

SEARCH PROFILE:

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

WASC

Senior College and
University Commission

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WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) invites applications and nominations as the Commission searches for the next President and Chief Executive Officer. The Commission seeks a thoughtful, strategically minded President who understands accreditation's place in a rapidly

changing postsecondary landscape, can provide leadership for regional, national and international conversations about accreditation, and will lead a committed staff in the ongoing work of policy development and implementation and institutional review.

WASC SENIOR COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY COMMISSION

WSCUC is a California nonprofit public benefit corporation that exists to promote the welfare and development of higher education through the continued improvement of institutions. WSCUC was established to accredit senior (bachelor's degrees and above) colleges and universities. Its genesis lies in the Western College Association, founded in 1924. WSCUC was formed on July 1, 1962, to evaluate and accredit schools, colleges, and universities in California, Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Today, WSCUC accredits institutions located anywhere in the United States and around the world. WSCUC serves a diverse membership of public and private higher education institutions. WSCUC currently accredits 216 institutions serving more than one million students. The Commission is committed to continuous improvement in its accreditation standards and processes, with a record of innovation and transparency, measuring student success, and assessing the financial sustainability of institutions.

WSCUC is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a reliable authority concerning the quality of education provided by member institutions of higher education offering baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate degrees. WSCUC is reviewed periodically for renewal by the U.S. Department of Education.

MISSION

With equity at its core—success for all students—WSCUC pursues excellence through rigorous accreditation standards applied flexibly, empowering all its member institutions to achieve their missions.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Equity and inclusion, evidence and improvement, and national and global reach are the centerpieces of WSCUC's strategic goals and objectives to advance quality and student success. These three enduring goals, adopted on June 25, 2021, are pursued through a set of objectives and specific activities organized around standards development, education, advocacy and communication, accreditation policy and process, governance, and organization fundamentals.

Evidence and Improvement: Lead nationally in development and use of meaningful, contextualized evidence of equitable student success, institutional performance, and financial sustainability, under the "Better Conversations, Better Data" banner.

Equity and Inclusion: Promote strong equity and inclusion goals and real progress for students, institutions and higher education, as well as throughout WSCUC itself.

National and Global Reach: Accredit and support institutions within the Commission's historic region, across the country, and around the world that share and advance WSCUC's equity, evidence-based, and innovation priorities.

WASC SENIOR COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY COMMISSION (CONT.)

HISTORY

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges was formed in 1962 to promote the development and accreditation of higher education in the western region of the United States. It had taken over and further formalized the work of its predecessor organization, the Western College Association. WCA in turn had its roots in the creation in 1924 of the Southern California Conference of Colleges and Universities, restructured in 1931 and named the Association of Colleges and Universities of the Pacific Southwest.

WSCUC was formally created in 2012-13 when three education commissions under the umbrella of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) – Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (ACSCU), Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), and the Accrediting Commission for Schools (ACS) — reincorporated as separate entities. They now use the same ‘WASC’ acronym but are three separate 501(c)(3) organizations with independent scopes and governance structures. Community and junior colleges are members of ACCJC, and public, independent, church-related, and proprietary pre-K-12 and adult schools are served by ACS.

ACCREDITATION

WSCUC accreditation aids institutions in developing and sustaining effective educational programs and assures the educational community and the general public that an accredited institution has met high standards of quality and effectiveness. In June 2023, the Commission adopted a new Handbook of Accreditation with revised Standards that is in effect for all accreditation reviews beginning after September 1, 2024. [Click here to access the 2013 and 2023 handbooks.](#)

Voluntary, non-governmental, institutional accreditation as practiced by WSCUC and the other commissions is a unique characteristic of American education. In many other countries, the maintenance of educational standards is a governmental function. No institution in the United States is required to seek accreditation. However, because of the recognized benefits, most eligible institutions in the country have sought to become accredited.

The Commission accredits institutions, not individual programs. Therefore, in addition to assessing the academic quality and educational effectiveness of institutions, the Commission emphasizes institutional structures, processes, and resources.

The accreditation process is aimed at:

- Assuring the educational community and the general public that an accredited institution has demonstrated it meets the Commission’s core commitments to institutional capacity and educational effectiveness and has been successfully reviewed under Commission Standards.
- Developing and applying Standards to review and improve educational quality and institutional performance and validating these Standards and revising them through ongoing research and feedback.
- Promoting within institutions a culture of evidence where indicators of performance are regularly developed and evidence collected to inform institutional decision making, planning, and improvement.
- Promoting deep institutional engagement with issues of educational effectiveness and student learning and developing and sharing good practices in assessing and improving the teaching and learning process.
- Developing systems of institutional review and evaluation that are adaptive to institutional context and purposes, that build on institutional evidence and support rigorous reviews, and reduce the burden and cost of accreditation.
- Promoting the active interchange of ideas among public and independent institutions that furthers the principles of improved institutional performance, educational effectiveness, and the process of peer review.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

WSCUC’s educational programs are developed by recognized experts and are offered as a service to WSCUC member institutions and others who wish to learn about good practices and emerging ideas in higher education. All programming is entirely optional; they are offered in the hope that member institutions will find them useful. WSCUC staff are present at each program to answer questions related specifically to accreditation expectations.

WASC SENIOR COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY COMMISSION (CONT.)

- [Accreditation Resource Conference](#): WSCUC’s annual Accreditation Resource Conference (ARC) takes place each April and is dedicated to supporting institutions of higher education as they identify their challenges, develop solutions, demonstrate results, and plan for the future.
- [Accreditation Leadership Academy](#): This 10-month professional development program embodies WSCUC’s commitment to inquiry and innovation and is designed to enhance leadership and analytical skills, deepen understanding of accreditation, explore significant issues in higher education, and foster professional networks.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

WSCUC’s pursuit of institutional excellence and effectiveness is anchored in a singular vision: success for all students. Success for every student – regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, geography, or other factors – is a long-standing WSCUC goal woven throughout the 2023 Standards for Accreditation. They provide a framework for upholding institutional quality and promoting learning environments where students from all backgrounds, (dis)abilities, and financial means can achieve their educational goals.

[With equity at its core](#)—success for all students—WSCUC pursues excellence through rigorous accreditation standards applied flexibly, empowering member institutions to fulfill their unique missions. WSCUC adopted its first diversity policy in 1994 and a successor [equity and inclusion policy](#) in 2017. In 2020, WSCUC reaffirmed its commitment to success for all learners in its “[George Floyd and Accreditation](#)” statement. WSCUC introduced its [Key Indicators Dashboard](#) the following year, pioneering the use of disaggregated student data in context to help institutions promote success for all students. WSCUC issued an [updated equity and inclusion statement](#) in 2021 and established the [Equity & Inclusion Council of the Commission](#) to drive its efforts. WSCUC’s [Equity & Inclusion Guide](#) helps institutions use inquiry and data to advance success for all students. Institutions are encouraged to add their own evidence to understand their students’ performance and address underlying barriers to student success.

Equitable student success remains central to WSCUC’s mission. This enduring commitment is embedded in WSCUC’s strategic goals and infused throughout the

2023 Standards for Accreditation. WSCUC recognizes that achieving equity and excellence in education requires sustained action and is committed to working continuously and with institutions to realize success for all students.

GOVERNANCE

The Commission is governed by a board of commissioners, elected by the membership, who are representatives of the public and of accredited institutions. [The officers of the Commission](#) guide discussion and the Commission takes official action on behalf of the agency. The Commission’s responsibilities include establishing WSCUC Standards for institutional quality and processes for review, acting on the accreditation status of individual institutions, and setting the strategic goals of WSCUC as a higher education organization committed to excellence, equity, and the public good. Its roles combine those of an accrediting agency commission and the board of directors of WSCUC as a non-profit organization. The Commission is composed of distinguished elected members in three categories: institutional representatives, public members, and at-large members. The officers of the Commission reflect diversity in institutional characteristics such as mission, size, geography, funding, and sponsorship, as well as in personal characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, and experience. All officers are deeply committed to higher education and volunteer countless hours to the tasks of peer accreditation.

STAFF

WSCUC’s [staff of experienced higher education professionals](#) includes respected Vice Presidents who serve as institutional liaisons and policy and project leaders, outstanding educational programming and information technology teams, and effective administrative staff who support Commission decision-making and operations. WSCUC is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive leadership organization within the higher education community.

INSTITUTIONS

WSCUC is proud of the diverse missions and characteristics of the public and private higher education institutions it accredits in the United States and around the world. WSCUC currently accredits 216 institutions. For a full list of member and candidate institutions, [click here](#).

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The President is the chief executive officer of the organization, reporting to the Commission functioning as its Board of Directors. The President is responsible internally for administrative leadership and effectiveness, provides thought leadership to the Commission in matters of research and policy development in accreditation, and contributes at the national and international levels to ongoing discussions on quality assurance in higher education.

More specifically, the next president of WSCUC will have:

- An earned doctorate or other terminal degree.
- An intentional passion for the support of student achievement defined as both student learning and student retention and completion.
- A broad and deep knowledge of the current higher education landscape and ability to visualize future stages of innovation.
- Considerable experience with institutional accreditation and a grounded sense of student, faculty, and institutional interests in its enactment.
- Demonstrated success in a senior-level administrative position at an accredited institution or at an accreditor recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
- Familiarity with current U.S. statutes and regulations related to accreditation and a willingness and ability to stay abreast of and contribute to discussions related to the reauthorization of the HEA.
- The ability and willingness to lead and oversee changes needed in the Commission's Standards and procedures in alignment with needs and demands of current and future students.
- The ability to balance the leadership and management of internal Commission operations and engagement in national and international issues and activities.
- The disposition, political acumen and experience to provide leadership for national and international conversations about accreditation's role in quality assurance.
- The tact, wit, and presence in a fast-paced environment to balance competing priorities and to represent the Commission before multiple audiences and constituencies including federal and state legislators and their staff, federal and state agencies, lobbyists, and national and regional organizations focused on higher education.
- Skills applicable to advancing a commission-level association with institutional membership.
- An ability to attract, inspire, and retain talented staff in the on-going work of institutional review and, relatedly, compassion, a sense of humor, and respect for co-workers at all levels of the organization.
- The willingness and ability to engage in significant travel throughout the U.S. and some international travel.
- A demonstrated commitment to the WSCUC principles of excellence, equity, engagement, and to its strategic goals concerning evidence, equity and inclusion, data/ data analysis, and national and global reach.
- Demonstrated experience with strategic planning, organizational change management, team building, and data literacy.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications should consist of a substantial letter of interest, a curriculum vitae, and a list of five professional references with full contact information. No references will be contacted without the explicit permission of the candidate. Applications, nominations, and expressions of interest can be submitted electronically, and in confidence, to: WSCUCPresidentCEO@academicsearch.org

The position is open until filled but only applications received by **Wednesday, October 30, 2024**, can be assured full consideration. The Commission is being assisted by Academic Search. Confidential discussions about this opportunity may be arranged by contacting consultants Ann Hasselmo at Ann.Hasselmo@academicsearch.org, Stuart Dorsey at Stuart.Dorsey@academicsearch.org, and Chris Butler at Chris.Butler@academicsearch.org. Further information about WASC Senior College and University Commission is available at www.wscuc.org/. The minimum salary range for this position is \$475-490k.

The Commission is an equal opportunity employer and makes employment decisions on the basis of merit. Commission policy prohibits discrimination based on race, color, creed, gender, religion, marital status, registered domestic partner, age, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, and medical condition (including pregnancy or childbirth), genetic characteristics, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws.

ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search is assisting WASC Senior College and University Commission in this work. For more than four decades, Academic Search has offered executive search services to higher education institutions, associations, and related organizations. Academic Search was founded by higher education leaders on the principle that we provide the most value to partner institutions by combining best practices with our deep knowledge and experience. Our mission today is to enhance institutional capacity by providing outstanding executive recruitment services, executive coaching, and transition support, in partnership with our parent organization, the American Academic Leadership Institute.

