

## WSCUC Interim Report

### INSTRUCTIONS

Interim Reports are limited in scope, not comprehensive evaluations of the institution. The report informs the Interim Report Committee about the progress made by the institution in addressing issues identified by the Commission.

The Interim Report consists of two sections:

- Interim Report Form and Appendices
- Additional Required Data (as specified on the Additional Required Data form)

Please respond completely to each question on the following pages and do not delete the questions. Appendices and Additional Required Data will be uploaded as separate attachments.

WSCUC is no longer using Live Text for receiving Interim Reports. Institutions will use a free Box.com account to upload the report. Instructions for creating the Box.com account and uploading the report will be provided by email.

### REPORT GUIDELINES AND WORD LIMITS

Because the number of issues reported on varies among institutions (the average is four to six issues), the length of a report will vary. However, a typical interim report ranges from 20 to 60 pages, not including appendices. Narrative essays responding to each issue should be no more than five pages each. **The total number of pages of appendices supporting the report should be no more than 200 pages** unless agreed upon in advance with the institution's staff liaison. Be sure that all attachments follow a consistent naming convention and are referenced the same way at appropriate places within the narrative. Please name them so that it is clear what they are and what section they refer to, with cross referencing in the narrative. For example, "Attachment 2-1: Mission Statement", would be used for Criterion 2. Attachments are preferred as PDFs.

Institutions that provide excessive information in their report will be asked to resubmit. You may wish to consult with your staff liaison as you prepare your report.

Some tips for providing evidence to support your findings:

- Put yourself in the place of a reviewer: what is the story that you need to tell? What evidence supports your story? What is extraneous and can be left out?
- Provide a representative sample of evidence on an issue, rather than ALL of the evidence.
- Consider including an executive summary or the most relevant points of supporting evidence, rather than the entire document.
- If you are referring to a specific page or set of pages in a document, include only those pages, not the entire document.
- If you are providing an excerpt of a document, include the title of the document, and a table of contents and/or a brief narrative to put the excerpt in context.

- If you provide a hyperlink to a web page, make sure the link takes the viewer directly to the relevant information on the page. Do not make your reviewer search for it.

### **REVIEW PROCESS**

A panel of the WSCUC Interim Report Committee (IRC) will review the report, typically within 90 days of receipt. Representatives of your institution will be invited to participate in the conference call review to respond to questions from the panel. Your WSCUC staff liaison will contact you after the call with the outcome of the review, which will also be documented in a formal action letter.

### **OUTCOMES OF THE REVIEW**

After the review, the panel will take one of the following actions.

- **Receive the Interim Report** with recommendations and commendations—No follow up required.
- **Defer action** pending receipt of follow-up information—The panel has identified limited information that may be submitted in a short period of time, such as audited financial statements or the outcome of an upcoming meeting of the board. The panel may authorize the WSCUC staff liaison to review these materials without the full panel being brought together again, depending on the nature of the supplemental information.
- **Request an additional Interim Report**—Issues reported on were not adequately resolved or need continued monitoring.
- **Request a Progress Report**—A progress report is less formal than an Interim Report and is reviewed only by the WSCUC staff liaison. A progress report may be requested when institutional follow-up on one or two relatively minor areas is desired.
- **Receive the Interim Report with a recommendation that the Commission sends a site visit evaluation team**—Serious, ongoing issues involving potential non-compliance with WSCUC's Standards and Criteria for Review may require follow-up in the form of a Special Visit. Note that the IRC panel makes a recommendation for a visit, and the Executive Committee of the Commission or the full Commission decides on whether or not to require the visit.

# Interim Report Form

Please respond to each question. Do not delete the questions. Insert additional pages as needed.

## **Name of Institution:**

Saybrook University

## **Person Submitting the Report:**

Carol Humphreys, PhD, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs.

## **Report Submission Date:**

March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016

## **Statement on Report Preparation**

Briefly describe in narrative form the process of report preparation, providing the names and titles of those involved. Because of the focused nature of an Interim Report, the widespread and comprehensive involvement of all institutional constituencies is not normally required. Faculty, administrative staff, and others should be involved as appropriate to the topics being addressed in the preparation of the report. Campus constituencies, such as faculty leadership and, where appropriate, the governing board, should review the report before it is submitted to WSCUC, and such reviews should be indicated in this statement.

The Provost (Carol Humphreys), who serves as Accreditation Liaison Officer, wrote the initial draft of the Interim Report based on information and data collected since March 2014 from

- Nathan Long, President
- Elizabeth O'Brien, Vice President of Enrollment Management
- Mehul Patel, Acting CFO of Saybrook University
- Nami Kim, Assistant Provost
- Jennifer Carter, Office of Institutional Support
- Thomas Champion, Registrar

The draft report and/or supporting documents were provided for review and feedback to

- Nathan Long, President
- Elizabeth O'Brien, Vice President of Enrollment Management
- Eileen Heveron, Chief Academic Officer, TCS ES
- Mehul Patel, Acting CFO of Saybrook University
- Nami Kim, Assistant Provost
- Kent Becker, Dean of the College of Social Sciences
- Don Moss, Dean of the College of Integrative Medicine and Health Sciences
- Massimo Pacchione, Director of Admissions
- Thomas Champion, Registrar
- Julia Sondej, Administrative Director of Student Services
- Rachel Napolin, Advising and Academic Affairs Coordinator

## List of Topics Addressed in this Report

Please list the topics identified in the action letter(s) and that are addressed in this report.

Following an August 2014 Special Visit, which was combined with a Structural Change Follow-up Visit, the Commission issued an action letter, dated March 6, 2015, which called for this Interim Report on the following areas:

**“Implementing the Strategic Plan:** Saybrook paused its work on implementing its strategic plan as a result of affiliating with TCS ES, reconstituting the board, and preparing for a shift in key senior leadership roles. The team observed that Saybrook has a history of making the effort “to write strategic plans, but the institution apparently is not able to execute and fully implement its plans. “The Commission expects Saybrook to make systematic progress on the priorities identified in its strategic plan. Saybrook needs to develop a detailed action plan for implementation that includes refined timelines, required resources, identified lines of responsibility, and clear, specific, observable measures for determining when milestones are achieved.”

**“Strengthening financial stability.** Financial sustainability continues to be a serious, ongoing challenge for Saybrook. The Commission concurs with the team’s assessment that Saybrook’s financial situation “remains fragile, requiring careful management.” While the affiliation with ICS ES appears to provide a “safety net,” the Commission expects Saybrook to give its urgent and highest level of attention to resolving its long-standing problem of financial instability.”

**“Improving Enrollment Management.** Central to financial sustainability, for institutions heavily dependent on tuition revenue to fund operations, is a strategic enrollment management effort. As the team noted, “The ongoing issue of enrollment planning is one of greatest importance for the new institutional leadership.” The Commission expects Saybrook to develop a comprehensive strategic enrollment plan, with appropriate resources, staffing, and metrics that bridge the institution’s academic and financial goals. Successful enrollment management efforts use market research, data, and student-centric interventions to ensure that new student enrollment goals are set and met and enrolled students are retained and graduated.”

Furthermore, the Commission requested the following related specific information:

- A. Enrollment goals and actual enrollments for fall 2014, spring 2015, fall 2015, and spring 2016.
- B. Explanations for any discrepancies between goals and actual enrollments.
- C. Results of Saybrook’s efforts in academic prioritization including programs identified for growth, consolidation, or elimination.

## **Institutional Context**

Very briefly describe the institution's background; mission; history, including the founding date and year first accredited; geographic locations; and other pertinent information so that the Interim Report Committee panel has the context to understand the issues discussed in the report.

Saybrook University is a private, non-profit institution that continues the mission and vision of the Saybrook Institute, originally founded in 1971 as the Humanistic Psychology Institute within Sonoma State University (SSU). Saybrook is a product of the idealistic aspirations of Abraham Maslow and other late 1960's psychologists wanting to make a real difference in the world. The original institution promoted a humanistic vision focusing on the potential to live full and meaningful lives as individuals as well as creative community members. From the beginning, Saybrook provided a hybrid form of education that offered a non-traditional, learning-centered environment for advanced studies. Saybrook separated from SSU and was established as an independent educational institution in 1972, in 2009 becoming Saybrook University. In 2014, Saybrook moved from its office in San Francisco and is now located in Oakland, California, with an additional campus site in Washington (WA). The WA campus recently moved from Kirkland to Bellevue in February 2016.

Saybrook has been accredited by WASC since 1984 and is approved to offer: Masters, PsyD, and PhD degrees in Psychology, Masters in Counseling, Masters and PhD degrees in Organizational Systems, Masters and PhD degrees in Mind Body Medicine, Masters degrees in Management, Masters degrees in Integrative Functional Nutrition, Masters and PhD degrees in Human Science, and the PhD degree in Clinical Psychology. While Saybrook has maintained its accreditation since 1984, it has been required to have a number of special visits and to submit interim reports throughout its accreditation history. Saybrook's challenges have consistently related to concerns of financial sustainability, strategic planning, leadership stability, and identity.

The mission of the university: "Saybrook University provides rigorous graduate education that inspires transformational change in individuals, organizations, and communities, toward a just, humane, and sustainable world." We endeavor to become the premier humanistic university globally, with academic rigor as scholar-practitioners, embodied values in everything we do, and a focus on the central question: "What does it mean to be human in the twenty-first century?" The core principles and values affirmed by Saybrook's Board of Trustees and University Council are:

- We value life and embrace our responsibility to facilitate the potential of every living being to thrive in a just, inclusive, healthy and sustainable world.
- We are scholar-practitioners who seek and apply knowledge to solve problems and foster social transformation.
- We live and conduct our affairs with integrity. We hold ourselves accountable for honoring commitments to ourselves and to one another, to Saybrook University, and to

the constituencies and communities within which we live and work, including the natural world.

- We insist upon operational and academic rigor in order to provide an exceptional educational experience for our students.
- We seek diversity because we recognize that there are many ways of knowing and there are inherent strengths in multiple perspectives.
- We approach what we do with a system, or holistic, perspective based on a belief in the inherent interconnection of all things.
- We create relationships and communities built on compassion, respect, authentic voice, deep listening, reflective awareness, support and challenge leading to responsible action.
- We are creative, risk-taking leaders who challenge assumptions and imagine new possibilities.
- We recognize that dynamic tensions and fundamental paradoxes are essential aspects of being human and we commit to find ways to work with them productively.
- We celebrate life, striving to bring fun and joy to our individual and collective existence.

In March 2014, Saybrook affiliated with TCS Education System (TCS ES). This relationship was approved by WSCUC in February 2014 through the Structural Change process. Among the benefits of affiliation are support for Saybrook's financial sustainability, improvement of academic quality, and expansion of the humanistic mission and vision through program growth. Greater attention to these institutional priorities is possible through the operational efficiencies and robust infrastructure offered by TCS ES in the areas of:

1. Finance
2. Recruitment and Admissions Operations
3. Legal and Compliance
4. Student Academic Support
5. Academic and Accreditation Expertise
6. Marketing
7. Human Resources
8. Information Technology
9. Online Course Development and Instructional Design Services
10. International Outreach

Additional advantages for Saybrook University have included the ability to share resources, good practices, and expertise with four unique, affiliate institutions: Pacific Oaks College, Dallas Nursing Institute, The Santa Barbara and Ventura Colleges of Law, and The Chicago School of Professional Psychology and their esteemed faculty, staff, and administrative members. The five affiliates have prioritized cross-institution collaboration among stakeholders throughout the Education System.

Soon after the affiliation with TCS ES in 2014, Saybrook conducted a search for a new President. Dr. Long arrived at Saybrook on August 4, 2014 for a September 1<sup>st</sup> start date. His early arrival allowed him to work with outgoing President Schulman and Provost Sewell, meet various stakeholders, observe the WSCUC Onsite Review, engage with faculty, staff, and students, and to attend Saybrook Residential Conferences and fall 2014 graduation. In addition to a new president, Saybrook has a new Provost and new Vice President of Enrollment Management (VPoEM). Saybrook has developed and implemented a new plan -- the Saybrook 2020 Strategic Plan -- and has restructured the university into two colleges (College of Social Sciences and College of Integrative Medicine and Health Sciences). Saybrook has also stabilized and increased enrollment and significantly reduced operating deficits.

## **Response to Issues Identified by the Commission**

This main section of the report should address the issues identified by the Commission in its action letter(s) as topics for the Interim Report. Each topic identified in the Commission's action letter should be addressed. The team report (on which the action letter is based) may provide additional context and background for the institution's understanding of issues.

Provide a full description of each issue, the actions taken by the institution that address this issue, and an analysis of the effectiveness of these actions to date. Have the actions taken been successful in resolving the problem? What is the evidence supporting progress? What further problems or issues remain? How will these concerns be addressed, by whom, and under what timetable? How will the institution know when the issue has been fully addressed? Please include a timeline that outlines planned additional steps with milestones and expected outcomes. Responses should be no longer than five pages per issue

## **Implementing the strategic plan**

As noted in the Commission action letter, in August 2014 Saybrook had the beginning of a strategic plan but had not made headway in implementing that plan with metrics and timelines. President Long determined within his first few weeks that the underpinnings of the plan needed to be reconsidered in order to build an effective and measurable plan for the future and to engender support from all segments of the community.

Beginning in September 2014, Dr. Long initiated the Saybrook 2020 Strategic Plan process through a series of intensive "listening sessions" in which he met with a variety of stakeholders including faculty, academic leaders, students, staff, alumni, non-governmental and non-profit leaders, and TCS ES leaders. More than a hundred hours of interviews occurred over the first two months of Dr. Long's presidency, yielding a substantial set of themes focused on alignment, growth, engagement, and quality of the learning environment.

In November 2014, Dr. Long convened the Saybrook Strategic Plan Advisory Council. The composition of the Council included a sampling of the groups Dr. Long had met with during the listening sessions. After several meetings and discussions of multiple approaches to addressing Saybrook's long-term financial sustainability, the Council adopted a moderately aggressive approach in the plan. On January 9, 2015, the Board of Trustees approved the plan unanimously and sent a statement supporting the plan to the Saybrook community (See Attachment A - Saybrook University Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – 1-5-2015)

In February and March 2015, the Saybrook administration led a full review of the status of the existing organizational and academic structure. A restructuring initiative led to the elimination of four schools and in their place the creation of two colleges – the College of Social Sciences (CSS) and the College of Integrative Medicine and Health Sciences (CIMHS) (See Attachment B – Saybrook University Organizational Chart 3.4.16). In addition, the number of administrative units was collapsed into three core areas: Enrollment Management, Academic Affairs, and Finance and Administration, creating greater efficiency.

The Saybrook 2020 strategic plan (See Attachment C - Saybrook 2020 Strategic Plan January 2015) focuses on four key strategic initiatives: Alignment, Growth, Engagement, and Academic Excellence. Each initiative has several goals and objectives. Effective January of 2015, the Saybrook 2020 Strategic Plan went into full implementation, with the initial focus on reorganization and academic program prioritization. With the exception of the initial phase, assigned Implementation Task Force groups are leading implementation. These groups are comprised of faculty, staff, and in some cases external members, alumni, and students.

Each task force has received a charge, expected outcomes, and target due dates for recommendations to be advanced to the administration for review and discussion. The task forces are currently meeting and developing recommendations. Once their recommendations have been reviewed, they will then be taken through the appropriate governance processes as specified in our newly created decision making process (See Attachment D - Saybrook Decision-Making Flowchart). Below is an overview of the progress made thus far on each of the initiatives:

Alignment, reorganization and restructuring have been completed. As previously mentioned, there are now two colleges (CSS and CIMHS). Each college is led by a dean who supervises program directors. Faculty members work at a distance while key administrators work primarily in the Oakland office. A Director of the Bellevue campus was named to manage that campus. In tandem with the reorganization/restructuring, program prioritization was addressed through a careful review of the effectiveness and long-term potential of programs and specializations. In March 2015, with input from various stakeholders, the administration determined the following program and specializations would be phased out:

- MA and PhD Human Science
- MA and PhD Psychology, Jungian Specialization
- MA OS, Leadership and Organization Specialization

During the phase-out period, all of the original faculty members (both salaried and adjunct) have continued to teach the remaining students either in course work or research. Twenty-one students remain engaged in Human Science (HS) and are being supported by the CSS Dean, Humanistic Clinical Psychology Program Director, and the Transformative Social Change Specialization Lead. Most HS students are in dissertation phase. Six students are completing the last semester of their MA OS, Leadership and Organization Specialization. Five students remain in the MA and PhD Psychology, Jungian Specialization. These students continue to advance in the curriculum outlined in their catalog year.

An additional focus of alignment included addressing Saybrook's unsustainable faculty-student teaching ratio of 1:3. During the 2015 reorganization, the work force was necessarily downsized. Four of the five faculty members whose positions were eliminated were moved from salaried to adjunct faculty with full benefits. Saybrook's previous practice of offering all courses each semester, many of which ran with fewer than three students, was discontinued. Instead, in Fall 2015, Saybrook decreased class offerings and increased course size. The Provost, Deans, and Program Directors scheduled course offerings to alternate semesters. New workload guidelines (See Attachment E - Faculty Workload Guidelines) were also developed and implemented. The guidelines were based on industry-wide best practices and with the assumption that faculty members working at a certain level of FTE are expected to work the appropriate number of hours per contract year. The guidelines acknowledged time for research, committee work, advising,

community engagement, and other professional activities. As a result of these changes, current faculty-student teaching ratio is 1:5 (See Attachment F – Faculty-Student Ratio 10.12.15). With continued attention to staggering course options and increasing course size, our goal for Fall 2018 is 1:8.

In addition to the programs being phased out, Saybrook continues to work on program assessment through the University Program Review Committee that was created as a task force of the Saybrook 2020 Strategic Plan. Consisting of faculty, Faculty Senators, staff, and the Academic Affairs office team, this task force is looking at both academic programs and infrastructure through the lens of a holistic view of the university, assessing all programs, processes, procedures, and organizational design (Attachment G - University Program Review Task Force 12-10-15). The task force committee, in collaboration with the Faculty Senate, will continue with the Academic Program Prioritization committee work (See Attachment H - Academic Program Prioritization Progress 08.24.2014) that began at Saybrook in 2014. The 2014 committee developed an initial draft of criteria to be considered as programs were reviewed: 1) mission, vision and history, 2) diversity and inclusion, 3) quality, credibility, and visibility, 4) collaborative and interdisciplinary, 5) demand, 6) financial condition (sustainability), and the size, stability, and potential future growth. The new task force will be making recommendations and implementing a cycle of review by the end of FY 2015/2016.

In a related effort to further develop Saybrook's assessment capacity, in October 2015 an assessment consultant was hired to study past Saybrook practices, program and course assessment processes, and best practices from other higher education institutions. The consultant has engaged in regular meetings with Faculty Senate as it formed the Assessment Committee, with one member from every program. In addition, a SharePoint site has been created to house all program and course assessment documents and communications moving forward.

As Saybrook initiated the phase-out of identified programs that lacked potential for future growth, it also invested in growth. In 2014, four new programs were approved by WSCUC and launched: MA in Management, MS in Integrative and Functional Nutrition, MA in Counseling, and PhD in Clinical Psychology. Three additional new programs are planned for WSCUC Substantive Change review (the MA and PhD in Transformative Social Change, MA in Clinical Psychology, and MA in Coaching). The Transformative MA and PhD received Interim Approval on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 from the WSCUC Substantive Change panel.

The Tuition and Fees Task Force is charged to eliminate 11 different tuition and fees structures, collapsing these into no more than two. Composed of university leadership and the TCS ES finance team, the task force has developed two models that are currently under review. Prior to implementation, the president and leadership team will meet with students and faculty to obtain feedback about the models under consideration. A new fee structure will be implemented in fall 2016 or spring 2017.

The Institute Design Task Force has made significant headway in the creation of several recommendations for a viable institute model that will serve as another major source of revenue. The design is predicated on a permeable structure that maximizes efficiencies, while focusing on community embeddedness and revenue generation that supports institute and center activities. Once recommendations are vetted and approved, business plans will be developed to ensure a

sustainable, disciplined approach to implementation.

Current recommendations focus on the following:

- Creation of one large institute with several centers of practice
- Center for Continuing Education
- Center Humanistic Wellness Center
- Social Innovation Laboratory
- Training and Consulting Center

In the area of strategic engagement, the Alumni and Community Engagement Task Force will present several recommendations to the university leadership by the end of the spring, 2016 semester. In the fall of 2015, the President and VPoEM led an alumni outreach initiative, contacting alumni for the first time in three years. The alumni appeal resulted in several donations and re-connected loyal alumni who have since become increasingly engaged with the university's recruiting efforts. The university also sponsored a two-day, face-to-face alumni forum with the Board of Trustees at the residential conference in January 2016. The university will be reviewing plans over the next six months with the aim of creating a comprehensive approach to support current and graduating students and alumni in terms of both placement and engagement (networking). We recognize that our role in our students' post-graduation lives requires action. Final recommendations on trajectory and implementation are due by the end of spring 2016.

Academic Excellence is the fourth area of focus in the strategic plan. The Saybrook Retention 2020 Task Force is currently charged with identifying key recommendations and actions for improving the student retention and creating clearer, more effective pathways to graduation. Saybrook's leadership is fully cognizant that the graduation rate of its doctoral students requires attention. With this in mind, recommendations will be made by late spring/early summer with implementation to occur in the Fall 2016. (See more below under Improving Enrollment Management.)

The Teaching and Learning Task Force is charged to spur innovation of the current modes and models of curriculum delivery; to identify potential mechanisms to improve the virtual and residential experiences; and to identify potential ways/means for enhancing the student learning experience. Target deliverables are due near the end of the spring 2016 semester with recommendations to be vetted through the university decision-making process.

The Saybrook 2020 Strategic Plan focuses on sustainability and growth, both of which are critical for a small freestanding, non-profit, tuition-dependent institution like Saybrook. See below under Strengthening Financial Stability and Improving Enrollment Management for a description of actions taken under the plan to address these important areas.

### **Strengthening financial stability**

The central feature of our strategic planning and implementation efforts is bringing Saybrook University into a position of strong financial health that is sustainable over the long term. It is important to note that among the several areas indicated above, we are investing considerable energy in crafting a diversified portfolio of academic and non-academic programs, reviewing and implementing cost-containment strategies, renewing efforts at programmatic prioritization,

investing in a philanthropic infrastructure that will position Saybrook for larger reserves, realigning existing resources by maximizing our affiliation with TCS ES, and reviewing and implementing improvements to faculty productivity. All of these are necessary improvements for Saybrook not only to survive, but also to thrive.

The most salient update is the restructuring of the university's operations resulting in a modest surplus budget expected for FY 2016 (beginning June 2015 and concluding May 31, 2016) (See Attachment I – Saybrook University Long-Term Financial Plan – Revised.). This surplus budget (the first in several years) was achieved by adjusting staffing ratios, containing expenses, and meeting conservative enrollment growth targets. In the University's long-term financial plan, Saybrook was projected to have a deficit of \$200,000 in FY 2016 and to produce operating surpluses in each succeeding year. Though the YTD financials through January show a deficit, the full year projections show Saybrook will be breakeven or generate a slight surplus (See Attachment J - Saybrook FY16 YTD (Actuals vs. Budget). The current deficit reflected in the FY16 Actuals vs. Budget is due to the seasonal nature of revenue through the fiscal year. December and January represent lower revenue months for Saybrook as the fall term winds down and the spring term starts toward the end of January. However, the most recent projections show the spring term tracking favorably to our forecast and thus as we progress through each month, we will see the financials converge towards breakeven or a slight surplus.

The following analysis reviews the financial drivers that informed our deficit in 2014-15 and Saybrook's resurgence beginning in 2015-16.

#### *Financial drivers that led to 2014-15 deficit*

The major drivers that led to Saybrook's deficit in 2014-15 included:

- No tuition and fees increases to keep pace with inflation.
- Overly optimistic enrollment projections that were not met. Fall 2014 enrollments were projected to be 151 and were 110; spring 2015 enrollments were projected to be 122 and were 66.
- Low faculty-student ratios. The ratio was 1:3.7 per course, resulting in inefficient delivery and high costs associated with hiring more faculty members to teach very small classes.
- Cost overruns. General cost overruns were the result of stipends and release time for faculty; inefficiencies in staffing and staffing support; and slow and ineffective collection of revenues.

In terms of positioning Saybrook for financial health, the affiliation with TCS ES has been critical in providing essential services and quality infrastructure and in enabling Saybrook to develop a sound plan to reach fiscal sustainability. This new infrastructure, including IT, recruitment, financial aid, and back-end support services, allows the leadership to focus its attention on building quality and programming. Saybrook's May 31<sup>st</sup> financial audit reflects the new relationship with TCS ES (See Attachment K – Saybrook Financial Audit Report FY15).

*Financial drivers that led to 2015-16 break-even/surplus*

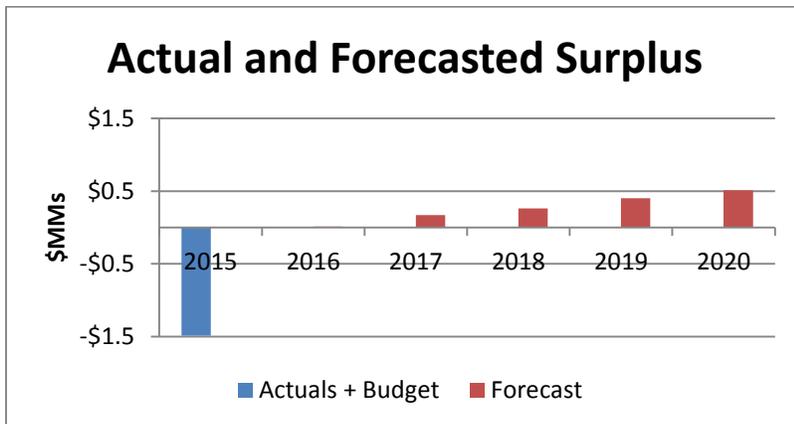
The major drivers that led to Saybrook’s current break-even/surplus status for the current fiscal year include:

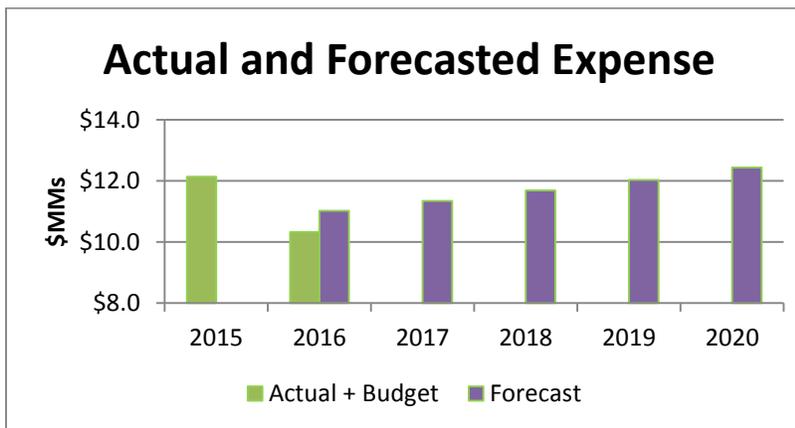
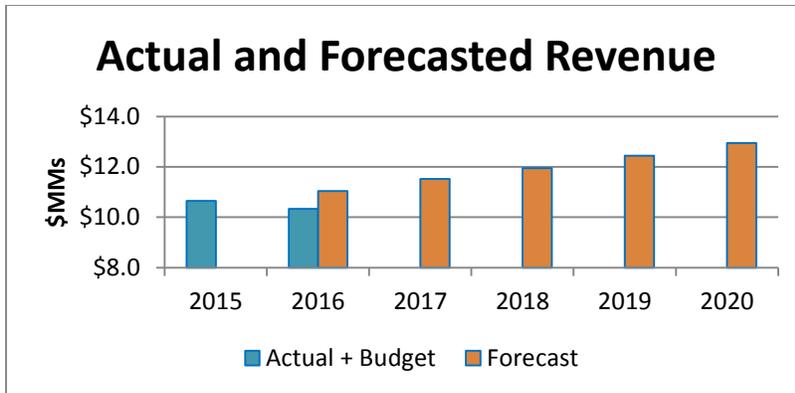
- A modest 1% increase in tuition and fees implemented for FY 2016.
- Prioritization of programs, including phase-out of underperforming programs
- More realistic enrollment projections that aligned with existing marketing capacity and admissions staffing. Fall 2015 enrollments were 119 on a budgeted enrollment of 103; spring 2016 enrollments were 87 on a budget of 77.
- Increasing faculty-student teaching ratios. In Fall 2015, faculty-student teaching ratios increased from 1:3.7 per course to 1:5.9 per course (Refer to Attachment F).
- Cost containment and efficiencies. These measures included better collections by leveraging TCS ES student billing services, getting timely payments, prioritizing travel and resources, and incorporating efficiencies related to staffing and faculty FTEs.

*Financial drivers implemented for financial sustainability through 2020*

When reviewing fiscal trending for Saybrook, the following measures are critical to continued success in achieving financial health

- Targeted expense discipline, not impacting revenue. Although FY16 has a lower expense base than FY15, we are seeing revenue increase year-over-year.
- Applying discipline in FY16 to forecasted financials. We are showing moderate revenue growth with reasonable increases in expenses to support increased activity.
- Realistic forward-looking financial projections. Plans and budgets are in line with historical data and the expense base builds slowly in line with revenue.





Furthermore, Saybrook’s sustainability is predicated on several factors that focus on revenue management, growth in programs and services, improved marketing and recruitment initiatives, and expense management and discipline.

1. Revenue management will be applied with discipline and consistency. As noted in the section above, the administration is in the process of reducing the number of different tuition and fees structures from 11 to two. Additionally, tuition will be reviewed and, if necessary, will be raised based on industry standards, including benchmarking against the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and regional market comparisons.
2. Saybrook’s future surpluses will in part built by new program enrollments. As described above, several new programs have been launched, more are planned and under development, including:
  - MA in Counseling: Launched in spring, 2015
  - PhD in Clinical Psychology: Launched in spring, 2015
  - in Management: Launched in fall, 2015
  - MS in Integrative and Functional Nutrition: Launched in fall, 2015
  - Transformative Social Change PhD and Master’s Programs: Planned in fall 2016
  - Organizational Systems, Educational Leadership Specialization: Planned in spring 2017
  - MA in Coaching: Planned in spring, 2017
  - Management, Business Specialization: Planned in spring 2017

- Leadership and Management in collaboration with National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS): Planned in fall, 2017
  - Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) in marketing review with planned in fall 2018
  - Integrative Medicine Fellowship in initial development
  - Doctor of Counseling in initial development
  - Doctor of Social Work in initial development
3. In addition to new programs, Saybrook has recently begun the process of identifying a staged process related to philanthropy/fundraising. The Board Institutional Advancement Committee is focused on identifying strategic objectives that connect to the 2020 Strategic Plan. Administration will begin moving forward following Spring 2016 Board meeting activities. The most recent effort, described above, involved re-engagement of alumni seeking donations in time and money.
  4. Dramatically improved marketing and recruitment initiatives are starting to increased enrollment in all programs. With the TCS ES resources and new internal plans and personnel, Saybrook now has effective marketing sentiment studies and larger competitor reviews/analyses, leading to better results in enrollment growth. Existing programs will be prioritized more effectively and our new programs better researched prior to launch.

Continued expense management and discipline are critical to ongoing sustainability. Vigilance in applying rational disciplined processes when purchasing and hiring is essential. An institutional-wide, transparent budgeting process was recently implemented to educate and empower managers with budgetary control, thus requiring greater accountability and understanding of institutional finances.

### **Improving enrollment management**

In summer 2015, the role of the Vice President for Enrollment Management (VPoEM) was created and filled by a seasoned enrollment management professional with over 19 years of experience. This change renewed the focus on the entire life cycle of the student and demonstrates Saybrook's understanding of the need to implement a comprehensive and strategic enrollment management plan. This approach has stabilized enrollment for 2015-16 resulting in both new and continuing enrollment numbers being met or exceeded.

The new student enrollment goals for fall 2014 and spring 2015, noted above, set by the previous Saybrook administration, were overly optimistic given the newness of the TCSES affiliation, the lack of strategic marketing, the extraordinary competition for students, and disruption within the university as a result of many changes and transitions. The failure to meet enrollment goals for 2014-15 academic year led to 1.5 million deficits, described in the section on Strengthening Financial Sustainability. (See Attachment L - Enrollment Summary by Program FA14 – SP16)

However, the improved enrollment this year (FA15: 119 new students, 103 budgeted and 440 continuing students, 440 budgeted. SP16: 87 new students, 77 budgeted and 449 continuing students, 464 budgeted) provides evidence that we have finally developed an effective enrollment management office and are able to project enrollment more accurately and to meet enrollment goals, with the prospect of building enrollment over time as outlined in the Strategic

Plan. With the admissions department and enrollment stabilized, the VPoEM has turned the focus to completing Saybrook's enrollment management plan, elements of which are outlined below.

### *Recruitment and Outreach*

Recognizing the urgent need to reverse declining enrollments in Seattle, Saybrook re-invested in the campus, including enhancing the admissions and enrollment management team and creating new processes and systems. In November 2015, the VPoEM hired a seasoned Director of Admissions for the Seattle campus. The Seattle Director is responsible for the recruitment of students into our MA Psychology, Counseling specialization program, a full residential program with classes being taught at our new Bellevue campus. This new Director was able to exceed the new student projection of 11 and enrolled 22 students for the spring 2016 semester.

At that same time, a Director of Admissions was also hired for the Oakland Campus to oversee the admissions counselors in the Oakland office and to be responsible for the recruitment of all of Saybrook's hybrid programs. These programs include a residential component known as the Residential Conference, which is held at the beginning of each semester, with the remainder of the semester being taught through distance learning.

The philosophy of the admissions department is to create a very high-touch experience for all the prospective and incoming students. Although these are adult learners pursuing a graduate education and as such, come with broad college experience, they still expect to be supported throughout the entire admissions process, ensuring that all of their questions are answered, that they have been connected to the appropriate faculty and peers, that their financial planning and/or financial aid is complete, and that they have made the necessary travel arrangements to the Residential Orientation/Residential Conference. This high-touch approach resulted in a higher percentage of completed applications, a higher conversion rate from acceptance to enrollment, and a low deposit melt rate, all of which contributed to the team's ability to exceed their enrollment numbers. (See Attachment M – Fall 2014 to Spring 2015 Enrollment Funnel)

This high-touch approach, deemed vital to increasing enrollment, was similarly valued in relation to improving student engagement and, subsequently, retention during new students' first year at Saybrook. During the 2015 strategic planning process, the Provost and Academic and Student Affairs office decided to integrate incoming students into the broader community prior to the RO/RC through the creation of a soft-start orientation available online. Saybrook launched the New Student Welcome Center (Attachment N - New Student Welcome Center), which serves as a single place for new students to access essential information and resources prior to their in-person orientation at the RO. The Welcome Center provides new students with Canvas orientation, advising guidance, financial aid information, academic expectations and resources, RO/RC arrival, hotel, travel, and presentation facts, IT access and information, and an introduction to library resources and processes, and orients new students to the Saybrook culture. Originally situated in the Canvas course shells, new students gain access immediately after registration. The New Student Welcome Center was a success and starting in January 2016 is housed in SharePoint, making it more readily accessible to students and allowing more dynamic content. Plans are currently underway to update the site for the fall 2016 incoming class so that it is even more interactive and incorporates changes made as the result of the feedback provided by the new fall 2015 and spring 2016 students.

While most of the prospective student interest in Saybrook is generated through the website, referrals and digital marketing, Saybrook clearly needs to increase brand awareness and interest in our degree programs through well-planned and executed outreach plans. The VPoEM and the Directors have developed and are in the process of implementing an outreach strategy that includes on-campus and virtual admissions events; a referral incentive program; graduate and career fairs; professional conferences and partnerships; and networking within the Seattle and San Francisco Bay Area communities. These efforts are intended to enhance the existing marketing and communication efforts in order to expand the top of the enrollment funnel and elevate the awareness and profile of Saybrook University as a premier institution for humanistic education. (See Attachment O - Admissions Outreach Plan)

*Marketing*

The outreach and admissions efforts are well supported by the marketing team at TCS ES, which conducted extensive market research, including interviews, focus groups, competitor analysis and data analysis to inform Saybrook’s rebranding campaign. New promotional pieces and a new website have launched and include the language and images that communicate what Saybrook is and the types of students we are recruiting. The materials have a consistent look and feel (i.e., you know it is Saybrook when you see it) and tell our story effectively. Saybrook has had preliminary conversations with TCS ES to discuss ways to better leverage social media (e.g., LinkedIn, Facebook and blogs) to increase the awareness of the university, connect alumni back to Saybrook and ensure our place as the leading voice in the humanistic tradition and education. (See appendices for new marketing materials: Attachment P - Saybrook IHS Program Slicks, Attachment Q - Saybrook Search Piece, Attachment R - Saybrook Brand Book)

*Retention*

The president also asked the new VPoEM to review retention and completion rates and patterns and to provide recommendations to improve rates. This focus led to several recommendations and actions during the fall and spring enrollment cycles including melt prevention related to leaves of absences and withdrawals. As a result of improved recruitment and retention, Saybrook has met or exceeded its enrollment projections for both fall 2015 and Spring 2016.

	FA14 New	FA14 Cont	FA14 Total	SP15 New	SP15 Cont	SP15 Total	FA15 New	FA15 Cont	FA15 Total	SP16 New	SP16 Cont	SP16 Total
Total Enrollments	<b>108</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>586</b>
Enrollment Goals	<b>151</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>541</b>

The overall retention rate for Saybrook is above the national average: 80% at Saybrook vs. 71% nationally for master's programs and 86% at Saybrook vs. 81% nationally for doctoral programs. Saybrook's three-year persistence to degree rate for our master's degree programs is above the national average (65% at Saybrook vs. 55% nationally) while our rate for doctoral degree programs is below average (32% at Saybrook vs. 62% nationally). It is important to note that this six-year graduation rate for our doctoral students does not provide a complete picture. Saybrook doctoral students (Avg. age 45), are generally employed full-time and raising families. Therefore, they often take longer than the average six years to complete their degrees. In keeping with our goal to improve retention and completion, we will provide the support and resources necessary so that more of our students can complete within the six-year time frame. (More information on actions to improve retention and completion are described below.)

Some early initiatives to meet the enrollment projections included moving registration earlier and encouraging students to register during Priority Registration week. Registration for continuing students had historically opened very close to the start of the semester, which did not give the students enough time to review the course offerings, make their selections, and register. They would then wait until the Residential Conference, which made it impossible to know how many of continuing students would return and did not give staff enough time to follow up with those students who did not register. Saybrook has now implemented proactive measures to follow up with those students who did not register during Priority Registration. Students not registered were assigned to a staff member who contacted them to identify why they had not registered, to address any issues or holds preventing them from registering, and to help them to resolve these issues. These efforts led to an additional 12 students registering for spring classes, many of whom were near degree completion, but had been faced with financial or academic obstacles that were preventing them from registering.

As outlined in the Strategic Plan 2020, student retention and graduation are part of a Key Strategic Initiative and a Retention Task Force has been created to improvement completion and time to degree. The Saybrook Task Force is compiling a series of recommendations to present to the administration. Areas of particular concern and opportunity include creating a process for identifying and connecting students with resources prior to their taking a leave of absence or withdrawing from Saybrook. This process would involve an early-alert system to identify students who are struggling before they decide to step away from the university. The committee has also identified our students who have registered for ADA accommodations as a potentially at-risk group and discussed ways to improve these students' experiences. The committee also recognized that offering career resources to current students to help them secure jobs would promote completion and could lead to professional employment after graduation. This support service is especially important because our students view graduate school as an opportunity to advance their careers. Finally, the committee recognized the need to increase opportunities for student engagement outside of the classroom and discussed how to increase participation in the Student Leadership Council, to establish alumni, faculty or peer mentoring opportunities, and to increase access to student advising.

In addition to the school's internal efforts, TCS ES has expressed its commitment to supporting students to completion by establishing a Retention Task Force to develop practices that will serve all five affiliates. Members from all of the affiliates have participated in two in-depth phone meetings and a day-long retreat that resulted in preliminary recommendations, which are

being finalized at the time of this writing. Among the recommended practices are having a designated staff advisor who would function as a single point of contact and a faculty mentor.

### **Identification of Other Changes and Issues Currently Facing the Institution**

**Instructions:** This brief section should identify any other significant changes that have occurred or issues that have arisen at the institution (e.g., changes in key personnel, addition of major new programs, modifications in the governance structure, unanticipated challenges, or significant financial results) that are not otherwise described in the preceding section. This information will help the Interim Report Committee panel gain a clearer sense of the current status of the institution and understand the context in which the actions of the institution discussed in the previous section have taken place.

During the implementation of Saybrook 2020, there have been numerous changes in key administrative personnel. In addition to a new President, new Provost, and new VPoEM, a new Assistant Provost, Registrar, Acting CFO, and Dean have been hired. The core administrative team is stable and committed to supporting academic excellence, organizational efficiency, and Saybrook's long-term sustainability.

After the strategic plan was approved, the administration, with Board approval, also made the decision to fully reinvest in the Seattle area, creating a structure that would position it for success over the long term and leasing a new facility in a much more visible, accessible area than the one where the previous campus was located. Several key factors went into this decision, including the recognition that the campus had lacked proper investment in infrastructure and had suffered from poorly located and under-resourced location. The new location, while increasing our basic incremental expenses, is located in downtown Bellevue with high visibility and easy access to the regional transit hub, numerous restaurants, shops, and hotels. It is also nearby potential collaborators and business partners.

In spring 2015, the benefits and challenges of offering a Saybrook summer session in CSS were explored. Holding summer sessions was viewed as a potentially untapped revenue source and a way to meet student's academic needs and support degree completion. Student satisfaction surveys had consistently included requests for increased academic opportunities and faculty engagement during the summer months. Although the CIMHS has held regular summer sessions, CSS, the much larger college, had never offered summer sessions. Therefore, an eight-week summer pilot session was developed and offered for CSS students for the first time in Saybrook's history in 2015. The pilot was offered to gather useful data for planning a more robust summer session in AY15-16. With very little time from planning to advertising to implementation, 25 students enrolled in five Psychology and Clinical Psychology course offerings. Even with a one-time only reduced tuition fee, the summer session delivered modest unbudgeted revenue for the summer of 2015 (See Attachment S - Saybrook Summer 2015 Enrollment Summary). Student and faculty reports were positive and a number of lessons were learned at a systems level for future offerings. Because of this initial success, Saybrook has scheduled another summer session for the CSS, with offerings from Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Counseling, Organization Systems, Management, and various research courses, plus five more courses in the new MA in Management (MAM) 18-month accelerated program for a total of 16 courses.

Three other changes of note that have occurred since the last WSCUC visit include:

- New online design for course shells in collaboration with TCS ES' instructional design team.
- Development of a new Saybrook website with a student and faculty gateway allowing for improved ease of navigation.
- The hiring of a seasoned IRB director and the revamping of the IRB structure and process.

### **Concluding Statement**

**Instructions:** Reflect on how the institutional responses to the issues raised by the Commission have had an impact upon the institution, including future steps to be taken.

In its last action letter, the Commission raised important concerns about three inter-related areas: strategic planning, enrollment management and financial stability. As shown in the narrative above and documents in the attached exhibits, Saybrook has made substantial progress in all three areas. In summary, Saybrook has:

- Adopted and implemented a strategic plan designed to address the challenges that Saybrook faces in an aggressive yet thoughtful way, which will lead to enhanced academic quality and engagement while moving Saybrook to financial health.
- Greatly enhanced its enrollment management effectiveness with new and highly qualified personnel, use of TCS ES expertise, and implementation of good practices in recruitment, marketing and retention, resulting in more accurate projections and stable and increasing enrollment.
- Through careful cuts in expenses, reorganization of academic and administrative units, program additions and eliminations, increased course size, clear workload expectations, and ongoing planning and monitoring of financial indicators, Saybrook has decreased ongoing operating deficits and can confidently project surpluses.

Through collaboration, transparency, communication, difficult decision-making, and hard work, the new Saybrook administration has eradicated a previous deficit of 1.5 million in a short year and a half. Though not taken lightly, we recognize that there is still much work to be done.

Therefore, as Saybrook plans for the 2016/2017 academic year, future steps include a strong commitment to the following:

- Saybrook 2020 Strategic Plan implementation
- Moderate, sustainable enrollment growth, recruitment, retention, and graduation rates
- Academically rich courses and residential conference experiences in both face-to-face and distance programs
- Continued focus on financial sustainability

- Student, faculty, and staff satisfaction and success
- Thoughtful growth through new and relevant programs
- Transparent communication and accountability with key stakeholders
- Relationships with alumni, employees, higher education partners, and TCS ES affiliates
- Partnerships in the Seattle and San Francisco area communities.

We believe that these accomplishments and future goals position Saybrook for a sustainable future, one that continues to be driven by its humanistic mission, vision and values. We “provide rigorous graduate education that inspires transformational change in individuals, organizations, and communities, toward a just, humane, and sustainable world.” We focus on the whole human being who strives to develop into a scholar-practitioner determined to make a positive difference in the world. It is because of this historic mission and these students, that the President, Board, administration, faculty, and staff remain committed to building a Saybrook that not only survives, but thrives well beyond the year 2020.