

Report of Actions Taken by Western Governors University to Address Stipulations May 2020

Overview

This report provides for discussion the report of Western Governors University describing the actions the program has taken to address stipulations.

Staff Recommendation

That the Committee on Accreditation remove all stipulations and change the accreditation status of Western Governors University from **Accreditation with Stipulations** to **Accreditation**.

Background

An accreditation visit for Western Governors University (WGU) took place on April 14-17, 2019. The full report is available here: [Western Governors University Accreditation Report May 2019](#).

The accreditation status granted to WGU by the COA at the May 2019 meeting was **Accreditation with Stipulations**. The link to the full letter from the COA with stipulations is here: [WGU Stipulations](#).

The COA placed the following stipulations on WGU:

That within one year of the site visit, the institutions submit a report, including evidence, documenting the following:

1. That host teachers are completing 10 hours of training including orientation to the program curriculum, training in effective supervision approaches, such as cognitive coaching, adult leaning theory, and current content-specific pedagogy and instructional practices, as required by the Commission’s adopted program standards;
2. That its plan for purposeful recruitment and admission of candidates to diversify the educator pool in California has been implemented and evaluated for effectiveness;
3. That the members have been selected for the institution’s California P-12 Council and that there is evidence the council has begun meeting for the purposes of informing the WGU Teachers College; and
4. That the institution provide clear information about the length of its program as well as clear data on the number of candidates who complete the program in that expected length of time.

WGU provided its report to staff on April 16 ,2020. The report provided evidence that addressed all stipulations. The information below summarizes the actions taken by WGU to address the stipulations.

Summary of Actions Taken by Western Governors University (WGU) to Address Stipulations

Stipulation 1: That host teachers are completing 10 hours of training including orientation to the program curriculum, training in effective supervision approaches, such as cognitive coaching, adult leaning theory, and current content-specific pedagogy and instructional practices, as required by the Commission’s adopted program standards.

Summary of Actions Taken by WGU:

WGU Field Experience Department reviewed and revised its processes and communications with regard to its host (mentor) teachers to ensure 100% completion of the training requirement as early as possible with regard to their assignments. These actions occurred in a timely manner so that implementation could begin with the Fall 2019 cohort. The process was then evaluated and further strengthened for the Spring 2020 cohort.

WGU created a California-specific district agreement that outlines the host teacher training requirement in addition to other California-specific items. The WGU Field Experience Department requires a signed agreement from each district where its candidates are placed for student teaching thereby ensuring each district understands what WGU will require of its host teachers. WGU’s placement coordinators periodically survey the institution’s partner districts. Based on feedback that indicated the districts were not aware of the host teacher training requirement, a question was added to the survey to gauge each district’s familiarity with the requirement so that WGU can provide additional information when necessary.

To ensure that the host teacher training requirement was communicated to and completed by prospective host teachers, WGU embedded links to the training modules in its host teacher application. Host teachers cannot complete the application until they have completed the training.

WGU tracks the placement status of all candidates to host teachers. After examining the outcomes with its Fall 2019 cohort, WGU implemented additional steps to strengthen the process for Spring 2020. To ensure a candidate does not begin student teaching in a placement where the host teach has not completed the training, the placement status of the candidate cannot be changed to “complete” on the tracking log until the host teacher completes the training. The Field Placement manager and placement coordinators meet weekly to review host teachers’ progress toward completion of the training requirement and a report is created for each cohort/semester to monitor and track the training. If the training is not completed within one month of the placement, the Field Placement Department will secure a new placement for the candidate.

Evidence:

Included in its report, WGU provided the following evidence toward meeting this stipulation:

- California Host Teacher Training Tracker – Fall 2019
- California Host Teacher Training Tracker – Spring 2020

- California Host Teacher Application
- California Host Teacher Training Resources including evidence of training modules for effective supervision approaches including cognitive coaching and adult leaning theory, and current content-specific pedagogy and instructional practices.
- California Tier 1 Partnership Agreement (agreement between WGU and partner district)

Rationale and Recommendation: Remove Stipulation

WGU has provided evidence that it has established a systematic process to ensure all host teachers receive information on the expectations for their training, verification that the training has occurred in a timely manner with regard to candidate placement with a host teacher, and that host teachers’ districts understand the requirements of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing related to host teachers.

Stipulation 2: That WGU’s plan for purposeful recruitment and admission of candidates to diversify the educator pool in California has been implemented and evaluated for effectiveness.

Summary of Actions Taken by WGU:

Beginning in July 2019 WGU Teachers College began focused marketing in the areas of Los Angeles, Sacramento-Stockton-Modesto, San Diego, and San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose in an attempt to garner more diversity in applications from prospective students. The result has been an increase in applications from prospective students who identify as Black or African American (44%), Hispanic (29%), Asian (33%), and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (68%). WGU began an additional campaign as part of its California Diversity Initiative. This campaign will initially run from April 2020 through September 2020 to target IP addresses of paraprofessionals and stay-at-home mothers between the ages of 25-54 within the African American, Asian American, and Hispanic American communities in the designated marketing areas. Scholarships are available for this audience and each ad drives viewers to a landing page featuring information on WGU’s Teacher Appreciation Scholarship. The campaign has identified 100,000 addresses within the designated marketing areas that are expected to result in a 6.8% increase in the completion rate for applications.

The WGU Teachers College has also hired the Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity (BranchED) to conduct an Equity Review for its programs.

Evidence

Included in its report, WGU provided the following evidence:

- Data from FY19 and FY20 on college applications from California audiences by designated marketing area (Los Angeles, Sacramento-Stockton-Modesto, San Diego, and San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose)

- Detailed outline and graphics of the Lead Generation Display Campaign for FY20 into FY21 targeting paraprofessionals and stay-at-home mothers from underserved markets in California, including scholarship information
- Detailed information and graphics of the Lead Generation and Social Campaigns for FY20

Rationale and Recommendation: Remove Stipulation

WGU has made significant efforts to identify and purposefully target recruitment of diverse populations, including providing scholarship information, for its Teachers College. Evidence of the evaluation of its initial efforts was provided.

Stipulation 3: That the members have been selected for the institution’s California P-12 Council and that there is evidence the council has begun meeting for the purposes of informing the WGU Teachers College.

Summary of Actions Taken by WGU:

In years past, WGU had a robust California-focused advisory board. At the time of the site visit in April 2019, WGU’s California P-12 Council had just three members and the institution was in the process of selecting a new council. Interviews conducted during the site visit verified that the institution’s executive committee had convened to being planning for future meetings of the council.

The newly formed council met in October 2019 and April 2020 and will continue to meet twice a year. The council has 10 seats representing public institutions of higher education, including 2- and 4-year colleges; school districts and county offices of education, including human resources and school and district leadership; and charter schools. The current council has two new openings that WGU intends to fill with individuals from northern California to ensure broad statewide representation. One of the openings was vacated by an individual who was a strong advocate for diversity in the California teaching population.

Evidence

Included in its report, WGU provided the following evidence toward meeting this stipulation:

- Membership roster of the WGU California P-12 Council
- Meeting agendas from October 2019 and April 2020
- Minutes from the October 2019 meeting

Rationale and Recommendation: Remove Stipulation

Evidence provided by WGU verifies that the members have been selected for the institution’s California P-12 Council and that the council has begun meeting for the purposes of information the WGU Teachers College.

Stipulation 4: That the institution provide clear information about the length of its program as well as clear data on the number of candidates who complete the program in that expected length of time.

Summary of Actions Taken by WGU:

At the time of the site visit in April 2019, information on the average time to program completion was not posted on the institution’s website. Members of the Committee on Accreditation requested that this information be made available to the public and prospective and current candidates of WGU’s California educator preparation programs. The institution has since updated its website with the information and added it to its FAQs page: “How quickly can you finish the program?” The average time to completion for Preliminary Single Subject credential candidates is 15 months and for Preliminary Multiple Subject credential candidates is 13 months (the institution does not operate on a semester model).

Evidence

Included in its report, WGU provided the following evidence toward meeting this stipulation:

- Reports of Single Subject completers and Multiple Subject completers showing program acceptance date, graduation date and total months in the program
- Link to the WGU website showing the posted information

Rationale and Recommendation: Remove Stipulation

Evidence provided by WGU articulates and supports the average time to completion of its Preliminary Single Subject and Multiple Subject credential programs is 15 months and 13 months, respectively, and that this information is posted to the institution’s website where the public and prospective and current candidates may locate it.