

REPORT ON THE FOLLOW-UP SITE VISIT

California Institute of Integrated Studies

Structural Change

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Team Roster:

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The team conducted its review and evaluated the institution under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective evaluation for consideration and action by the institution and by the WSCUC Senior College and University Commission.

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SECTION I – Overview and Context

A. Description of the Institution

July 1, 2015, with WSCUC approval, the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) formally merged with the American College of Traditional Chinese Medicine (ACTCM). On November 5, 2015, the Department of Education approved the ACTCM students to receive Title IV funds as part of CIIS. In all, seven different accrediting bodies had to give the merger their imprimatur. Thus while this report can describe the transition of integrating the two institutions, it is far too early to attempt to measure the impact of the merger.

CIIS began in the 1950s with the mission of training students for “interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, and applied studies in psychology, philosophy, religion, cultural anthropology, transformative studies and leadership, integrative health, women’s spirituality, counseling, community mental health, and the arts.” CIIS had three schools: Undergraduate Studies, Consciousness and Transformation, and Professional Psychology and Health. CIIS offers a bachelor’s degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, eight master’s degrees, five research doctorates, and one professional doctorate. Before the merger it had approximately 1,300 students: 6% undergraduate, 55% master’s, and 39% doctoral.

ACTCM, founded in 1980, is one of the oldest acupuncture and Chinese medicine colleges in the United States. In 1986 ACTCM began to offer a master of science degree in Traditional Chinese Medicine, and in 2006 it began to offer a clinical doctoral degree in Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. There are currently 263 students: 57 pursuing a Doctor of Acupuncture and Chinese

Medicine degree, 71 pursuing a Doctor of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Degree, and 135 pursuing a Master's Degree in Chinese Medicine. ACTCM as a whole and the different degrees have not been WSCUC accredited but enjoyed professional accreditation from the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine.

Since the merger, ACTCM has been organized as a fourth school of CIIS. Considerable progress has been made in integrating the two institutions, as this report will explain, but the leaders are careful not to prune ACTCM too quickly or radically. For example, ACTCM is being encouraged to maintain its individual identity in terms of having its own graduation, special events, and possibly its own website.

B. Description of the Review Progress

The review was conducted by Steven J. Novak, Ph.D., associate dean (retired) of Irell & Manella Graduate School of Biological Sciences of City of Hope. Dr. Novak and Margaret T. Bailey, Ph.D., had conducted the site visit in September 2014 that recommended the merger. He reviewed the 2014 team report and the November 10, 2014 WSCUC commission letter. He reviewed CIIS's accreditation history. He read the CIIS Follow-Up Report on the Structural Change and a sixteen-page table of action items indicating priority level, required resources, target completion dates, and status as of 9/28/2015. The long table indicated how much careful planning has gone into the merger and how systematic has been the implementation. Considerable progress has been made in most areas, and the integration has been fairly smooth.

At the visit, Dr. Novak received copies of audited financial statements, data on applicants and student FTEs, and the CIIS 2020 Strategic Plan. At the visit, Dr. Novak met with three board members, representing both CIIS and ACTCM, the president of CIIS and other executives, the CFO, members of the Admissions team, students from each institution, and faculty members from ACTCM. (Henceforth in this report, unless otherwise indicated, ACTCM will refer to the fourth college in CIIS, not the former independent school.)

Section Two – Evaluation of the Change

A. Strategic Planning

The WSCUC Commission Letter of November 10, 2014 asked CIIS to integrate ACTCM into the CIIS strategic planning process. In May 2014 the former ACTCM adopted a strategic plan, and about that time CIIS began a strategic planning process that is still underway. The president of CIIS is recommending that each of the other three colleges within CIIS adopt their own strategic plan. This might be seen as an example of cross-fertilization, CIIS borrowing good ideas from the former ACTCM. As mentioned, the CIIS 2020 Strategic Plan is still evolving. It has received feedback from trustees and faculty. It is an extensive, thoughtful plan. It is organized into nine broad sections. Within those sections there are forty objectives, and at least 207 strategies for achieving the objectives. If even a fraction of these strategies are successful, CIIS will be a stronger institution. Among the most significant goals are increasing the number of international students, especially through outreach in China; increasing student FTE from

about 1550 to 2000; adding new degree programs, on-line degrees, and hybrid courses; and strengthening programs with low enrollments.

B. Faculty

The WSCUC Commission Letter also recommended that CIIS integrate the ACTCM faculty into the higher education culture of CIIS, align salaries and benefits, as appropriate, and introduce ACTCM faculty into LMS technology. Historically the two institutions had different types of faculty. Whereas before the merger CIIS had approximately 70 full-time, 50 half-time, and 100 adjunct faculty members, ACTCM had a more clinical faculty: 3 full-time, 6 part-time, and 46 adjunct. The 2015 site visit report noted that CIIS has made considerable progress in integrating the faculty members of the two institutions. To quote from the Follow-up Report:

The ACTCM faculty members are on CIIS payroll and all ACTCM faculty and staff are provided the same benefits as other CIIS employees. The three ACTCM full-time faculty members moved to CIIS as ranked faculty, and six other ACTCM faculty members were named full-time senior lecturers....All the ACTCM faculty members have CIIS contracts, including adjuncts who did not have contracts prior to the merger. For the first post-merger year, all of the full-time contracts are for one-year; we expect to move to multiple-year contracts in subsequent years. All full-time faculty members from ACTCM are on CIIS Faculty Council....The three ranked ACTCM faculty members have administrative responsibilities and attend the CIIS Chairs' meetings monthly.

(An anecdote illustrates the cultural change taking place as a result of the merger. In the past ACTCM was so small that it could operate successfully informally. After the merger, many

former ACTCM clinical faculty complained that they were not receiving their paychecks or receiving e-mail messages. It turned out that they had not signed their contracts and until they did they could not be handled by the stricter CIIS processes. Once they signed the contracts, the problems ended.)

Former ACTCM faculty have been trained on the Learning Management System and will be trained on a new LMS (Canvas) that will enable teaching online courses. CIIS has not yet looked into salary differentials but they are retaining a consultant to create a plan to be ready at the start of the next fiscal year. Dr. Novak met with five former ACTCM faculty members and they were enthusiastic about the potential of the merger and philosophical about any small glitches in systems caused by the merger.

C. Other Issues Arising on the Visit

Dr. Novak also met with three CIIS students, who knew almost nothing about the merger, and three former ACTCM students, two of whom were quite concerned about the impact of the merger. He applauds CIIS's transparency in including these students in the site visit. One of the student complaints was that they did not see any improvements as a result of the merger, though it is probably too early to expect dramatic changes at the course level. Another concern was that there was lack of communication with former ACTCM students about the impact of the merger and things that went wrong. When CIIS leaders were asked about this, they recounted many forms of communication but also admitted that communication with students, and faculty, for that matter, needs frequent iteration. Dr. Novak was impressed to hear that the CFO had

attended a student Town Hall meeting to apologize for the disruption in the area of student loans. There does not seem to be one e-mail distribution list of all students. The acting director of student affairs explained that there were multiple lists created by the registrar, financial aid, and different departments. He said the school is working to create such a list.

The two disgruntled students also complained that the shift from the former ACTCM's quarter system to a semester system used by CIIS in some cases required them to retake a course or to have a lot of duplication in a course. The CIIS Follow-Up Report was quite forthcoming about the disruption caused by this shift. "One highly important and consequential change in the academic area was the conversion of the ACTCM programs from the quarter to the semester system so that all CIIS's schools are on the same academic calendar. This necessitates converting the entire curriculum of each ACTCM program and each course or module in it [requiring] an extensive amount of curricular development." Fortunately this is a one-time disruption, and there is always the possibility that redesigning a course may lead to improvements.

Despite these inevitable glitches, CIIS has made great headway with the merger with relatively little disruption. The CFO explained that the two schools previously had different fiscal years and now their fiscal years will be the same. The reconfigured Board of Trustees has met and is operating smoothly. Although with one small exception former ACTCM students are not taking CIIS courses, and vice versa, plans are underway to encourage this interaction. The two campuses are a mile apart. There are plans to conduct CIIS courses on the former ACTCM campus, though the clinical courses cannot be taught on the CIIS campus. There are plans to

intermingle the faculty and include former ACTCM faculty on CIIS committees and to reorganize space. In sum, careful planning went into the merger and its implementation, in general, is proceeding smoothly.

Section Three—Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations:

The reviewer comments CIIS for the following:

- (1) The open, candid spirit in which it approaches accreditation issues and site visits.
- (2) The systematic planning and implementation of the merger.

Recommendations:

- (1) Continue efforts to communicate the long-range value of the merger especially to faculty and students at the former ACTCM who may have been inconvenienced by new systems and processes.
- (2) Continue efforts to mingle students and faculty from the formerly disparate institutions and to reconfigure space, systems, and the curriculum to fit the post-merger opportunities.
- (3) Continue to develop vigorous, consistent assessment activities and program review in all four CIIS schools. (CFRs 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, and 2.10)