was also recognized by stakeholders who highlighted AUA's unique importance in the higher education landscape of Armenia and the region. Government officials external to the institution described AUA as a "model" for higher education, providing for "the free exchange of ideas" and, as such, an important agent of change in Armenia's continuing transition from its Soviet past including its economic, social, and political development. The team also learned about AUA's importance in the continued evolution of Armenia's higher education system, including AUA's potential as a leader for the development of quality assurance systems in state institutions. That AUA is meeting these expectations was confirmed through team meetings with students, both current and former, who described their experiences at AUA as nothing less than transformative, highlighting differences between the intellectual environment of AUA and that of their previous educational experiences and describing AUA's as a "truly student-centered institution" that cultivates "creative thinking" and a regionally distinctive set of "values and norms."

The implementation of AUA's mission is guided by two boards: the Board of Trustees associated with the California-based American University of Armenia Corporation (AUAC) and the Board of Directors of the Armenia-based American University of Armenia Foundation (AUAF). The AUAF was established after the AUAC as required by a change to Armenian law in the early 2000's. Although separate decision making entities, significant overlap in membership among the two boards facilitates communication and coordinated oversight of AUA, while continued incorporation in the U.S. facilitates tax exempt support of AUA by American philanthropists.

AUA also benefits from a formal affiliation with the University of California, which has greatly influenced its academic development and provides legal and investment-related support.

Through informative meetings with the AUAC Board of Trustees in California, and with an Armenian member of the AUAF Board of Directors while in Yerevan, the team learned that both boards are very committed to the mission and success of AUA and exercise that commitment through appropriate oversight of institutional operations (CFR 3.9).

In September 2010, AUA hired its first full-time president (CFR 3.10). Immediately following his appointment, the president embarked on a strategic planning process, culminating in plans to expand and diversify faculty, income sources, and degree programs with the addition by 2017 of three or more undergraduate degree programs enrolling 1200 undergraduates (CFR 4.1). At the time of its CPR Site Visit, AUA had submitted substantive change proposals for the structural change and new degree programs necessary to implement its first undergraduate programs in fall 2013. Accordingly the structural change site visit was integrated into the CPR site visit for reaccreditation, with the substantive change team members pursuing their review alongside the WASC CPR team. This was the only addition to the site visit, as AUA has no off-campus sites or distance education programs.

AUA was granted Initial Accreditation in February 2007 for a period of seven years, the maximum period possible. In keeping with the timeline established by the Commission in its action letter of February 26, 2007, this report addresses the Capacity and Preparatory phase of AUA's first reaffirmation of accreditation review.

B. The Capacity and Preparatory Review Report: Alignment with the Proposal and Quality and Rigor of the Review and Report

In keeping with its Institutional Proposal, AUA organized its CPR Report around two themes: *Institutionalizing the Assessment of Student Learning* and *Cultivating a Community of Scholars*. Together these themes address AUA's three goals for reaccreditation: 1) Recalibration of AUA's institutional mission and goals, 2) Focus on student learning across the institution and

the development of more diverse and effective methods of assessment, and 3) Alignment of research and scholarship with teaching at a graduate institution focused on impacting the development of a nation.

With respect to the Capacity and Preparatory Review, the Institutional Proposal also included a set of outcomes specific to each theme. For Theme 1, these were to 1) establish a Student Learning Committee, that would 2) complete an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the current processes for assessing student learning and 3) have in place resources to strengthen the assessment of student learning including faculty training and an orientation to AUA's commitment to student learning and assessment for visiting faculty. For Theme 2, AUA intended to 1) involve faculty and students in shaping the AUA standards for research and scholarship, 2) define the faculty standards for research and scholarship and revise hiring, retention, and promotion policies accordingly, 3) develop processes for recognizing excellence in teaching and scholarship, and 4) shift from one to multi-year contracts for core faculty. With the exception of multi-year contracts, the implementation of which has been postponed until fall 2012, the team verified that these outcomes have been met, a result that supports the team's on-site observations that AUA is engaged in serious self-review and improvement.

The team found the CPR Report well organized, clearly written and presented with effective use of tables and figures to communicate evidence in support of analysis. With respect to both themes, the institution collected and analyzed relevant forms of direct and indirect evidence under the guidance of faculty-led committees (CFR 3.11). Much of this evidence was available in the supporting attachments, permitting validation of report conclusions while also enabling insight beyond that communicated in the report narrative. For both themes, the review process led to a greater understanding of institutional capacity, including its infrastructure for

data and analysis. Examples of these outcomes include the efforts undertaken by the

Institutional Research Office to standardize institutional data gathering and reporting practices

and the concrete next steps identified by the faculty-led committees responsible for the review.

The report accurately portrayed the condition of the institution as confirmed through discussions

during the site visit (CFR 1.9).

C.   Response to Previous Commission Issues

In its letter of January 27, 2007 conferring Initial Accreditation, the WASC Commission

recognized nine action items for AUA to address: the six recommendations of the EER visiting

team together with an additional three issues identified by the Commission. As of February 2012,

AUA has met, has concrete plans to meet, or has made significant progress on all of these

expectations. A brief summary of each action item and its status as of the February 2012 site

visit follows.

Three Commission Issues

The need for a full-time president and periodic presidential evaluation: Since September

2010, AUA has had in place its first full-time, resident president, who by contract will undergo a

two year performance review in spring 2012. As laid out in the Strategic Plan, the AUA

Evaluation Plan also requires that the president be evaluated by the Board of Trustees every five

years (CFRs 1.3, 3.9, 3.10).

Multi-year faculty contracts: AUA plans to implement multi-year faculty contracts, in

fall 2012, coincident with the transition to a July 1-June 30th fiscal year and a semester calendar

(CFR 3.2). The Institutional Proposal notes that the implementation of multi-year contracts was

delayed by the global financial crisis.

Six Team Recommendations

Coordination of planning through the development of a Strategic Plan to integrate various institutional plans: Upon his hiring in September 2010, the new president initiated an inclusive strategic planning process that resulted in a comprehensive strategic plan for 2011 to 2017. Available on the AUA website, this plan addresses in an integrative fashion the core issues of development, enrollment, regional and international recruitment, finances, research, faculty, facilities and administrative capacity in the context of the institution's plans to add undergraduate degrees beginning in fall 2013. Summaries of strategic plans specific to individual academic programs and administrative units are provided, with each plan tied to institutional priorities through a series of targeted actions. The strategic plan is being implemented (CFRs 4.1, 4.2).

Progress toward fiscal stability: The institution's response to the global financial crisis resulted in significant budget reductions in 2009 and 2010 and the global fiscal crisis continues to impact AUA. Despite this, the campus' new Paramaz Avedisian Building was opened in 2008 with the support of $17.3 million in fund raising. The board and institutional leadership attend regularly to the institution's finances and are currently implementing plans to grow AUA's capacity to increase and diversify revenue streams. There is evidence of improvement in the fiscal results in the current year. Fiscal stability is addressed further in Part II, Section D of this report.

Implementation of the Enrollment Management Plan: Since 2006, AUA has made significant progress in student recruitment and enrollment management. Current enrollment exceeds the targets set for 2012-2013, while goals with respect to admissions criteria have been maintained. The institution anticipates continued enrollment growth through increased numbers

of international students and through the new undergraduate programs. Enrollment for undergraduates is meant to be "budget neutral" meaning that undergraduate tuition will not be used to subsidize graduate education; rather tuition levels will be maintained for graduate students as undergraduates are phased in.

On-Site leadership: AUA seems to be well on the way to addressing prior on-site leadership concerns. Since earning Initial Accreditation, the institution has hired a full time, resident president. Four of the six deans heading existing programs are currently resident as well (CFR 3.10). Thus, in keeping with previous Commission recommendations, AUA is shifting from its early but strategic model of internationally-based leadership to full-time resident leadership. This transition is taking place in concert with an administrative reorganization of academic programs into a minimum of three colleges that is slated for 2012 and intended to achieve administrative savings and foster synergies across faculties and disciplines. With this transition, it is expected that all deans will be resident and that each department will be headed by a resident chair (CFR 3.10).

Faculty development and student learning assessment: AUA has made good progress in defining assessment priorities to ensure a focus on questions that are useful and important to the institution; refining its assessment processes and procedures; developing a multi-year schedule to make this work sustainable; and creating an institutional support structure to provide leadership and professional development for this effort. These subjects are addressed more thoroughly in Section II, Part A of this report, which considers AUA's re-accreditation theme *Institutionalizing the Assessment of Student Learning.*

II.   EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY UNDER THE STANDARDS

A.   Theme 1: Institutionalizing the Assessment of Student Learning

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

AUA has established university-wide processes for program review and assessment of student learning. A three-year plan was initiated for 2007, 2008, and 2009. During this period, each academic program was to carry out an evaluation of student learning (CFRs 1.2, 2.7). The process required that each academic program develop a set of desired student learning outcomes as well as a three-year plan to ensure that the outcomes were being assessed (CFRs 2.2, 4.3, 4.6, 4.7). A series of guidelines and policies was put in place to assist faculty and deans with the development and implementation of the assessment plans and their incorporation into periodic program review. Examples of these policies include a Student Learning Assessment Manual, Guidelines for Self-studies and Self-study Audits, and a Syllabus Policy. Results of assessment findings were to be reported annually by program deans to the provost for use in planning, hiring, and budget decisions (CFR 4.4). These initial plans were extended by one year in 2010 upon the formation of the Student Learning Committee (SLC).

Established in fall 2010 by the Curriculum Committee, the SLC was charged with investigating AUA's capacity and effectiveness with respect to the theme of institutionalizing the assessment of student learning. Through a deliberate, evidence-based process, the SLC identified strengths and weaknesses of AUA's academic assessment program to date. Strengths included a relatively high level of participation and knowledgeable support at the highest level of academic administration, the Provost's Office (CFR 4.6). Weaknesses included gaps in participation across programs after the first year, as well as unevenness in assessment methodologies, inconsistency in "closing the loop," deficiencies in the monitoring mechanisms, and lack of general awareness of assessment beyond those directly involved. Given the size of

AUA, faculty members were found to be spread thin across multiple teaching, administrative, scholarly, and service commitments. The demands on a small faculty are addressed in AUA's second theme *Cultivating a Community of Scholars,* Part II Section B of this report.

Information provided in the CPR Report and the AUA catalog confirmed the SLC's candid recognition that assessment to date at AUA has been uneven across programs, has not uniformly "closed the loop," and is not yet fully embedded in the university's culture. The CPR Report itself acknowledges that "The Student Learning Assessment Process has been uneven" (p. 6). The team's observations and review of documents confirmed that assessment of student learning, while well underway at AUA, was not uniformly developed across the degree programs.

Under the guidance of the SLC and the leadership of a newly appointed Accreditation Director, AUA adopted in November 2011 an interim plan for "closing the loop" on previous graduate-level assessment findings for 2011-12 and 2012-13. The university has also begun to strengthen its capacity for program review and learning outcomes assessment by, for example, creating new resources such as internal web pages for tracking, monitoring, and sharing self-studies, program review audits, and annual assessment reports. In addition to the Accreditation Director, an educational consultant with expertise in assessment was hired to conduct trainings and workshops and to work directly with program faculty to help them "close the loop" with their assessment activities (CFR 3.4). During the visit faculty members in several programs provided the team with examples of how they have already used their assessment findings to improve curricula. In response to the SLC findings, AUA also plans to revise the Student Learning Assessment Manual and the Self-Study and Self-Audit Guidelines in spring 2012 to better support AUA's goals for institutionalization of assessment and program review.

Learning outcomes have been developed for all academic programs at AUA and made available in public materials (CFRs 1.2, 2.3). However, their accessibility to prospective students and external stakeholders varies; for some schools and departments, the information can be discovered on the AUA website or as variously represented in marketing materials but for others it is more difficult. Institutional representatives indicate that there are plans to make these expectations for student learning and performance more readily and uniformly accessible, which will help AUA highlight its mission for Armenia and the region (CFRs 1.7, 2.4).

The second theme of AUA's Capacity and Preparatory Review Report, *Cultivating a Community of Scholars*, intersects with the goal of institutionalizing the assessment of student learning with respect to faculty workload. The recommendations of the SLC address the issue of faculty involvement specifically, calling for each program to have a designated assessment coordinator who will participate in trainings and, in turn, become a trainer (CFR 3.2). The SLC also recommended that participation in student learning assessment be formalized as part of faculty contractual obligations (CFR 3.3).

Concurrently and commendably, assessment has been recognized as a form of creative scholarship in the newly revised *Policy on Appointment, Retention, Promotion and Faculty Titles* (CFRs 2.8, 2.9). To further strengthen the connection between contractual practices and its personnel policy, AUA might consider how the *Policy for Appointment, Retention, Promotion, and Faculty Titles* addresses faculty contributions to assessment at the course, program and institutional level that do not rise to the level of creative scholarship "beyond routine teaching responsibilities," perhaps in its definition of teaching (CFRs 2.8, 2.9, 3.3). The team also encourages AUA to consider what will be the "carrots" – incentives, supports, and rewards -- for

active and sustained participation in assessment and program improvement, and what will be the "sticks" or consequences for non-participation by faculty or programs (CFR 3.3).

To date AUA has developed assessment plans for its academic degree programs. Going forward, it will be important to develop and implement assessment plans for its academic support programs such as the information literacy program provided by the Library (CFR 2.13) and other academic support services, student support services, and co-curricular programs (CFRs 2.11, 2.13).

AUA has made considerable strides in establishing its capacity for assessing student learning through policies, planning processes, governance structures, and dedicated resources. In particular, the team sees the position of the Accreditation Director as being vital to the achievement of AUA's long term goals for institutionalizing and sustaining assessment in support of teaching and learning. For AUA to achieve its long term goals, it is critical to put in place a robust infrastructure, including institutionalizing staff positions, to promote and sustain educational effectiveness on an on-going basis (CFRs 3.4, 4.6, 4.7).

Academic Program Review

AUA has put in place policies and procedures to review its academic programs on a periodic basis and to use review results for continuous quality assurance (CFRs 2.7, 4.4). In 2008, AUA initiated a cycle of academic program review, with staggered reviews scheduled for all academic programs as well as the Extension program. The Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate oversees the academic program review process as well as any modifications to existing courses and programs (CFRs 4.1, 4.4).

Academic program review at AUA begins with a self-study prepared by the program faculty according to published guidelines (CFR 3.11). Self-studies must include the program's

assessment plan and annual assessment reports (CFR 2.7). Subsequently, an audit team

composed of three AUA faculty members and one external expert conducts a review of the

program, culminating in a report provided to the program and to the university administration

along with the self-study. In a "wrap-up" meeting with program representatives, the provost, and

the president, an action plan is developed for the interval before the next program review in five

years. Program review audits are ultimately reviewed by the AUA Board of Trustees (CFR 3.9).

AUA's program review process over the past five years has been largely successful.

Findings and recommendations stemming from the academic program reviews conducted to date

at AUA have resulted in modifications to curricula and degree programs (CFRs 3.11, 4.4, 4.6).

As a result of the first round of program reviews, the Self-Study and Audit Guidelines issued in

2008 will be revised and refined for future cycles of review (CFR 4.7). To further support

institutionalization of assessment, the team encourages AUA to consider making a revised multi-

year assessment plan an outcome of program review.

Institutional Research Capacity

The Institutional Research Office (IRO) is responsible for assisting faculty and programs

with information and data in support of the assessment of student learning and academic program

review (CFRs 4.3, 4.4, 4.5). In collaboration with the Director of Accreditation, a newly

appointed Institutional Research Manager has begun to benchmark data gathering and

disaggregation practices with U.S. institutions to strengthen and expand data collection, and is

further standardizing and institutionalizing data collection through the development of formal

guidelines for data collection, disaggregation, and management. These are important steps in

furthering a culture of evidence that is aligned with American higher education practices while

ensuring continuity in service and data delivery into the future. The team commends the IRO for these forward looking efforts.

The IRO provides information as requested by programs that are writing self-studies, and cites academic programs as the most avid users of the office's services together with the provost (CFRs 2.7, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6). As the IRO and the program review process mature, AUA might want to develop a template of required data elements that are central to assessing the educational effectiveness of the academic programs. The IRO could also work towards articulating its own set of service objectives in anticipation of the expansion of annual assessment and periodic review to academic support and student service units (CFRs 2.11, 4.5).

Institutional Assessment

As described above, AUA has made great strides toward institutionalizing outcomes-based assessment of student learning at the program level, identifying and addressing key issues of capacity necessary to support faculty in the identification of meaningful assessment questions and the generation of actionable evidence that is essential to sustaining these efforts into the future (CFRs 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 4.6, 4.7). Significantly, the mechanisms developed to facilitate inter-departmental communication and synergies around program-level assessment have also contributed to the erosion of long-standing departmental "silos." The team commends the institution for the progress it has made with respect to this essential work.

The team, however, encourages AUA to develop plans and processes for aggregating and evaluating the meaning of program-level results at the institutional level, as an input for evaluating institutional progress in relation to AUA's mission and accordingly for institution-level planning and decision making. Reciprocally, and as observed in the approach for evaluating progress on the institution's strategic plan (CFR 4.1), institutional goals for student learning and

success will need to be investigated at the program level, with their impact evaluated at both program and institutional levels, including the contributions co-curricular and student support services make to achievement of institutional goals and outcomes for both student learning and success (CFRs 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 4.2, 4.3, 4.6). To support continued unification of academic program and administrative and co-curricular unit-based efforts, the institution will want to complete work on a set of institutional objectives for student learning and to develop a clear set of objectives for student success (CFRs 1.2, 4.3). The team imagines that the Director of Accreditation could make a valuable contribution to this effort, given the broad institutional perspective this position affords.

B.   **Theme 2: Cultivating a Community of Scholars**

As AUA advances into its third decade, it has recognized that continued growth and success require development of the University as a community of researchers and scholars, united by a shared understanding of what constitutes research and scholarship at AUA. Clarifying this aspect of AUA's mission is also important to establishing a common vision in which the major expansion and diversification of program offerings, faculty, and fundraising that AUA is currently launching can be anchored.

To facilitate this development, AUA pursued the identification of a "research model" able to encompass the forms of research, scholarship, and teaching that have evolved over time in AUA's academic programs and seven research centers, with the goal of formally institutionalizing this model in anticipation of the introduction of multi-year contracts in fall 2012 as recommended by the WASC Commission (CFRs 2.8, 2.9). As part of this work, AUA conducted a thorough analysis of the impact that its institutional context has had on scholarly activities, including its effects on faculty capacity to engage in scholarship and research given

that "cultivating a community of scholars…requires a critical mass of resident faculty and a supportive institution with long-term reciprocal commitments to each other" (Institutional Proposal, p. 10; CFR 4.7). AUA also established a faculty-led Research and Scholarship Task Force (RSTF) to investigate the nature and pattern of scholarship and research at AUA (CFRs 3.3, 3.11, 4.3). The results and implications of these analyses are outlined below.

Impact of Institutional Context on the Community of Scholars

Several important findings emerged from AUA's analysis of institutional context on the scholarly activities of faculty. The first is that core attributes of AUA's community of scholars have been shaped and reinforced by: 1) AUA's mission, which reflects 2) AUA's location in the transitional environment of post-Soviet Armenia, as well as by 3) AUA's exclusive, historic focus on granting master's degrees that has resulted in 4) small enrollments and 5) a relatively small cohort of full-time faculty with core responsibility for delivering the mission but 6) without the benefit of the doctoral and post-doctoral students that typically conduct research projects in larger research universities.   One consequence of this context is that teaching, scholarship and public service have become "mutually interdependent" over time, typically sharing a focus on the often unique and inherently specialized needs of Armenia and the region, rather than on questions of broader, scholarly relevance typical of peer reviewed literature. As described further below, AUA is addressing this finding in revisions to the policy on hiring and promotion (CFRs 2.8, 2.9).

A second consequence of AUA's context is that to meet its educational, research and service goals AUA has had to rely heavily on a relatively small group of full-time faculty, with additional instructional support provided by a proportionally larger group of part-time and visiting faculty (CFRs 3.1, 3.2). Recent expansions in enrollment have not solved this challenge;

even as student enrollment increased by 61% between 2006 and 2010, the global financial crisis and on-going financial challenges prohibited faculty growth, with the result that about 20 full-time and 60 part-time faculty sustained institutional operations during this period. Although many of AUA's part-time faculty are recurrently hired, and as such are considered "core" faculty with commensurate investment in program success, AUA recognizes the challenge of building a community of scholars when a substantial fraction of the faculty has significant commitments beyond the university. This includes the applied programs like law or business that, despite the importance of hiring faculty who are also practicing professionals, could benefit from a larger core of full-time faculty to support program and curricular development, diversification, and administration.

As part of its 2011-2017 Strategic Plan, AUA intends to substantially expand and reorganize in ways that are expected to positively impact AUA's community of scholars. For example, AUA plans to establish undergraduate degree programs which will allow a number of current part-time faculty to become full-time stakeholders in the AUA community, decreasing the service-related workload shouldered by individuals and increasing research capacity. New faculty, chosen well, will also benefit graduate-level learning through the addition of new subfields of study and courses in areas not currently available (CFRs 3.1, 3.2). These are opportunities that students have requested. The team encourages AUA to attend particularly to the number of female faculty hires, as historically only about one third of the faculty has been female relative to a student body that has been on average about two-thirds female (CFR 1.5).

AUA's development as a community of scholars will also benefit from its plans to reorganize its academic programs into three (possibly four) colleges, uniting extant graduate and planned undergraduate programs within common administrative infrastructures reflecting natural

disciplinary alliances (CFR 3.8). Beyond achieving administrative efficiencies that will help to address recurrent fiscal challenges, this re-organization is intended to create opportunities for interdepartmental interaction and interdisciplinary research among faculty and students from different programs. The team commends these plans as discussions with faculty revealed the existence of "siloed" programs, reflecting in part the historical distinctiveness of AUA's graduate programs as well as the highly focused nature of graduate education. Discussions during the visit revealed that faculty had clear ideas for cross-fertilization among programs, including exciting new potential synergies, which would be facilitated by such reorganization.

Finally, AUA is considering the development of an Office of Research to better coordinate and support grant getting and management activities. While AUA's research centers already generate a significant amount of funding, AUA's grant-based revenues would be expected to increase with the support of an Office of Research that coordinates strategically with the new Vice President for Advancement. The team encourages AUA to evaluate the benefits of such an approach, particularly given AUA's plans for growth, its ongoing need for revenue, and that grant getting responsibilities are currently shouldered by individual faculty with associated inefficiencies and consequences for winning extramural funding (CFR 4.2). Individual units themselves would also benefit as AUA returns 15.5% (out of the 36.5% total) overhead to the unit which generated a particular research contract.

The Nature of Research and Scholarship

To gain insight into the nature of research and scholarship at AUA, the Research and Scholarship Task Force (RSTF) gathered and evaluated several complementary lines of evidence (CFR 4.3). Drawing on the annual reports of AUA's Research Centers and academic program reviews, the RSTF documented the types and numbers of research-related activities, including

those with and without student involvement. Interviews of academic program faculty and research center staff were also conducted. The RSTF also consulted with deans and associate deans with responsibility for annual faculty reviews.

The results revealed a good deal of activity that encompasses a range of approaches to, and understandings of research and scholarship. Most significantly, the RSTF recognized a mismatch between practice and policy; faculty and students engage in, and the AUA mission supports, forms of scholarship that did not fit the old policy's description of scholarship with its emphasis on peer-reviewed publication. Thus, RSTF developed, and AUA adopted, new criteria for appointment and promotion regarding creative scholarship. These new criteria take into account the nature of the applied research required in a transitional economy while realistically promoting creative scholarship that links discovery and its integration with and application in teaching (CFRs 2.8, 2.9, 3.2). In particular, AUA expanded its definition of scholarship to include categories similar to those proposed some years ago by the Carnegie Commission namely - 1) scholarship of discovery, 2) scholarship of integration, 3) scholarship of application, and 4) the scholarship of teaching– thereby promoting the links between scholarship, teaching, student learning, and public service that have emerged organically at AUA as a function of its mission and context (see above; CFRs 2.8, 2.9).

AUA plans to implement the revised *Policy on Appointment, Retention, Promotion and Faculty* titles during AY 2011-2012 in anticipation of the shift to multi-year contracts in fall 2012. The team commends AUA for so careful an effort to value and promote scholarship, creative activity, and curricular and instructional innovation and their dissemination in ways appropriate to AUA's mission and character (CFRs 2.8, 2.9). The team encourages AUA to

evaluate and calibrate its implementation of this policy across programs, research centers, and faculties.

Leadership to Fulfill the Mission

At the time of the site visit, negotiations were underway to hire both a new provost and a Vice President for Advancement. One intention was that the new provost would have experience in both undergraduate and graduate education, with benefits for implementing the new strategic plan, including the expansion into undergraduate education, and in further developing AUA's scholarly activities in keeping with its educational, research and service missions. AUA's plans to appoint a new Vice President for Advancement also indicate awareness of the urgent need to generate new revenue streams to support the hiring of additional faculty, to enable AUA to continue to allow all qualified students to attend regardless of the ability to pay, and to fund any expansion. It will be very important that the new provost and Vice President for Advancement develop an excellent working relationship (CFR 3.5) so that needs can be prioritized, and funds can be raised to support even greater effectiveness.

Alumni's Enthusiasm, Loyalty and Support for Future Development

During an hour-long meeting with over thirty alumni of AUA, it was absolutely clear that AUA has provided them with life-changing education. Some of their direct quotations are highlighted below:

- AUA is the best. The bachelors program is a very good idea.

- AUA is the best university in Armenia. Graduates are over qualified for many jobs.

- Adding bachelor's programs is good, but Ph.D. programs will be even better.

- AUA education is completely different- more multidisciplinary, broadened my limited scope.

- AUA has helped me grow. Many students came from India.

- Really thankful to AUA. Hope AUA will offer Ph.D. programs.

- New building is great. Want more professors from other countries, and like to see Ph.D. programs. AUA is truly student-centered and study is not detached from real life.

As stated clearly and loudly, AUA graduates appreciate the educational effectiveness provided by the faculty. They also support more programs at AUA both at the bachelors and Ph.D. levels. Many alumni have also made contributions to support AUA.

C.   Student Success

As described in Section II, Part A of this report, AUA has an active Institutional Research Office (IRO) that is making important strides to systematize the collection and use of data to inform program and institutional planning and decision making. Indeed, the IRO has established a solid foundation of basic institutional data describing essential demographics of faculty, staff, and students as well basic metrics of student success, including graduation and retention rates for the student population as a whole (CFR 4.5). The IRO is also responsible for delivery and analysis of student exit, alumni, and employer surveys, and has been working to revise and refine these surveys in light of program and institutional needs, including those for student learning outcomes assessment (CFR 4.8).

AUA also has institutional research capacity in the form of faculty and students engaged with statistics, biostatistics, and survey research in the programs of Public Health, Political Science and International Affairs, to name a few. The team encourages AUA to consider the contributions students from these programs might make to program and institutional assessment

activities. Indeed there is precedent for this kind of synergy with Public Health researchers having facilitated the focus groups and associated data analysis conducted in connection with AUA's reaccreditation.

The subsections that follow describe the team's understanding of AUA's engagement with metrics of and institutional support for student success, and include suggestions for future research and analysis. The team found this section somewhat challenging to draft as AUA's goals for student success and how they relate to AUA's mission are unclear. The team encourages the institution to develop an explicit set of objectives for student success in support of its mission and to evaluate its progress in relation to these goals, taking action as necessary. As discussed below, AUA may find it useful to look to peer institutions, both comparable and aspirational, in the development and/or evaluation of these goals.

Retention and Graduation

In the last several years the number of students has increased at AUA to a steady state of masters and certificate students of close to 400. For cohorts tracked since 2006, the three year graduation rate is over 80%, which is impressive for a relatively new institution. Still approximately one in every five students is not graduating within the three year time frame, with about 5% of students appearing to remaining enrolled after three years and the other 15% leaving but not transferring. To better manage resources in ways that are consistent with its goals, AUA might benefit from a better understanding of the outcomes of these two groups of students, including time-to-degree for the students who do not meet the three year graduation goal and the reasons for their lack of progress, as well as the reasons for student attrition before graduation.

AUA does not yet appear to disaggregate data on time-to-degree or graduation rates. At an institutional level, variables of interest might include students' income level, gender, ethnicity

(as appropriate), and geographic origin, both within Armenia (rural vs. urban) and outside of the country, given that AUA's strategic plan calls for increasing the numbers of international students. Disaggregating time-to-degree and graduation rates by program, and within programs by relevant demographic characteristics including but not limited to gender, income level, and international status, would also seem important given the distinctive differences in the goals, structure, and delivery of degree programs (CFR 2.10).

AUA also does not appear to have begun looking to an existing peer group or an aspirational group of peers to better understand its own successes and challenges. Such benchmarking can be quite useful and is in keeping with WASC's evolving expectations for understanding student success, as is the disaggregation of key student success metrics. There are several other universities that were started right at the collapse of the old Soviet Union that might be useful comparators or other institutions of similar size and level (graduate only) located in the United States, Europe or the Middle East.

Student Satisfaction

AUA has a student body that is very excited to attend AUA and is proud of the institution. The team was impressed by the high levels of student satisfaction with AUA and the extent to which AUA is student centered. To a person, students commented that when they wanted to talk about an intellectual idea or needed help, faculty, administrative staff or others were happy to assist and uniformly accessible.

The satisfaction that students expressed is echoed in a comprehensive, annual Graduate Student Exit Survey student that has been administered since 2006 and for which there have been very high response rates. In general, for virtually each question, 80% or more of students highly agreed or agreed that they are satisfied with the relevant measures, especially with the

curriculum, faculty, and facilities. The increase in the fraction of students who are highly satisfied and satisfied with facilities such as buildings and computers has risen sharply in the last several years. This is likely a direct result of the opening of the new Paramaz Avedisian Building in 2008 as well as AUA's recent investments in greater bandwidth and more computer labs (CFR 3.7). In general, the team found that students applauded the knowledge and dedication of the faculty who taught them. Where student responses were somewhat less positive, the team suggests that these areas be investigated and assessed for possible future actions.

Many students commented that what sets AUA apart from the undergraduate universities they attended in Armenia and Russia is that the subjects are taught through the lens of real world problems and practical applications. Yet, the team left with the impression that, as in the United States, students would like more connection between their coursework and the real world. According to the most recent exit survey, at graduation roughly 35% of students say they are seeking employment (a figure that has decreased from 41.5%), 29% are in working in positions not appropriate for their degrees, and almost 18% indicate that they are in positions appropriate to their positions. However, only 54% students in 2011 indicate that they are very satisfied or satisfied with career planning and advising. AUA might consider exploring ways to improve career planning.

As mentioned previously, AUA's precise goals for student success are unclear as is how such goals relate to AUA's mission. A particular focus of AUA's mission is to serve the needs of Armenia. It is very clear that the degrees AUA offers--from business, engineering, law and public health, to teaching English--all are highly consistent with this mission. Alumni surveys are conducted periodically (CFR 4.8), several departments collect job placement results, and the university Alumni and Career Development Office maintains an alumni database that is updated

annually. Although the information is accessible to the programs for their self-studies, it is

unclear to what extent the information is utilized to assess AUA's accomplishment of its

mission. Such data can be useful as the faculty develops courses, revises curricula, and advises

students on career paths. Following graduates in this manner also will be essential for any future

development and advancement efforts, in particular, for the campaign that is planned for the

future.

Library Support for Student Learning and Success

There appear to be excellent library resources to support student coursework, faculty

preparation of courses, and their research. Students do not pay for textbooks. Rather, they are

provided by AUA. Copies of textbooks and course readers also are available in the library. The

library is a member of several consortia, including one in Ohio, and one more locally through

which there is excellent information sharing and inter-library loans. For books, it takes about

two weeks for delivery. The library actively encourages faculty and students to plan ahead

accordingly. Electronic resources such as journal articles or digitized books arrive in a day and

often within an hour or two. Library staff appear very satisfied with their access to professional

development, including the conferences and webinars that are sponsored by these consortia (CFR

2.13, 3.6). Library staff also report taking an active role in information literacy instruction,

applying standards articulated by the Association of College and Research Libraries (CFR 2.2).

Although AUA students, faculty and researchers do have access to JSTOR for older

journals, a few students suggested that they lacked access to certain newer on-line journals or

informational resources. Included in this list are Lexis-Nexis and Proquest which will appear as

a budgetary request as AUA prepares for undergraduates. Librarians also opined that upon

occasion they wished they could access the libraries at the University of California. The new provost and president may want to explore whether this is feasible.

Finally, in keeping with AUA's mission, the library takes very seriously its responsibility to be a national resource. As a result, any resident of Armenia may visit or access AUA's library. Membership costs about $10/year. Library staff also provides professional development to students and libraries at other Armenian institutions, particularly in relation to accessing digital resources and related literacy issues.

Policies and Procedures in Support of Student Success

There is a very comprehensive Student Handbook and Code of Student Ethics that describe, among other things, students' rights and responsibilities, appeal of grades, grievances and tuition and refund policies. The document indicates that students are guaranteed to be free from harassment (CFR 1.7). There is a long definition of sexual harassment in the Faculty Handbook and, although it implies it covers students, students are not mentioned explicitly. The Faculty Handbook needs to be clarified to indicate that the policy protects students as well. This policy should also be cross referenced in the Student Handbook and Code of Student Ethics.

Through the Institutional Review Board, students receive some training in human subjects in research (CFR 1.7). However, research misconduct does not appear to be addressed in the Student Handbook. The team encourages AUA to add this important topic to the Handbook.

The registrar handles both registration of students and issues of financial aid. With the support of AUA graduates in Computer and Information Sciences, the registrar is guiding the development of a new integrative, student record system to replace a homegrown, single user access system. Other informational needs regarding curriculum and requirements of academic programs are the responsibility of the individual academic programs (CFR 2.12).

Information Technology in Support of Student Success

The technology available to students, faculty, and staff in support of teaching and research is impressive as are AUA's new facilities and infrastructure which are comparable to those newly built in the United States. Instructional Technology is overseen by a Director of Communication and Information Services and a plentiful staff of about 15 employees. This staff is responsible for network control, network security, software selection and maintenance, end user support, graphic and web design and maintenance of email. Computer and technical resources, including bandwidth, are at western standards; 25 classrooms are fully equipped for multi-media and for teaching with 22 more in the planning stages. Further, there are five computer labs including one used solely by the extension division for on-line classes, administration of GRE and TOEFL exams etc., as well as wireless internet connections throughout the campus and videoconferencing capability.

Students and faculty have access to a cadre of professionals who can teach them how to use any of these resources including software. In addition, there is a policy in place to replace faculty and staff computers at regular intervals (CFRs 2.13, 3.7).

D.   Additional Emphases

a. Impact of Recession on Finances

Not unexpectedly, the global financial crisis has impacted AUA, with significant budget challenges experienced and addressed over the years since Initial Accreditation. In 2009 and 2010, AUAF experienced significant operational deficits of 47 million and 180 million drams respectively, approximately equivalent to $122,000 and $467,000 U.S. at current exchange rates, to which AUAF responded by reducing its operating budgets and deferring spending. Review of the audited AUAF and AUAC financial statements for June 30, 2011 document a small surplus

in unrestricted fund balance for AUAC and very small deficit for AUAF. The institution reports that the current fiscal year is projected to show improved fiscal results both for the year ended December 31, 2011 and the subsequent six month stub period to June 30, 2012. The six month stub period adjusts AUA's fiscal reporting from a calendar year to the new fiscal year.   The Board of Trustees has a clear goal of achieving financial stability as noted in its April 2009 meeting minutes, which state "…[T]he University must move away from crisis management of its finances and [the Board] cited the need for development policies…. [and] [the need] to explore a long-range method for securing funding for Development activities."

Many institutions identify enrollment growth through domestic or international students and philanthropy as solutions to fiscal challenges. AUA is very dependent on philanthropy and its endowment earnings to balance the budget. Not unexpectedly, both of these revenue sources were negatively impacted by the fiscal crisis. AUAC fundraising exceeded $25 million U.S. dollars in the period 2006-2010. Year to year variability in fundraising results can be significant. AUAF results were also impacted by both net tuition declines and reduced gifts from AUAC. AUAF total fund balances have declined by approximately 15% since December 31, 2005, from approximately 595 to 509 thousand drams (approximately $1,500,000 to $1,300,000 at an exchange rate of 385 drams per U.S. dollar).   At the same time AUAC's total fund balances have increased from approximately $24 million to over $35 million. Significant fiscal challenges exist but the University has been able to demonstrate growth in net tuition, gifts, and other revenues over time. Approximately 15% of AUA's revenues come from tuition. AUAF external auditors confirmed the improved fiscal results (Lilit Arabajan, Partner, Grant Thornton (Yerevan)).

To address fiscal challenges and to support institutional growth, AUA is in the process of hiring a Vice President for Advancement (VPA). With a focus on external relations, a primary goal of this position is to strategically develop and expand AUA's donor base, which currently consists of a limited number of relatively large donors. The VPA is also expected to play a role in helping AUA prioritize goals in relation to donor interest.

To be close to AUA's primary source of philanthropy, the VPA will be based in the U.S. but will be expected to visit AUA twice annually. The VPA's first visit to AUA is expected to be extended in order to establish the institutional relationships and understandings that enable targeted fund raising. During the visit, the team learned that all members of the president's senior staff meet weekly, with individuals who reside outside of Armenia or are away from campus participating via Skype (CFR 1.3, 3.8). As a result, the team anticipates that the VPA will remain highly connected to AUA even while living in the U.S. During the visit the team also learned that this search was nearly complete, with an offer out to a highly experienced individual. To complement these efforts in support of anticipated growth, the president has been expanding AUA's leadership team, adding and filling new positions including a Vice President of Operations/COO and a Vice President of Finance/CFO (CFR 3.10).

All institutions have been challenged by the global economic downturn and AUA is no exception. The team, however, found the president and senior leadership focused on addressing the on-going fiscal challenges. Continued progress on fundraising results, net tuition revenue growth, and expense management is recommended.

b. Transparency and Accuracy in Recruitment and Marketing

Marketing and recruitment materials provide clear information regarding admission criteria, course and project requirements for degree completion, and expected time-to-degree

information for the typical part-time student (CFR 1.7). The only exception were marketing

materials for the Computer and Information Sciences program that, while clear about course

requirements for the degree, did not indicate typical time-to-degree but this oversight has now

been addressed. Students perceived program information to be consistent with their experiences.

Tuition costs and the availability of financial aid are also clearly laid out, with AUA brochures

stating that "no eligible Armenian student will be denied the opportunity to study at AUA

because of financial need" (AUA General Information Brochure 2010). The recruitment

materials included a list of the jobs for which program graduates were qualified.

E.   Other Issues Arising from the Standards and CFRs

Professional Development for Staff

During the visit, AUA staff expressed interest in professional development opportunities,

a need also raised in the 2006 Educational Effectiveness Review team report. As noted by the

2006 EER team, such opportunities would infuse new ideas for improvement to administrative

policy and practice, while also "reducing the isolation that could wear in time on this important

segment of the AUA community" (p.19). As part of its goals for development and expansion,

the team encourages AUA to attend to this important professional and morale boosting need

(CFRs 3.1, 3.4).

Board of Trustees

AUA is commended for the commitment, enthusiasm, and engaged oversight provided by

its California-based Board of Trustees and Armenia-based Board of Directors. Although both

boards exercise appropriate oversight over institutional integrity, policies, and ongoing

operations, including hiring and evaluating the president (CFR 3.9), the team encourages the

U.S.-based Board of Trustees to periodically meet in Yerevan, in order to oversee operations on the ground at an interval judged appropriate by the Board of Trustees.

Consistency between the Credit Hour Policy, Syllabi, and Practice

Although the AUA Credit Hour Policy is stated clearly, the sample course syllabi varied in format and the number of hours of instruction per course. Some syllabi did not include the number of credit units earned by students, which made evaluation even more difficult, although this information might be available elsewhere. Additional details are provided in the team report on the Credit Hour Policies and Procedures (Appendix). The team recommends that for the EER review, AUA assure that its syllabi and other materials meet the expectations of WASC credit hour policy and that AUA prepare and present more consistent documents for the EER visit.

Plans for Undergraduate Education

In the course of this review, undergraduate education emerged as a high priority for AUA's future development. As a result of significant and widespread support from stakeholders, the team learned much about AUA's plans. The team recognizes that moving in this direction will create a significant capacity challenge in terms of faculty, staff, student services, and financial support. It is clear, however, that AUA is aware of this issue and is planning to ensure sufficient resources to support a new undergraduate program. The team notes that AUA's progress in this area should be evaluated at the time of the Educational Effectiveness Review.

III. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The team very much appreciated the extraordinarily well-organized visit that facilitated candid, collegial conservations with AUA's leadership, faculty, staff, students and alumni as well as with relevant government representatives. Through these conversations, the team learned

much about the institution that greatly enriched its understanding beyond that gained from AUA's CPR Report. The team was also grateful for the opportunity to better understand AUA's context in the larger history of Armenia and the Armenian people. In light of what it has learned, the team commends AUA for:

1) Substantial progress in every dimension of the physical plant and facilities; they are impressive.

2) On-going fulfillment of its mission as evidenced by: AUA's dedication to its students, the satisfaction of its students, its successful alumni who continue to reflect positively on the transformative experiences they had at AUA, the dedication and commitment of faculty, and the national government's recognition of the value of an AUA degree, and the model it provides for higher education in Armenia.

3) An academic program review process that is thorough and effective.

4) The progress AUA has made, relative to the last accreditation visit, in establishing an on-site leadership team including the hiring of its first full time president.

5) The commitment of its boards over many years, with the recent gains in fundraising, and especially the new building, as tangible demonstrations of that commitment.

6) The completion of a substantial and inclusive strategic planning process, an effort that is particularly noteworthy.

Recommendations:

The team recommends that AUA:

1) Provide ongoing support and resources to promote quality assurance practices and educational effectiveness (CFRs 1.2, 1.3, 1.9, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 3.8, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7).

2) With its promising institutional research capacity, adopt a culture of analytic thinking and reflection so that AUA can articulate goals for student success appropriate to its mission, measure progress against those goals, and take action based on findings. In particular, the Commission expects graduation rate and time-to-degree data to be disaggregated by variables important to the mission of the institution. Consideration should be given to developing a student information database with unit records for each student (CFRs 1.2, 1.5, 2.7, 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.8).

3) In anticipation of its switch to a semester system, ensure consistency and alignment among the policy on credit hours, the information on syllabi, and practice. For example, the team found syllabi without credit hours, as well as instances of meeting times that might be inadequate according to policy (CFRs 1.7, 1.9, 2.1, 2.2).

4) Continue vigilance regarding financial operations and advancement, while providing the resources necessary for institutional growth and development, as the institution continues to move toward financial sustainability (CFR 3.5).

5) Continue to develop and refine its student learning assessment practices across all academic programs and to develop guidelines for the systematic review of co-curricular and support services such as career services, the library, and the registrar (CFRs 2.2, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.11, 2.13, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7).

IV.   PREPARATIONS FOR THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

The team finds that AUA is making good progress in its preparations for the Educational Effectiveness Review. With the exception of multi-year contracts, the institution has met the outcomes outlined in the Institutional Proposal for completion by the Capacity and Preparatory Review. The Capacity and Preparatory Report also includes a set of clear next steps for each reaccreditation theme that respond to the institution's findings. With this, AUA is positioned to meet the outcomes established in the Institutional Proposal for the Educational Effectiveness Review. Indeed, the team saw evidence of educational effectiveness during its visit both in relation to annual assessment and program review. Multi-year contracts are slated for implementation within the coming year and the team encourages AUA to meet this outstanding goal. It also encourages AUA to pursue, as it did for the CPR, evidence to illustrate both how and the degree to which it has met the outcomes it has established for its Educational Effectiveness Review.

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report for all CPR, EER and Initial Accreditation Visits. Teams are not required to include a narrative about this matter in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings and Recommendations section of the team report.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)	Verified Yes/No
Policy on credit hour	Does this policy adhere to WASC policy and federal regulations?	Yes
	Comments: Apparently anticipating the transition from the current quarter system to a semester system in fall 2012, the AUA credit hour policy is based on 15 weeks of instruction per semester, with a single credit hour equivalent to 15 academic hours of faculty-led instruction plus 30 hours of student work outside of the classroom. This is consistent with the WASC policy on the credit hour. The number of hours of instruction for individual courses varies across programs:	

1. MKT590 (BA369-not in Student Handbook) (4 units)- 3 hrs. x 12 (3 hr-midterm, 3 hr-final); This course was not listed in the Student Handbook provided in the team room. Here 3 hours are 180 minutes.
2. MGT520 (4 units) - 3 hrs x 11, including 3 hrs of final essay exam = 3 x 180 minutes without break x 11 = 1,980 minutes, < 40 hrs (x 50 minutes) =2,000 minutes.
3. SBC/ECN410 (4 units) - 1 hr 40 min x 20 = 2,000 minutes. without break.
4. IE276 (4 units) - says I hr lecture + 6 hrs. of lab/wk, but, detailed description shows 16 hrs of lecture + 39 lab hrs= 16+39/2=35.5 hrs. With each hour as 60 minutes, the total minutes is greater than 2,000.
5. IE242 (4 units) - T/F 2hr20min, 10 wks =140x20 =2,400 minutes.
6. IE230 (4 units) -10 weeks, M/Th 2hrs= 4hrs/wk X 9 wks + final week=2,200 mins
7. TE320(TF113)(4 units)- T, R(120 minutes) X 2x 10 wks = 2,400 minutes
8. TEFL 138 (4 units)- M/W (120 minute) X 2x 10 wks = 2,400 minutes
9. TEFL 137 (4 units)- M/W (120 minute) x2x 10 wks = 2,400 minutes
10. PH320 (2 units)-Oct 17-21 (3:00-7:30 p.m.) one-week course (1,150 minutes)
11. Qualitative Research Methods (4 units) -seminar discussion and mentored writing, data collection, data analysis. 3 hrs x 13 classes=180 minutesx13=2,340 minutes.
12. LW342(3 units)- 18:20-20:00 M or T; Th 18:20-19:10 or 19:10-20:00 10wks 100 min x 10 + 50 minutes x 10 = 1,500 minutes
13. BA312 (2 units) 1:30 hrs, 11 classes = 90 X 11= 990
14. LW141 (2 units) Th (2 hrs) 10 sessions = 120 x 10=1,200 min
15. LW101 (2 units) 2 hrs x 10 sessions= 1,200 min

16. PS646 (no unit information provided) 20 sessions
17. PS610 (4 units) T, Th 1 hr 50 min x 17 sessions plus final=1,960 min
18. PS543 (4 units) 1 hr 50 min x 20 = 2,200 min
19. ESC292 (2 units) 120 minutes x 8 sessions = 960 minutes
20. ESC298 (2 units) 120 minutes x 9 = 1080 minutes
21. ES302 (2 units) 120 minutes x 10 = 1,200 minutes

The presented sampled schedules are based the quarter system. There are no regular seminar courses that give credit hours. Likewise, no detailed description is provided for internship courses. Roughly speaking 20 hours (1,000 minutes) of instruction is expected for 2 units, and 40 hours (2,000 minutes) for 4 units. However, there is some variation; some 2 unit courses have less than 1,000 minutes of instruction time (e.g. ECSC292), PS610 (4 units) has less than 2,000 minutes, while 1,200 minutes of instruction are offered for 2 units in LW141. Some courses can be 4 hours long, but the break time duration may vary with the professor. There also exists some variation in the total number of weeks a course may be offered (less than 10 weeks in a quarter) to accommodate visiting faculty members. However, the total number of instructional hours is observed generally.

Process(es)/ periodic review	Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)?	Yes
	Does the institution adhere to this procedure?	Yes
	Comments: The Curriculum Committee reviews and approves new course proposals and changes in existing courses. For assessing the intended learning outcomes and verification of student achievement, AUA has established and applied academic program reviews done in every five years, together with annual student learning assessments since 2007. With emphasis on "closing-the-loop" AUA uses the outcomes to improve the programs which include the credit hour policy related procedures.	
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours?	Yes
	Comments: Yes, many courses gave dates of class meetings and strictly required attendance by students.	
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses	What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? How many syllabi were reviewed? What degree level(s)? What discipline(s)?	No on-line or hybrid courses, although on-line lectures may have been added occasionally.
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded?	NA
	Comments:	
Sample syllabi or equivalent	What kinds of courses? (please see below) How many syllabi were reviewed?	

for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated)	What degree level(s)? -masters level What discipline(s)? All programs offer internships of 8 units (master's capstone thesis projects plus defense) usually during the second year. Practicum courses are assigned 4 units.	
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded?	
	Independent studies are allowed rarely only for unusual cases such as delaying graduation due to long lapse of next course offering time.	

Recommendation: Although the AUA Credit Hour Policy is stated clearly, the sample course syllabi varied in format and the number of hours of instruction per course. Some syllabi did not include the number of credit units earned by students, which made evaluation even more difficult, although this information might be available elsewhere. The team recommends that for the EER review, AUA assure that its syllabi and other materials meet the expectations of WASC credit hour policy and that AUA prepare and present more consistent documents for the EER visit.