REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM
For Reaffirmation of Accreditation

To United Arab Emirates University

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Section I – Overview and Context

A. Description of Institution and Accreditation History

The United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) was established in 1976 by federal law as the nation's first government-sponsored university with a focus on intellect, culture, and science, and is the largest and most comprehensive university in the Country. Currently, it enrolls more than 14,000 students from 75 different countries, including over 1,300 in graduate master's and doctoral programs, 73% of whom are female and 15% are international students (non-Emirati).

As of Spring 2020, UAEU has 2,172 employees, 945 of whom are academic staff (faculty members and instructors), including 651 (69%) with doctoral degrees and 271 (31%) with master's degrees (most of whom are instructors teaching in the Foundation Program). Teaching faculty represent 76 nationalities. Females represent 26% of the academic staff and 56% of the non-academic staff. Emirati faculty represent 24% of total faculty.

Since its founding, UAEU has evolved from an undergraduate teaching institution to a comprehensive university and has continued to expand its breadth of program offerings and depth of research. Students have access to a broad range of undergraduate and graduate programs across nine degree-offering colleges supported by the University College (i.e., various student support services) and the College of Graduate Studies. Together, these colleges offer a total of more than 100 degrees at undergraduate and graduate levels on the main campus in the city of Al Ain, in addition to other locations in Abu Dhabi and Dubai (see Appendix B). The prevalent language of instruction at the University is English.

As a university with a research focus, UAEU works with its partners in industry to provide research solutions to challenges faced by the nation and the region. Nine research centers are advancing knowledge and developing innovative and sustainable solutions in areas of strategic

importance to the country and the region, such as water, health, environmental protection, biotechnology, traffic safety, public policy, happiness, and energy. In addition, the University has established the Science and Innovation Park as a hub for innovation, entrepreneurship and leadership to foster the transitioning of the UAE economy from an oil economy toward a knowledge economy.

The UAEU has increased standards and support for English proficiency. They have partnered with edX, the Asian Universities Alliance, University of California, Berkeley, and others to offer programs and conduct research on a global scale. In January 2017, the UAEU launched the Emirates Institute for Learning Outcomes (EILOA) as a hub for networking and knowledge sharing in assessment. Over the past five years, the University has received its highest-ever international rankings. This evidence supports their seriousness in advancing the institution through partnerships, high-quality research and degree programs.

Since initial WSCUC accreditation in 2016 UAEU has submitted 31 substantive changes (25 PhD, 4 MS, 2 BS). In February, 2019 WSCUC conducted a Special Visit and took action to continue with an Off Site Review, which was conducted in April, 2021 with a recommendation to proceed with a site visit in March, 2022.

B. Description of Team's Review Process

The WSCUC reaffirmation site visit team reviewed UAEU's Institutional Report, all appendices and related materials, as well as additional written materials requested in the Offsite Review, and communications to a confidential e-mail account. The team found the university's staff to be very responsive to all requests for information. Materials were well-written, logical and thorough.

The team began its site visit work on Monday, March 7, 2022 with meetings at a UAEU off-campus location in Abu Dhabi (see Appendix B). On Tuesday morning March 8, the team began a series of meetings at the main Al Ain campus starting with the institution's CEO (i.e., UAEU Vice-Chancellor). A series of 22 meetings and a campus tour ensued, held through March 10, with faculty, students, staff and administrative leaders from across the campus. Meeting participants and content were focused on the lines of inquiry from the Offsite Review as follows: Governance, student success, assessment and program review, faculty, and sustainability.

C. Institution's Reaccreditation Report and Update: Quality and Rigor of the Report and Supporting Evidence

UAEU prepared a very thorough, well-organized and well-written report that gave an accurate and complete picture of the institution. There was ample additional documentation in the form of appendices and attachments, all of which exemplified rigorous evidence-based self-study. The University was very responsive to the team's line of inquiry questions and requests for additional documentation.

Through the Offsite Review and the site visit, there was evidence of broad involvement of trustees (i.e., the University Council), as well as faculty, staff, and administrative leaders from across the campus. Faculty were present in many of the meetings either directly representing their academic interests or by virtue of their involvement in committees and groups of interest during the site visit (e.g., program review, student support, curriculum, accreditation steering). The same was true for staff and administrative leaders.

Section II – Evaluation of Institutional Essays

Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions

UAEU has taken WSCUC accreditation recommendations to heart, including the recommendations it received during its last WSCUC accreditation review. It has worked to improve its governance structure. Meaningful efforts have been made to improve processes and procedures related to recruitment, hiring, purchasing and grant management. UAEU has studied the impact of raising admission standards (related to higher English language scores) on both admissions and student success. The institution created "baseline" funding for its library and invested in other library improvements. Finally, it has diversified its revenue streams, primarily through growth in funded research. (CFR 1.3)

The team notes that while UAEU has worked to improve its governance processes, its efforts have been hampered by existing Federal law that blurs the oversight role of the board with administrative functions. To its credit, the institution drafted a new governance law that, if approved, will eliminate this role friction, and provide other benefits both for UAEU and sister federally-sponsored institutions. Multiple people interviewed by the team fully expect that this draft governance document will be signed into law soon.

The new law, if approved, will require administrative and governing board leaders to forge new relationships in some areas. The team believes that it will remain important for both the administration and the board to continue their efforts to build an effective, mutually beneficial partnership that respects and supports their differentiated roles and has included this as one of its recommendations.

The teams' campus visit to UAEU was delayed due to the impact of Covid-19 on travel, and restrictions had just begun to lift at the time of the rescheduled visit. UAEU's responses to the

pandemic focused on the safety of students, faculty, and staff as well as ways to mitigate impacts on student learning. For example, the institution leveraged its IT infrastructure by offering virtual classrooms and proctored exams. Faculty interviews revealed broad appreciation for UAEU's support during this time and for helping to ensure minimal loss of learning opportunities for students. Importantly, for UAEU, the pandemic heightened awareness of the need to be prepared for future health risks, in part by moving toward a more flexible array of course delivery modalities with faculty adept in using them. (CFRs 3.3 and 4.4) UAEU's response to the Covid-19 pandemic has been commendable in many respects and the team has thus offered a commendation reflecting this fact.

UAEU received its initial accreditation from WSCUC in 2016. Since that time, it has engaged with WSCUC through such processes as annual reports, mid-cycle reviews and substantive change applications. Additionally, the institution is a regular contributor to WSCUC ARC and has a history of consulting with WSCUC regarding educational effectiveness initiatives.

UAEU has also actively sought accreditation for programs where specialized accreditation is possible. Currently, thirty of its academic programs have received specialized accreditation. Both institutional and specialized accreditations are important to the institution as part of its drive towards ensuring quality and being recognized for doing so. (CFR 4.1)

UAEU's preparation for the current WSCUC review was both appropriate and effective, with a steering committee, leads for each major focal point of the report, and processes for gaining relevant feedback from students, faculty, and staff. The team learned that the role of the steering committee persists beyond accreditation reviews, and committee members are invested in

ensuring that review results are used for institutional improvement. Many were able to proudly point to steering committee contributions in following up on recommendations received during the most recent WSCUC review. (CFR 1.8)

B.   Component 2: Compliance: Review under WSCUC Standards and compliance with federal requirements

UAEU completed the reaffirmation accreditation review thoroughly, reflectively, with analysis of evidence, and with plans and resources to address areas of improvement.

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) is a United Arab Emirates (UAE) government-sponsored university. It has clear statements of its mission and vision that emphasize its goals of being a positive contributor to the advancement of the UAE. Its goal of enhancing the research capacity of the country is supported by its successful efforts to become a leading research-intensive university in the region.   UAEU's mission and values and the university activities that support them clearly define UAEU's essential values and its contribution to the public good. (CFR 1.1)

UAEU has highly developed learning outcomes at the university, program and course levels. It has a robust infrastructure for the assessment and for data collection and storage of program review and learning outcomes assessment data (i.e., PRAMS and LOAMS). It has a Learning Outcomes Assessment Unit in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness that assists with program assessment follow-up activities to close the assessment loop. In addition, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness publicly posts indicators of student achievement. (CFR 1.2) Prior to the visit, the team had concerns about the nature and level of faculty reflection on learning

outcomes assessment data and discussions regarding areas for improvement, but during the visit the team was very impressed by the enthusiasm and level of engagement displayed in the team's meeting with deans, department chairs and faculty.

UAEU has a Code of Professional Ethics that asserts its commitment to academic freedom and integrity. It also has a Student Academic Grievances and Appeals Policy. (CFR 1.6)

UAEU states its commitment to equity and diversity, and has a Diversity and Equal Opportunity Policy that applies to all faculty, staff and students. (CRF 1.4) However, the policy does appear to differentiate between native UAE students and non-national students with regards to certain opportunities, such as work placement and scholarships. While this is consistent with the goal of UAE to develop the UAE's workforce, it does appear to have led to some tensions among non-national faculty and staff.

UAEU has a governance policy to ensure that its educational mission is free from inappropriate government interference. In addition, UAEU is currently in negotiations with the UAE federal government in order to increase its level of autonomy. It is also proposing amendments to the University Law that would strengthen the oversight role of the University Council once the law has been approved by the government. (CFR 1.5) Further negotiations regarding the draft governance law were held while the team was conducting its visit, and the Vice Chancellor seemed confident that the law would be finalized and approved within the next few weeks.

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to determine compliance with Standard 1.

Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives

Standard 2 requires institutions to demonstrate attainment of their educational objectives through core functions of 1) teaching and learning, 2) scholarship and creative activity, and 3) support for student learning and success. As an institution fairly recently receiving initial accreditation and seeking reaffirmation for the first time, UAEU has demonstrated a strong embrace of the WSCUC standards in establishing and evaluating these core functions. The institutional report supplemented by the responses to lines of inquiry and discussions with the visiting team demonstrate a comprehensive and widely held consensus and commitment to build, maintain, evaluate and refine programs and procedures that are in alignment with the criteria for requirements of this standard.

More detailed descriptions of these institutional initiatives can be found in other sections of this report, but one specific illustrative example might be useful here. Development and implementation of the campus-wide Learning Outcomes Assessment Management System (LOAMS), deployed in 2018, is an impressive achievement that provides rich data-driven resources that are analyzed and used to monitor student learning, to develop as indicated remedial actions, and to assess those actions. Notable from campus conversations was the widespread support for and use of the comprehensive assessment tools that have been created. (CFR 2.6)

In its report, the school acknowledged that they have not yet developed a more systematic assessment of co-curricular and extracurricular programs. Conversations during the site visit confirmed that the school is committed to filling this gap. (CFR 2.11)

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to determine compliance with Standard 2.

Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability

The university maintains a well-qualified faculty. All faculty, although not necessarily all instructors and lecturers, have terminal degrees relevant to their appointments. UAEU materials report that the student-faculty ratio is 9.2:1. University planning documents and quality assurance manuals suggest that the institution would like to better align the student-faculty ratio with comparable international institutions. This will be partially addressed as the university moves incrementally to a co-educational model for instruction delivery, which will allow it to offer fewer sections of many courses. Fewer than 25% of faculty members are female, although females represent a greater share (39%) of instructor positions. Given that more than 80% of the university's students are female, the institution might consider how to increase female participation in the faculty. International diversity is an outstanding feature of the UAEU faculty, with 76 nationalities represented. The university aspires to elevate its research and scholarship profile. This may lead the university to examine various aspects of faculty compensation. UAEU may also find it useful to examine the adequacy of staff available to support research activities. (CFRs 2.8 and 3.1)

UAEU's personnel policies regarding faculty and staff are well developed, clearly articulated, and systematically applied. Faculty and staff handbooks, as well as manuals for deans and chairs, provide detailed standards and processes for hiring, as well as regular review processes, and promotion processes. Academic Personnel and Human Resource offices oversee the implementation of these processes. The Workload Policy provides detailed guidelines for faculty members and instructors in different streams and at different ranks. Deans and chairs have some flexibility to adjust workloads as appropriate for the instructional needs and academic

goals of colleges and departments. Some non-Emirati faculty and staff members raised concern during the Accreditation Visit that this flexibility has been exercised in ways that disadvantaged them, especially as UAEU adapted its instruction to meet the exigencies of the pandemic. (CFR 3.2)

Faculty development is largely under the purview of the Academic Personnel Office and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL). The former is responsible for new faculty orientation. CETL provides support for instructional design, scholarship of teaching and learning research, and several communities of practice. The Workplace Planning and HR Development Section of Human Resources provides a range of opportunities for staff to build knowledge, skills, and capabilities. (CFR 3.3)

UAEU has a record of financial stability, attested to by reports from prominent external auditors. University officials are proactive in planning for the fiscal resources needed to achieve institutional goals. The university depends on revenue almost exclusively from contributions from the UAE Federal Government (90% or more in recent years). Much of the federal contribution is based on, and highly sensitive to, student headcount. As more institutions of higher education appear in the UAE, the university understands that it will face an increasingly competitive environment. Expected changes in federal law regarding university governance would provide opportunities to develop a more flexible federal funding model. The university's strategy calls for a diversification of revenue sources, improvement of financial management, and cost optimization. The university also understands the need to better align budgeting with strategic planning. (CFR 3.4)

UAEU features a robust information technology infrastructure, including library access to at least 136 online databases. Computers are available at the library and elsewhere on campus for

student use. Classrooms, library workspaces, laboratories, residential villages, and recreational facilities are up-do-date and in many cases cutting edge. (CFR 3.5)

Procedures are in place to provide accountability for and incentivize responsibility in the university's leadership. A comprehensive Quality Assurance Manual provides a general framework for responsibility and accountability. Complete elaboration of some procedures (e.g., Vice Chancellor Evaluation) await final approval of the draft UAEU governance law and final approval of strategic KPIs. (CFR 3.6)

The university's organizational structures and decision-making processes are very detailed. These structures and processes are richly documented on the university's website, in particular on a "Bylaws, Policies & Procedures" website and in a Standing Committees Handbook. (CFR 3.7)

UAEU has a full-time Chief Executive Officer, the Vice Chancellor, and a Chief Financial Officer. These are full-time and exclusive appointments. The organization of the university is similar to U.S. institutions with comparable profiles (comprehensive, research-intensive), with divisions and schools headed by appropriately credentialed individuals. (CFR 3.8)

Both previous WSCUC reviews and the institution's own self-review under the standards conducted for this accreditation review, highlight "the oversight role of the Board and its Chair" as "an area of further improvement." A highly anticipated new University Law, which should soon be promulgated, would clarify the role of the board and its chair, providing the basis for a model governance relationship. In the meantime, the board has taken critical self-reflective steps to address previous concerns. These include developing a close working relationship with the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) and the appointment of a board secretary, which have

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enabled the board to evolve into an increasingly generative actor that can identify focused

performance measures for the university and engage university leadership. (CFR 3.9)

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has

provided sufficient evidence to determine compliance with Standard 3.

Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional

Learning, and Improvement

UAEU has created strong alignments of its learning outcomes, program outcomes, and

institutional outcomes. Its institutional learning outcomes define core competencies that students

are expected to achieve through study in their major fields, general education curriculum, and

extra-curricular activities. These outcomes are consistent with UAEU's mission and goals and

reflect competencies that WSCUC has emphasized. (CFR 4.1)

UAEU also has a well-developed general education program that has been externally

reviewed and revised, as is appropriate, to better support new institutional priorities and WSCUC

recommendations. Program oversight is through a broadly representative faculty general

education committee (CFRs 2.2a and 4.1).

Quality assurance through the regular conduct of appropriate reviews and assessments

appears to be an integral part of UAEU culture. UAEU's Office of Institutional Effectiveness

has overall responsibility for quality assurance. The institution has a comprehensive Quality

Assurance Framework and has made critical hires to support quality assurance efforts.

Additionally, it has created policy and procedures for quality assurance efforts in areas such as

academic program review, learning outcomes assessment, and faculty teaching effectiveness. It

has also provided the technological support needed to automate and support faculty in the

learning outcomes assessment process. (CFR 4.2)

The learning outcomes infrastructure at UAEU is both comprehensive and integrated. The oversight for program learning outcomes comes not only from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness but also the University Learning Outcomes Committee and the University Program and Curriculum Committee. The institution makes effective use of a technology tools to streamline these processes. (CFR 4.2)

Specifically, UAEU has well-developed and effective course learning outcomes processes. All sections of all courses are assessed each time the course is offered, and a committee then reviews assessment results and recommends "remedial" actions as needed to improve student learning. (CFRs 2.3 and 4.1)

Similarly, UAEU's program learning outcomes assessment processes are equally well-developed and effective. All programs have an approved assessment plan, with assessment results reviewed regularly by a committee responsible for recommending and monitoring "remedial" actions as needed. (CFRs 2.3 and 4.1)

Finally, the institution has developed a set of institutional learning outcomes, and it has implemented effective processes for determining if students are achieving these outcomes (CFRs 2.3 and 4.1) UAEU will benefit from more clearly differentiating between ILO expectations for undergraduate and graduate students.

In 2020, UAEU implemented a new two-stage academic program review process. The first level occurs annually for all programs, which are assessed using various sets of performance indicators for areas ranging from faculty research productivity to teaching. Programs that fall short of these performance expectations are subject to a comprehensive external review and improvement plans. (CFRs 2.6, 2.7 and 4.1)

UAEU has an international faculty, most of whom have terminal degrees. Recruitment has lagged somewhat due to Covid-19 travel and contact restrictions, but new investments for faculty hires were recently approved by the university management, and recruitment and hiring processes have opened again. This funding will also enable the institution to better retain faculty in an increasing competitive higher education environment. (CFR 3.2)

The institution provides faculty with appropriate support in areas ranging from teaching effectiveness and outcomes assessment to research seed grants.   In general faculty expressed satisfaction with these support services, particularly with respect to outcomes assessment. (CFR 3.3).

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to determine compliance with Standard 4.

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has provided sufficient evidence to determine compliance with the federal requirements for credit hour, marketing and recruitment, student complaints, and transfer policy (See Appendices A.1-4).

Component 3: Degree Programs: Meaning, quality and integrity of the degrees

UAEU places high value and puts to good use the WSCUC standards of accreditation to further the meaning, quality and integrity of their undergraduate and graduate degrees. The purposes and academic accomplishments of undergraduate and graduate students are well publicized and supported with accessible evidence on retention, graduation and student learning. (CFRs 1.2 and 2.6) The integrity of the degrees is undergirded by a large and internationally diverse group of PhD faculty representing 76 countries. (CFR 3.1)

In support of its international aspirations, UAEU has defined the mission of undergraduate education as preparation for the world of work but also to prepare students for global awareness and leadership potential. This mission is achieved through structured general education and learning in a major to provide coherent sequence of courses., internship and research experience, and an optional minor. The undergraduate experience is enhanced though opportunities to participate in summer research projects, and attend conferences and exhibits held in UAE. More recently the University has added entrepreneurship as a core skill, in alignment with institutional mission, that is supported through the required internship. (CFR 2.2a)

At the graduate level, learning outcomes emphasize disciplinary specialization along with the ability to integrate knowledge across related areas. The quality of undergraduate and graduate learning experiences is enhanced by the extensive use of learning outcomes to measure acquisition of knowledge and skills, as well as careful review from academic advisors. (CFR 2.4)

The University, through the College of Graduate Studies, offers a coordinated system of support for education, research and professional development. This includes workshops, seminars, certificate training programs related to research skills, academic writing, leadership skills, software or technical skills, presentation and communication, publication in top journals, career development, stress management, life-academic balance, and personal development. Graduate students also conduct workshops and trainings for other students through the College of Graduate Studies. For PhD students there is a teaching academy program for those who want to pursue academic careers. (CFR 2.2b)

Finally, the University supports the quality and integrity of UAEU degrees through published standards of quality assurance, assessment of learning outcomes, annual internal department

program reviews, and external peer-based program review. (CFRs 2.2, 2.4, 2.7, and 4.1, and see Component 6).

Component 4: Educational Quality: Student learning, core competencies, and standards of performance at graduation

UAEU has been meticulous in using WSCUC standards as a guide when developing and assessing educational programs to fulfill the institution's mission "to make positive contribution to the advancement of the United Arab Emirates by preparing graduates for future leadership roles and providing quality education that meets international standards." These efforts are clearly articulated in the school's report and were confirmed by extensive conversations among the accreditation visit team and a broad cross-section of campus representatives. (CFR 2.1)

There is a comprehensive alignment of learning outcomes at the course, program and institutional level with program objectives through detailed processes and procedures that appear to be applied with rigor and consistency. Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) define core competencies that prepare graduates to be successful in their chosen disciplines, assume future leadership roles, and contribute to a national agenda. (CFRs 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, and 2.6)

There is a foundational undergraduate General Education Program required of students in all colleges to provide a common, unifying learning environment designed "to broaden intellectual horizons and to stimulate intellectual growth." The program was reviewed and approved by the Academic Council and offered for the first time in fall 2019 and subsequently revised to align with the UAEU Strategic Plan 2017-2021. (CFRs 2.2a and 2.4)

A Quality Assurance Manual was developed by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness "to define the processes used for measurement, assessment, evaluation, accountability, and accreditation" for all programs and services provided by the University. Numerous conversations

with the site team confirm that quality assurance is seriously and consistently pursued at the University. Central to the effectiveness assessment is the campus-wide Learning Outcomes Management System (LOAMS) which provides comprehensive tools for administrators regarding tracking submission of data, progress in the implementation of remedial action and impact of implemented actions. Results roll up to generate Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) which are analyzed and assessed as part of a comprehensive systemic review. (CFRs 1.2, 2.6, 4.1, 4.3, and 4.4)

All academic programs undergo annual program review, facilitated by PRAMS with emphasis on faculty, research productivity, program viability, and course offerings. A second level of review identifies programs at risk and initiates a comprehensive review of the identified programs, concluding with recommended actions for improvement and a follow-up mechanism to ensure implementation of the actions. In conversations with academic leaders, the team was informed of the termination of programs that failed to meet the required improvements. (CFRs 2.7, 3.5, and 4.1).

The school recognizes the critical importance of recruiting and retaining high-caliber faculty to support both its goals of educational excellence and becoming a highly regarded research institution. Senior administrative leaders, when meeting with the site visit team, expressed strong support of the school's diversity policy with regard to the recruitment and retention of women and Emirati faculty. However, it appears that a concerted plan to convert the commitment to results has not yet been developed and implemented. All faculty have PhD degrees in relevant disciplines from well-regarded international universities. Seventy-six nationalities are represented, and 21% of the faculty members are women. Forty-five percent of all faculty and instructors have been working at UAEU for more than ten years. (CFR 3.1)

The school recognizes the importance of faculty development and has taken important steps in providing professional development opportunities. However, in site visit conversations with UAEU academic leaders they acknowledged a need to do more, especially regarding research support given the school's recent emphasis on developing its reputation as a research institution (CFRs 2.8 and 3.2). The team has thus included research support and infrastructure among its recommendations.

Component 5: Student Success: Student learning, retention, and graduation

UAEU defines student success as having a focus on innovation, societal value, future-ready skills and knowledge, and leadership. This definition is in alignment with its being the preeminent, federally-funded university in the UAE. It measures student success with both traditional measures of retention, attrition and graduation rates and with external measures of success, including rates of post-graduation employment and by transition to advanced study. Since these two external measures are not completely in UAEU's control, it uses achievement of learning outcomes that relate to employability and preparedness for advanced study as proxy measures for the external outcomes. UAEU considers student success as "the heart" of what they do, through academic programs and student support services. (CFR 4.1)

UAEU collects extensive data on a number of metrics relating to student success and disaggregates them by degree level, college and academic program, gender and nationality. This data is reported annually to the Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of Education. UAEU's graduation rate is a key performance indicator for its performance-based funding from the Federal Government. Student success data is also presented in an Executive Dashboard that is accessible to university leadership, Deans and Department Chairs, and to academic programs for program review purposes. Summary data is also presented on the university's Office of

Institutional Effectiveness website. It also benchmarks its graduation rates against several peer institutions (CFRs 2.10 and 4.1).

UAEU has consistently high retention and graduation rates, with some differences related to gender and national origin. For the 2011-2015 cohorts, all have average graduation rates ranging from 71.8 – 76.8%. However, in each of these cohorts, women have higher rates that men (females ranging from 75.4-79.9%, and males from 59.7-64.4%), and non-nationals have higher rates than UAEU nationals (non-nationals ranging from 78.4-83.2%, and UAEU nationals from 69.8 – 76.4%). Graduation rates are fairly consistent across academic programs when accounting for nominal length of programs. UAEU offers possible external causes for the gender differences in graduation rates but has launched an investigation into the causes for the gap. Due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic, it is too early to assess the results of these efforts, and so they should be monitored closely in the next few years. Likewise, possible causes being investigated for the differences in rates related to nationality include higher graduation rates for non-nationals and more employment opportunities for nationals. (CFR 2.10)

While UAEU's graduation rates are consistently high, they are slightly lower than several of its peer institutions. It was also observed that the length of time students are taking to complete their programs has increased. The UAEU graduation rate at 1.5 times the length of the degree programs has declined from 79.2% for the 2009-10 cohort to 71.8% for the 2013-14 cohort. Therefore, UAEU has recently implemented a number of initiatives to improve student progress and completion. These include: an increase in the minimum annual study load for undergraduates in good standing; an increase in undergraduate admission standards; infusing English language proficiency support across the General Education curriculum; the centralization of pre-major undergraduate student advising into the Pre-Major Advising Office at the

University College with plans to expand to all undergraduate students; and the implementation of a CRM student success solution in addition to Degree Works and Analytics. (CFRs 2.11 and 2.12)

For UAEU master's degree programs, the 4-year graduation rate increased from 69.8% for the 2014-15 cohort to 72.4% for the 2016-17 cohort. However, attrition rates have also increased over this period. There are also variations in rates across master's degree programs. As in the undergraduate program, UAEU has implemented a number of policies to improve completion rates in its master's programs. The completion rates for doctoral programs is quite low, ranging from 39% and 48% for the 2012-13 to the 2014-15 cohorts. The attrition rate has also steadily decreased over this time period. UAEU has recommended policy changes to doctoral student enrollment to improve student persistence. (CFR 2.12)

While UAEU stated in their report that they were using student skills attainment and readiness for post-graduate education as proxies for students' post-graduation employment (see above), the team felt it was important to investigate its low student employment rates, given that this was included as a metric of student success and given that development of the UAE workforce is a key prong of UAE's mission and goals. Student employment during nine months post-graduation for graduates seeking a position within their specialization ranged between 37% and 39% for 2017-2019. This is significantly below UAEU's target achievement level. Further, female and Emirati nationals had significantly lower employment rates that male and graduates of other nationalities. Graduates also had extremely low employment rates in the private sector versus government employment. A report analyzing employment data made a number of recommendations, several of which UAEU has already implemented, including the implementation of Simplicity (a Career Management System), the development of a co-

curricular transcript, and increasing engagement with local employers. They are also implementing a project to hire Emirati national graduates to gain employment experience by working for the university. UAEU is to be credited for these efforts but also encouraged to continue and expand them. (CFRs 2.6, 2.10, and 2.13)

One area for possible focus that was suggested to the team in meetings with Career Center staff was to provide more professional development to modernize and professionalize the skills of graduates. Because of the importance of this area to both UAEU and the UAE economy, the team has included making continued efforts to enhance the employment of UAE graduates as one of its recommendations. (CFRs 2.6, 2.10, and 2.13)

UAEU has a full complement of both academic and student support services as well as co-curricular programs to support students' personal and professional development. (CFRs 2.11 and 2.12) One such program is the Student Success Unit (SSU), which supports students from admission to graduation. In addition to providing academic support, this unit also offers programs and events to strengthen student engagement. SSU programs that support academic success include the Tutorial Center, the Writing Center, the Speaking Center and, most recently added, the Technology Center. It also includes Pre-Major Advising. As mentioned above, Pre-Major Advising was recently centralized to provide more consistent advising during a critical period in their undergraduate experience. There are discussions underway to expand the Pre-Major Advising Office to serve all students as a comprehensive advising services center. UAEU also offers an extensive array of student life activities, ranging from programs offered through its residential halls, sports and recreation facilities, community outreach programs, and a recently launched Student Leadership program. (CFR 2.11)

All of these centers collect data on usage and student satisfaction, which is available for program review and development. However, UAEU acknowledges that a more systematic assessment of co-curricular programs needs to be established.

Component 6: Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program review, assessment, use of data and evidence

In addition to WSCUC accreditation, all UAEU's academic programs are externally accredited by the UAE Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) as well as specialized professional accreditation where appropriate (e.g., AACSB for business, ABET for engineering). Since 2016 UAEU has adhered to CAA standards and aligned them with WSCUC external program review standards that include a site visit by a panel of external reviewers. The results of program reviews that were reviewed by the site visit team include policy and program development across a wide range of topics including e-learning, career services, alumni relations, community relations, social media, and off-campus programs. (CFRs 2.4, 2.7, and 4.1)

UAEU has invested heavily in the administrative, technical, and human resource aspects of accreditation, quality assurance and improvement. Through their Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Strategy and Future Department, and Risk Management Office, the University supports quality assurance for (1) accreditation and learning outcomes, (2) institutional research for a wide range of student, faculty and institutional data indicators, (3) assessment of University strategy and future that links strategic planning with federal government requirements and ensures broad engagement in quality review, and (4) risk management that is primarily focused on administrative units. (CFR 4.2)

The University began cycles of internal program review for all academic units in 2019 that are comprehensive reviews of curricula, learning outcomes, faculty effort and performance

improvement planning. As referenced elsewhere in this report (Standard 3 and Component 7), the database systems that support quality assurance and improvement (PRAMS that supports internal Program Review and LOAMS that supports assessment of learning outcomes and which is integrated with their Learning Management System), are highly regarded by deans, department chairs and faculty. (CFRs 2.4, 2.7, 4.1, and 4.2).

The Program Review and Accreditation Management System (PRAMS) is used for annual internal program review. It produces a wide range of quantitative indicators with qualitative remarks and program improvement plans and status updates. Program review categories include faculty composition by rank, faculty turnover, teaching workload, research productivity, five-year departmental courses offered, class size, credit hours generated, course evaluations, CLO/PLO accomplishments, student retention/attrition, cohort graduation rates, and time to graduation. Most of these indicators are also arrayed with comparisons at college and university levels (25th and 75th percentiles). (CFRs 2.6, 2.7, and 2.10)

The site visit team examined five departmental program reviews across four colleges and departments to document the PRAMS system in action. Also included were multiple examples of rubrics for cross-school CLO, PLO, capstone and internship projects. Site visit meetings with deans, department chairs and faculty provided evidence of faculty and administrative buy-in to PRAMS. Department chairs submitted a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) for each program review category. Review of the actions noted for PIP provided evidence of "closing the loop" with program review that resulted in action for program improvement. (CFRs 2.7, 4.1, 4.3, and 4.4)

The site visit team had questions about whether the internal program review process was burdensome. To the contrary, in our meetings with the UAEU accreditation steering committee,

college deans, department chairs and faculty, there was consistent praise for the value of the PRAMS-based program review process. Nevertheless, the WSCUC team suggested that program reviews be staggered by year to avoid an undue burden on faculty and academic leadership and to facilitate thoughtful analysis of results.

Component 7: Sustainability: Financial viability, preparing for the changing higher education environment

UAEU has enjoyed an enviable record of financial stability, which has enabled the institution to offer a comprehensive catalog of curricular and co-curricular programs and to develop critical research facilities, including the UAEU Science and Innovation Park and the National Center for Space Science and Technology. The key to university finances has been contributions from the Emirates' federal government. In recent years, government support has accounted for approximately 90% of the university's revenue. It is worth noting in this respect that government support is based principally on audited student head count with supplemental funding for student services. In other words, revenues are sensitive to student, especially undergraduate student, enrollment. Under current policy, university revenues could be affected both by competition from a growing number of institutions of higher education in the UAE, online global competitors, and the difficult-to-plan-for impact of events such as the ongoing pandemic. For example, the university lost 53 million AED ($14.4 million US) in May 2020 because of a drop in undergraduate students. (CFR 3.4)

The institution has identified a three-track approach to assuring its ongoing financial sustainability: diversified funding, improved financial management, and optimized cost processes. UAEU has conducted a detailed analysis outlining key opportunities for and challenges to pursuing each of these tracks. In addition, the university has developed a detailed

plan for each track. It is likely that funding diversification is the key element in this plan. The university's recent "10-Year Forecast Financial Modeling" presentation anticipates increasing non-federal funding by approximately 5% of UAEU's budget. An anticipated new University Governance law should enable UAEU to significantly increase revenues from undergraduate tuition and fees within a decade. (CFR 4.7)

The university has developed an impressive financial modeling and forecasting capacity. Forecasts are developed for multiple scenarios (optimistic, average, and pessimistic). Forecasting is used to provide early-warnings if forecasts suggest outcomes outside acceptable parameters. The team wishes to commend UAEU for its highly effective, forward-looking strategic and fiscal planning efforts. (CFRs 3.4 and 4.3)

UAEU's institutional report provides a thoughtful reflection on global and national events and their meaning for the future of the university. At the national level, this has led the university to explore how to integrate 21st century job requirements into the curriculum and to look for ways to encourage students to develop advanced skills. This effort can be seen, for example, in the recently revised General Education Program, which includes among its three required clusters a set of courses described as "Skills for the Future". (CFRs 4.3 and 4.7)

The university has identified five global trends as key drivers for the evolution of higher education: a changing employment landscape, evolving consumer demands, re-imagining the educational experience, a constantly expanding education ecosystem, and redefining the higher-education business model. These local and global drivers underlie the institution's strategic planning, providing it with four core priorities: focusing on the student experience, high quality and adaptive program offerings, impactful research and innovation, and faculty recruitment, development, and retention.

The university has put in place important structures, such as the Strategy and Future Department, and processes to support strategic planning at all levels of the institution. These resources and support structures have enabled effective institutional planning processes, despite interim leadership for several years at both the vice chancellor and provost levels. The team has crafted a commendation related to these planning functions. (CFR 4.6)

It is noteworthy that UAEU has begun a process of moving from gender-segregated programs to classrooms and support services that integrate male and female students. Given the fact that the university is in a conservative region, this could be perceived as a bold and risky move. But it will lead to multiple benefits, including much improved facilities utilization and integrated classrooms taught at capacity. The team commends the administrative and academic leaders who are leading such efforts.

Component 8: Optional essay on institutional specific themes

Not applicable.

Component 9: Reflection and plans for improvement

As noted elsewhere in this report, the team was impressed with UAEU's depth of commitment to the peer review process and the opportunities it provides for institutions to focus on strengths as well as areas for improvement. UAEU's commitment to this process was in evidence in multiple ways, including the work of its accreditation steering committee, which is on-going and includes meaningful engagement with WSCUC findings and self-identified areas for future focus. (CFR 1.8)

During its self-study process, UAEU was able to celebrate some of its significant accomplishments and take stock of some remaining challenges and areas for future focus. By the time the team was finally able to visit the institution in March 2022, progress had already been

made in some of these areas. For example, UAEU had created a requirement for academic program external advisory boards, an action that aims to strengthen stakeholder involvement in program evaluation and student placement. Similarly, having noted some weaknesses in identifying co-curricular learning outcomes, UAEU implemented a process for better aligning co-curricular program learning experiences with academic learning outcomes.

The team believes that UAEU's sustained efforts to identify areas for improvement, and to then take appropriate actions, bodes well for its willingness and ability to respond to findings and recommendations issued by WSCUC at the completion of this review process.

Section III – Other Topics (such as Substantive Change)

Not applicable.

Section IV – Findings, Commendations, and Recommendations

The team found that UAEU admirably fulfilled the intended outcomes for this review process. The process was used by UAEU as an appropriate occasion for meaningful reflection on strengths and challenges; it led to actions designed to responds to these areas of challenge; and it reaffirmed the importance of the peer review process in helping institutions improve. It became evident to the team in multiple ways (e.g., quality of report, responsiveness to team requests, pride in past improvements based on WSCUC recommendations) that UAEU was fully committed to the WSCUC review processes and the institutional benefits it can bring. Indeed, UAEU's more general commitment to quality improvement is worthy of a team commendation.

Commendations

The Team commends the institution for the following accomplishments and practices:

a. The institution has strong, capable, and forward-looking senior administrative and academic leadership that has implemented progressive changes in the university, including the phased academic integration of male and female students.

b. The institution has created comprehensive data systems (PRAMS and LOAMS). These systems provide the university with a well-integrated and widely embraced approach to learning assessment and continuous improvement of academic programs.

c. The institution is committed to quality improvement as an on-going process. Particularly notable is the continuing work of the institution's accreditation steering committee.

d. The institution has developed critical structures and functions to plan for the future. Prominent examples include the Strategic and Future Department and the development of comprehensive long-range financial models and analytical tools.

e. The institution quickly developed and adopted effective alternative teaching and learning technologies in response to the pandemic.

Recommendations

The Team recommends that UAEU:

a. Continue to take actions, based on widely recognized best practices, that are designed to improve the effectiveness of the University Council as the institution's governing board. (CFRs 1.5 and 3.9)

b. Strengthen its efforts to improve post-graduation employment rates, which is one of UAEU's criteria for student success. (CFRs 2.6, 2.10, and 2.13)

c. Affirmatively address the representation of women and Emirati nationals in the faculty as the university works to attract and retain the high-quality faculty needed to support its educational excellence goals and its aspiration to enhance its research profile. (CFRs 1.4, 3.1, and 3.2)

d. Develop a detailed plan for continued growth of the institution's research profile that addresses areas such as graduate students and post docs, specialized research support personnel, balance between teaching and research, research partnerships, and technology transfer functions. (CFRs 2.8 and 3.2)

Appendices

A. Federal Compliance Forms

1. Credit Hour and Program Length Review

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Policy on credit hour	Is this policy easily accessible? x❑ YES ❑ NO
	Where is the policy located? https://www.uaeu.ac.ae/en/about/policies/pdf/admission/7_academic_calendar-en.pdf
	Comments:
Process(es)/ periodic review of credit hour	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)? x❑ YES ❑ NO
	Does the institution adhere to this procedure? x❑ YES ❑ NO
	Comments:
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? x❑ YES ❑ NO
	Comments:
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses *Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.*	How many syllabi were reviewed? Thirteen
	What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? On ground
	What degree level(s)? BA, MA
	What discipline(s)? Agriculture. Engineering, Space Sciences, Biology, Education
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? x❑ YES ❑ NO
	Comments:
	How many syllabi were reviewed?

Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated) *Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.*	What kinds of courses?
	What degree level(s)?
	What discipline(s)?
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? ❑ YES ❑ NO
	Comments:
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	How many programs were reviewed? Five
	What kinds of programs were reviewed? Accounting/Finance, Engineering, Cognitive Sciences
	What degree level(s)? UG, MA, PhD
	What discipline(s)? Business, Engineering, Humanities/Social Sciences
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? x❑ YES ❑ NO
	Comments:

Review Completed By: Charles McClintock
Date: March 10, 2022

2. Marketing and Recruitment Review

Material Reviewed	**Questions and Comments: Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this table as appropriate.**
**Federal regulations	Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students? X❑ YES ❑ NO
	Comments: Though the institution is not eligible for federal funding it has established procedures that follow federal regulations on recruiting students and monitors compliance as part of its internal accreditation standards review.
Degree completion and cost	Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree? X❑ YES ❑ NO
	Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree? X❑ YES ❑ NO
	Comments: See comment above.

Careers and employment	Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? X❒ YES ❒ NO
	Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable? X❒ YES ❒ NO
	Comments: See comment above.

Review Completed By: Stephen Yandle
Date: March 8-10, 2020

3. Student Complaints Review

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Policy on student complaints	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints? ❒ YES ❒ NO **Yes**
	If so, Is the policy or procedure easily accessible? Where?
	Comments: The Student Handbook includes a section on filing complaints.
Process(es)/ procedure	Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? ❒ YES ❒ NO Yes If so, please describe briefly:
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? ❒ YES ❒ NO **Yes**
	Comments: A new complaints system was launched in 2018 to improve UAEU's ability to address complaints.
Records	Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? ❒ YES ❒ NO **Yes** If so, where? The UAEU Cares office has been replaced by the Student Happiness Center, which now has responsibility for these student records
	Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? ❒ YES ❒ NO **Yes** If so, please describe briefly: New complaints system
	Comments: The SAV report concluded that this was unclear. The new complaint system should provide the capacity for tracking and monitoring student complaints.

Review Completed By: Brian E. Klunk
Date: March 18, 2022

4. Transfer Credit Review

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Transfer Credit Policy(s)	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit? ☐x YES ☐ NO
	Is the policy publicly available? ☐ YES ☐x NO If so, where? The institution has a detailed transfer credit policy in its policy handbook. However, the public website does not include any details about the policy (or criteria). The website just says: "Students enrolled in an accredited higher education institution may apply for transfer to the University in accordance with the policies and procedures approved by the University and according to the terms and conditions set by the University and within the limits of each College."
	Does the policy(s) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education? ☐x YES ☐ NO
	Comments: As stated above, UAEU does have a detailed transfer policy in its policy handbook. However, the details of this policy are not available on the Undergraduate Admissions website. It might be useful to provide more information and/or a link to the policy on the website.

Review Completed By: Donna Wiley
Date: March 21, 2022

B. Off-Campus Locations Review, as appropriate

Institution: UAEU

Type of Visit: Reaffirmation

Name of reviewer/s: Donna Wiley, Dorothy Leland

Date/s of review: 3.6 and 22, 2022

1. Site Name and Address
   UAEU Abu Dhabi Off-Campus Site – MBA Program

2. Background Information (number of programs offered at this site; degree levels; FTE of faculty and enrollment; brief history at this site; designation as a branch campus standalone location, or satellite location by WSCUC)

3.
   MBA program with 73 students. The classes are taught by CBE faculty from the main campus, so there are no full-time faculty located at this site

4. Nature of the Review (material examined and persons/committees interviewed)

The WSCUC reaccreditation team visited the Abu Dhabi Off-Campus Site. We interviewed Dr. Mohamed Madi, the College of Business and Economics Dean, and the Site Administrator, Ms. Nadia Ghabboun.

Lines of Inquiry	Observations and Findings	Follow-up Required (identify the issues)
For a recently approved site. Has the institution followed up on the recommendations from the substantive change committee that approved this new site?	NA	
Fit with Mission. How does the institution conceive of this and other off-campus sites relative to its mission, operations, and administrative structure? How is the site planned and operationalized? (CFRs 1.2, 3.1, 3.5, 4.1)	The MBA program fits with UAEU's mission to develop the UAE economy by developing its students' leadership and business functional skills.	
Connection to the Institution. How visible and deep is the presence of the institution at the off-campus site? In what ways does the institution integrate off-campus students into the life and culture of the institution? (CFRs 1.2, 2.10)	The same professors teach at both the home campus and at the off-campus site.	
Quality of the Learning Site. How does the physical environment foster learning and faculty-student contact? What kind of oversight ensures that the off-campus site is well managed? (CFRs 1.8, 2.1, 2.5, 3.1, 3.5)	The program is housed in a new building with state-of-the-art classrooms, small group meeting rooms, technology, etc. The site has a very effective full-time program manager.	
Student Support Services. What is the site's capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services and other appropriate student services? Or how are these otherwise provided? What do data show about the effectiveness of these services? (CFRs 2.11–2.13, 3.6, 3.7)	The program has an off-site staff that provides student support. It has access to all online library and other services at the home campus.	

Faculty. Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? In what ways does the institution ensure that off-campus faculty is involved in the academic oversight of the programs at this site? How do these faculty members participate in curriculum development and assessment of student learning? (CFRs 2.4, 3.1–3.4, 4.6)	See above. The same faculty teach at both the main campus and off-site location. One faculty member lives in Abu Dhabi so provides a permanent presence at the off-site location. The program has the same PLOs and assessment processes as the program on the main campus.	
Curriculum and Delivery. Who designs the programs and courses at this site? How are they approved and evaluated? Are the programs and courses comparable in content, outcomes and quality to those on the main campus? (CFR 2.1–2.3, 4.6)	Again, the curriculum, PLOs, and assessment methods are identical to those at the main campus. UAEU has two online systems (LOAMS and PRAMS) that collect program and PLO assessment data.	
Retention and Graduation. What data on retention and graduation are collected on students enrolled at this off-campus site? What do these data show? What disparities are evident? Are rates comparable to programs at the main campus? If any concerns exist, how are these being addressed? (CFRs 2.6, 2.10)	The same retention and graduation data are collected for the off-campus and main campus MBA programs. The data show that retention and graduation rates are higher at the off-site location than those at the main campus. Enrollment is also higher at the off-campus site. See data summary below.	

Student Learning. How does the institution assess student learning at off-campus sites? Is this process comparable to that used on the main campus? What are the results of student learning assessment? How do these compare with learning results from the main campus? (CFRs 2.6, 4.6, 4.7)	The PLOs and assessment methods are identical to those at the main campus. UAEU has an online system (LOAMS) that collects assessment results from the off-site location.	
Quality Assurance Processes. How are the institution's quality assurance processes designed or modified to cover off-campus sites? What evidence is provided that off-campus programs and courses are educationally effective? (CFRs 4.4-4.8)	They are the same.	

College of Business and Economics
Major: MBA

Four-Year Graduation and Attrition Rates in the MBA Program by Location

Year Admitted	Abu Dhabi Off-Campus Site			Al Ain Campus		
	Cohort size (count)	Graduated (%)	Dropped (%)	Cohort size (count)	Graduated (%)	Dropped
2014/2015	65	81.5	12.3	12	75.0	25.0
2015/2016	40	72.5	15.0	23	78.3	17.4
2016/2017	27	81.5	14.8	26	73.1	26.9
2017/2018	12	100.0	0.0	21	95.2	4.8
Total	144	80.6	12.5	82	80.5	18.3

Donna Wiley

3/22.2022