

Special Visit Report

November 30, 2022

Humphreys University  
Stockton, CA

Submitted by  
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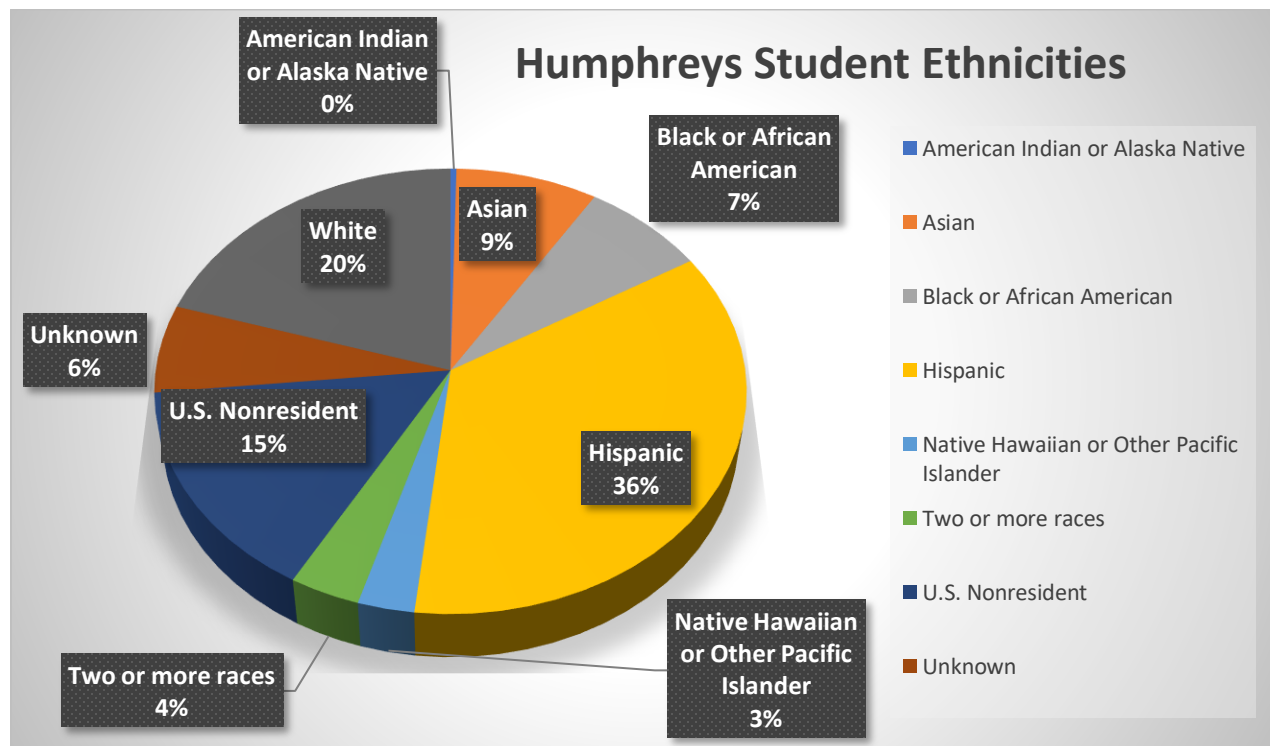
## Institutional Context

Humphreys University has been providing higher education since 1896. It was accredited by WSCUC in 1992. The mission of the university is:

*Humphreys University prepares students for meaningful careers and professions through a high-quality educational experience, strongly informed by the liberal arts, and directed to the specific and changing needs of students from diverse ethnic, cultural, economic, and educational backgrounds.*

At its main campus in Stockton, Humphreys offers associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees in areas of business, law, and education. At its off-campus site 25 miles south in Modesto, the University offers its undergraduate degrees. Since 2014, Humphreys has been offering a completion program (less than 50% of the B.S. in Business Administration program) to international students at an education facility in the City of Industry in Southern California. Humphreys programs are approved by WSCUC to be offered on-site and/or at a distance.

In fall 2022, Humphreys enrolled 407 students, with 163 (40%) in undergraduate programs and 244 (60%) in graduate programs. The student body of Humphreys continues to be very diverse, reflecting the local and state populations.



Since 2021, most Humphreys programs have been offered in a blended format, such that students may choose to attend in person with a professor present at a campus or to participate interactively via Zoom. Most students continue to choose to attend classes at a distance via Zoom. Notable exceptions to the blended modality are the Court Reporting and Master of Arts in Education programs, which are offered only at a distance, and the MBA with a concentration in Information Technology, which is offered mostly at a distance but with a required face-to-face weekend each term at the Stockton campus to meet visa regulations for international students.

## **Major Changes Since the Team Visit**

There have been major changes at the University since the team visit, many of which are detailed in this report. Highlights include:

- The full-time faculty have designed their own workload policy.
- The University created and filled the role of provost.
- The role of the CFO has been significantly expanded, and input into budgeting now includes faculty, deans, provost, and CFO.
- The former Humphreys president and Secretary of the Board has retired from the Board.
- A new strategic planning process has begun with broad input and new co-chairs.
- The University has achieved its second year in a row of budget surplus.
- The University's current financial Composite Score is the highest possible: 3.0
- Fall 2022 enrollment increased 8.5% over the previous fall, representing the first fall-over-fall increase in four years.

## **Statement on Report Preparation**

Humphreys University mobilized quickly to begin addressing the team and Commission recommendations. In spring 2022, the president asked Business Department and Academic Senate Chair Jason Wolins to form a task force comprised of faculty members to examine the recommendations, identify what had been done to that point to address them, and recommend additional steps the University could take to meet the team and Commission recommendations.

The Task Force reviewed the WSCUC Visiting Team's report and responded to the eight recommendations that were raised. Members of the Task Force included both full-time and adjunct faculty from various academic departments. They reviewed both the WSCUC Team's concerns and Humphreys University's perspectives, then wrote recommendations after reaching a consensus. The Task Force's Final Report aligns with the issues in the Commission Action Letter and reflects voices of the faculty about how the university has met and should meet the Commission's recommendations.

The Task Force report was used as the basis for writing this Special Visit report. The ALO, organized the president's Executive Committee members to draft responses to the five issues in the Commission's Action Letter. The University understands the Further Recommendations contained in the Action Letter are not to be a focus of the Special Visit or report.

Executive Committee members produced the initial drafts of these sections:

### **Issue 1: Integrity and Transparency**

- Dr. Lisa Kooren, Dean of IR and Director of the Modesto Campus

### **Issue 2: Enrollment and Fiscal Viability**

- Dr. Jess Bonds, Provost, ALO

### **Issue 3: Board Governance and Independence**

- Dr. Robert Humphreys, President

### **Issue 4: Leadership and Decision-making**

- Jason Wolins, Chair of Business Department and Academic Senate

### **Issue 5: Faculty and Academic Leadership**

- Cynthia Becerra, Dean of Undergraduate Studies
- Dr. Donna Roberts, Associate Dean

The ALO formatted and edited the initial draft of this report and presented it to the Executive Committee members for additional editing. The second draft of the report was emailed to full- and part-time faculty, as well as to the Board, for comments and suggestions. Additional changes were made based on faculty and Board input, resulting in this final version.

## **Response to Issues Identified by the Commission and the Last Visiting Team**

### **Issue 1: Integrity and Transparency**

*The Commission is concerned with a lack of transparency on the part of the Humphreys senior leadership. The University's strategic plan is a dramatic departure from its stated educational objectives and seems to have been implemented without engagement from the campus community. Issues from previous visits have not been addressed and integrity of operations remains an issue. Humphreys must establish clear educational objectives with the full engagement of its internal and external constituencies and ensure communication with WSCUC that is transparent and candid. (CFRs 1.2, 1.7, and 1.8).*

### **Actions Taken by Humphreys University**

*Strategic Planning.* In spring 2022, the president removed himself as the chair and as a member of the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). In June 2022, the remaining SPC members met and decided to expand SPC membership, select a new chair, and embark on a new strategic planning process toward the goal of producing a plan that is aligned with stated educational objectives and implemented with the full engagement of the campus community.

Membership was expanded to include faculty, deans, students/alumni, the director of administrative services, and a board member. During the June meeting, volunteers were requested to chair the committee. Julie Walker (faculty/admissions) and Susan Loftus (Board) volunteered to co-chair the committee. The other SPC members unanimously voted in the co-chairs. It was decided by the SPC that the role of the co-chairs would be to facilitate the meetings and ensure the SPC remained focused. The SPC is a collaborative group, operating on a consensus basis (Attachment 1.A SPC Committee Members).

The SPC met again in July 2022 to review the University mission and to review the planning processes adopted by the two previous SPCs. The SPC agreed to conduct internal and external scans and a SWOT analysis before revisiting the University mission. In August, September, and October, the SPC met five times to receive internal and external scan reports from professors and administrators. In November, the SPC conducted a SWOT analysis. In December, the SPC will review the mission, university philosophy of education, and core values in the context of the scans and SWOT analysis.

*Transparency and Integrity.* The University has made significant efforts to increase transparency and seek input from multiple constituencies:

- To include important voices and perspectives as a means to seek transparency and integrity in the University's response to the team report and Commission Action Letter, a WSCUC Task Force was immediately convened following the receipt of the draft team report to address the issues presented by the team. The Task Force report was eventually aligned with the issues in the Commission's Action Letter. The Task Force was comprised exclusively of full-time and adjunct faculty. The Academic Senate Chair led the Task Force and reported on each of the Task Force's meetings to the Executive Committee, Department Chair committee, and the Senate. The Task Force's report served as the basis for this report (Attachment 1.B WSCUC Task Force Report).

- The provost position was created to address concerns about transparency, among other issues, and is detailed in the section on Issue 5. The process for developing the position description and filling the position reflected the beginning of a new era of transparency at the University. All deans met to discuss the value of the position and make recommendations for the job description. All full-time faculty were sent an anonymous survey link to gather input regarding the creation of a provost position. The president reviewed those recommendations and created a formal job description (Attachment 1.C Senior Position Descriptions) which was sent to the members of the Academic Senate for review and vote. A recommendation for the Jess Bonds, Dean of Graduate Studies, to fulfill the position was made and unanimously approved by the Senate. The president sent an official announcement to faculty and staff in July 2022.
- To foster transparency in the president's Executive Committee, the president and other committee members expanded the membership to include the current chair of the Academic Senate, as well as a faculty member selected by the Senate. Both are standing members of the Executive Committee (Attachment 1.D Exec Committee Members) The Senate chair is to report important information from the Executive Committee to the Senate at regular meetings.
- A very important step was taken to repair integrity of operations and to support transparency when the Dean of Undergraduate Studies convened a faculty workload committee to examine and update the faculty workload policy. The membership included deans and faculty from various departments. The components of the workload were expanded to include more scholarship activities as well as the inclusion of a request for workload release should a faculty member be required or request to participate in assessment or other institutional activities. The updated workload policy was presented to the Academic Senate for a vote. The new policy was unanimously approved in August 2022 and was approved by the provost and president in September 2022 (Attachment 1.E Faculty Workload Policy).
- In the spring of 2022, in another step to repair integrity of operations, the president led the Executive Committee to update the institutional organizational chart, which was presented to the Academic Senate and unanimously approved. Additionally, the provost distributed a draft academic affairs organization chart to Executive Committee membership and made improvements based on input. The provost sent the final version to the deans to distribute to their faculty members (Attachment 1.F Organizational Charts).
- To codify the University's new directions to ensure transparency and repair operational integrity, a faculty governance committee convened to examine the shared-governance policy, matrix, and structure, which had for all intents and purposes remained unchanged for twenty years. Initial changes and updates were made and presented to the Academic Senate in early August 2022. Many members voiced concerns about the structure of the matrix and a motion to approve the matrix was withdrawn. A new motion to table voting on the matrix and request the committee reconvene and revise the matrix was approved. The Senate members agreed to review an updated version of the matrix and vote via

email. The faculty governance committee reconvened and updated the matrix based on the feedback from the Senate. Additionally, the matrix was expanded to include governance for graduate programs and for the role of the provost. The new undergraduate and graduate matrix was unanimously approved by the Academic Senate in August 2022, and by the Graduate Council October 2022. A separate matrix was created for the law school, which was approved by the Law Council (Attachment 1.G Shared Governance Matrices).

- In a critical move to support financial transparency and greatly enhance shared governance, the president and Board significantly expanded the role of Miles Denniston, a vice-president of CSMC, in the role of CFO for the University. The University contracts with CSMC for financial services. The president circulated an email with the announcement as well as a description of his duties to all University employees (Attachment 1.C Senior Position Descriptions). More details about the CFO position and its impact are presented in Issue 2. Deans and department chairs each met with Miles Denniston, CFO, as a part of the budgeting process for the 2022-2033 year. The CFO also presented financial and budget data at an Academic Senate meeting in May 2022 and at the Executive Committee meeting in August. He has also presented information at each of the last three Board meetings (spring, summer, fall).
- During the recent site visit, the team asked to see the MOU between Humphreys and the director of operations at the City of Industry (Arcadia campus) off-site facility. The MOU could not be found by either party. Though the fact that the MOU could not be produced was not included in the Action Letter, it did understandably feed into the team's perception that Humphreys was not being transparent. A new MOU has been signed by both parties and is included as Attachment 1.H MOU City of Industry.

### **Analysis of Effectiveness of Actions**

Each of the above actions has improved transparency and has begun to restore operational integrity. Significant efforts have been made to take the voices of multiple constituencies into account. Maintaining transparency has become an important issue for the leadership and will continue to remain in the forefront as an important issue to sustain.

Candid and transparent communication with WSCUC continues to be a priority. The WSCUC Task Force examined each of the issues presented in the Action Letter and takes the recommendations of the visiting team seriously. The Task Force will continue to review progress on the concerns and report updates to the University community, including the Board of Trustees.

Building and sustaining trust among Humphreys constituencies and with WSCUC will take time. Though trust-building must begin with transparency, by itself transparency cannot build trust. For this reason, it is imperative that Humphreys include faculty and staff in decision making. Without real and sustained input from all constituencies, it is easy to assume, though not axiomatically, that transparency would reveal an organization that is distrustful of its employees, arrogant in its thinking, ashamed of its motives, insecure in its abilities, greedy in its power, and/or myopic in its perspective. These are not the characteristics Humphreys strives for; these do not reflect the assumptions Humphreys wishes for others to make. And so, a long journey has



begun, a journey toward trust, cooperation, and community, revealed by the virtue of transparency.

### **Next Steps**

The Strategic Planning committee is in the process of reviewing the University's educational objectives in the context of the current and projected climate of higher education. With the broadened inclusion of more faculty, a Board member, students, and the administration, the new strategic plan will be the guide for meeting the mission of the University. The SPC will be voting on the creation of either a three- or a five-year plan. It is a consensus among the members that the new plan will not sit on a shelf but, instead, will be a living document with regular review and update.

Maintaining transparency, communication, and accountability is a priority. While significant progress has been made, this issue can never fully be completed as it is an on-going process. The changes in committee membership are officially updated to help ensure continual improvement in this area.

The University's WSCUC Task Force will conduct recurrent review of the progress made on the issues and report their findings to the larger University community.

## **Issue 2: Enrollment and Fiscal Viability**

*Humphreys has experienced plummeting enrollment for five of the last six years which has led to significant financial deficits. The budget is created and controlled by the president without input from operational departments. Although financial functions have been outsourced, the CFO who works for the outsourced company functions more as a controller than as a CFO. Financial analysis of programs continues to be needed. Financial decisions should support degree quality and integrity which requires a CFO that engages with the campus community. Humphreys needs to provide data and analysis of the incremental costs of new and existing programs, including the impact on staff and faculty workloads to support student success. (CFRs 3.4 and 3.8).*

### **Actions Taken by Humphreys University**

In 2019, Humphreys proactively solicited and was assured by WSCUC VPs that it is acceptable for a small institution to contract with a corporation to act as its CFO. Since that time, Humphreys contracted with CSMC, Inc., a California-based financial services company serving educational institutions, to act as the Humphreys CFO. Up to the March 2022 Commission Action Letter, CSMC provided accounting and controller functions to Humphreys but not some of the higher-level financial services that are also part of a traditional CFO role. Though the CFO-level services have always been part of Humphreys' contract with CSMC, the University had not sought to have CSMC provide them (Attachment 2.A CSMC Contract).

After the reaffirmation visit and subsequent Action Letter, Humphreys activated the other CFO services in the contract to include:

- Lead the planning and budgeting process including budget development support to faculty and administrative staff, advising the president, and accounting and reporting
- Work with University constituencies to ensure adequate resources are available to support degree quality and integrity, and attainment of institutional mission and initiatives
- Provide financial analysis of academic program performance
- Communicate with faculty and administration on performance to budget and university finances
- Communicate financial data to campus constituencies including faculty governance groups and the Board of Trustees
- Assist with financial analysis as needed or requested
- Meet with and brief the Board of Trustees and/or with individual trustees when required
- Provide guidance to the president on financial matters associated with risk management, investments, capital expenditures, debt management, etc., as necessary

CMSC has appointed one of its vice presidents – Miles Denniston – to represent CMSC in its capacity as the CFO of Humphreys. While continuing to oversee accounting and related

functions performed for Humphreys by CSMC, Mr. Denniston has substantially expanded the activities of the CFO arrangement through interactive participation with deans and provost related to the development of the 2022/2023 budget and with financial analysis of programs.

*Budgeting.* Since the reaffirmation visit, because of CFO involvement, the Humphreys budgeting process has improved dramatically in terms of participation and use of data to support the success of programs. The budgeting process now follows a procedure (Attachment 2.B Budget Calendar and Process). Now, the deans work with academic chairs and faculty and the CFO to draft budgets for each program.

Budget development begins by examining reports of the actuals of the most recently completed year, as well as up-to-date data for the current year. These financial reports, provided by the CFO, are used to form a baseline budget, which can then be modified by including recommended expenditures from program review reports, tasks associated with strategic planning initiatives, enrollment projections, and faculty proposals (teaching load reductions for assessment projects, sabbatical leaves, etc.).

The deans submit their draft budgets to the CFO for review and comment. The CFO asks questions, makes adjustments, and sends the budgets back to the deans for further review. The deans make other requests and/or modifications until a final budget is produced for each program. During the time the 2022/2023 budget was in development, Humphreys did not have a provost. Now that a provost has been appointed, the provost will work alongside the deans and CFO during budget negotiations.

A vital component that is necessary to allow analysis of the financial health of programs is accurate allocation of direct costs of personnel. At a small institution such as Humphreys, it is common that a full-time employee “wears many hats.” For instance, a faculty member might teach for two different academic departments, or an academic dean might also be responsible for an administrative function. Proportioning an employee’s salary and benefits accurately among multiple cost centers is oftentimes more art than science. Though proportioning had always been a part of cost allocation at the University, the 2022/2023 budget process with its heightened participation brought to the fore the need for chairs and deans to make adjustments to the proportions to align with realities. By doing so, the data and analysis of the incremental costs of operating a program are now more accurate, allowing, for example, an analysis of the impact of faculty workloads on a program’s viability. The CFO incorporated the updated proportions of employees’ compensation into the 2022/2023 budget.

The CFO presented the institutional budget (Attachment 2.C 22-23 Budget, reformatted) to various stakeholders, including faculty governance groups, such as the Academic Senate, and the Executive Committee. Importantly, along with the CEO, the CFO presented the proposed budget to the Board for its approval. In each instance, the CFO and CEO answered questions and led constituencies to a fuller understanding of the role budgeting has in the growth and direction of the institution.

*Financial Analysis.* At the request of the provost, the CFO produced a 2021-2022 P&L analysis (Attachment 2.D Direct and Overhead Margins, reformatted), which allowed the provost to identify the degree to which program tuition charges are exceeding direct costs and the degree to which excesses are contributing to institutional overhead. The financial analysis provided by the CFO is an important step to identifying program viability.

Though developing a reliable and valid method of allocating overhead costs to tuition centers is an elusive and challenging task to even the most sophisticated financial analysts in higher education, it is vitally important to develop a working formula to understand the true cost of operating a program.

The use of financial analysis data, as well as the need to examine programs from a mission perspective, prompted the President's Executive Committee to draft, circulate for input, and finalize the Program Closure Policy (Attachment 2.E Program Closure Policy). The policy calls for a viability assessment of a program under specific conditions, such as failing to meet direct costs or failing to complete a program review.

The policy was activated when financial analysis of the profit/loss margin of the Court Reporting Department showed 0%, indicating that the program was on the cusp of not generating enough tuition revenue to cover direct costs. The Program Closure Policy calls for the Academic Review Committee (the deans and provost) to gather additional information about the department under review, engage the department chair in discussions about program viability, and submit a recommendation report to the president.

In the case of the Court Reporting Department, the Academic Review Committee recommended lifting the temporary stay on program enrollment and requiring a program viability plan of the department chair (Attachment 2.F Academic Review Committee Report: Court Reporting). The Committee will review annually progress toward meeting the goals of the Court Report Department plan for viability (Attachment 2.G Court Reporting Viability Plan). Essentially, the Court Reporting program needs to increase its quarterly enrollment headcount by approximately 25%, from 30 students to 40 students, to provide sufficient revenue to move its direct cost margin from 0% to approximately 50%, which would put it in line with the margins of some other programs.

### **Analysis of Effectiveness of Actions**

The University pursued three strategies simultaneously to address the Enrollment and Fiscal Viability issue:

- Implement a distributed budgeting process
- Pursue fulfillment of the contract with CSMC to be CFO
- Adopted and implemented a Program Closure Policy

These three strategies have produced tangible results:

- The budgeting process is now more transparent and distributed to provost, deans, and faculty – allowing for allocations to be made from the perspectives of employees who are closest to the core of what the University does: teaching and learning. The breadth and depth of participation in the budgeting process signal a new era in shared governance.
- Fulfilling the contract with CSMC to be CFO has been significant and profound. The role of the CFO is separate from the role of the CEO and clearly meets CFR 3.8.

Humphreys University has an objective, outside entity and representative involved in the budgeting and finances of the institution.

- In the case of the Court Reporting Department, the implementation of the Program Closure Policy has provided a formal mechanism for developing an improvement plan that will lead to either program viability or program closure.
- Improvements to proportioned allocations of employee compensation and linking faculty workload levels to financial reports have improved the accuracy of budgeting and financial analysis of programs, though more work needs to be done in this area, as described below.

### **Next Steps**

Though significant progress has been made to address the issues described in Enrollment and Fiscal Viability, additional work needs to be completed to have a fuller picture of the viability of programs. Thus far, the focus of improvements has been on budgeting for costs, not on tuition revenue. To know with greater certainty that a program's costs are appropriate, they must be viewed in the context of revenue generated by the program.

Tuition revenue needs to be allocated to the programs to which students are a part. Currently, a rough estimate of how much tuition revenue is generated by programs is calculated by proportionally allocating the sum of all tuition revenue by program headcounts. These calculations often do not account for a variety of tuition rates or tuition discounting. Consequently, the analysis of the extent to which a program is viable is not as reliable as it will be in the coming year because of planned changes in the way tuition revenues are received at the institution.

The CFO is working with the CEO to revamp the chart of accounts so that tuition revenues can be allocated to the programs to which a student belongs. While doing so will go a long way towards supporting complete analyses of program viability, there are other issues which also need to be resolved, particularly in regard to funding the Liberal Arts Department, which provides the general education components of all programs. Taking into consideration the increase of transfer students coming to the institution and their transfer credits, which are often general education credits, a sophisticated system of allocating revenue to the Liberal Arts Department to fund its delivery of general education courses needs to occur.

The work to build a system of accounts allowing for the allocation of revenue to programs has already occurred, and historical data from the first quarter of the current year are being moved to the new structure. All new tuition revenues will be input directly into the new structure. Tuition data for the current fiscal year will also be available in the second half of this year. The formula for funding of the Liberal Arts Department is being developed by the CFO and is expected to be operational by the end of the third quarter of the current fiscal year.

### **Issue 3: Board Governance and Independence**

*The insulated relationship between the president and board is symptomatic of a governance system that is struggling, leading to a lack of decision-making and transparency in the culture of the institution. The governing board, made up of individuals with a long history with the university, has appropriate authority. However, both the current president and his father, the previous president, are members of the board. It concerns the Commission that the president's father was directly involved in the evaluation of the president. The Board needs to revisit its protocols to ensure independence. In addition, the Board should expand its membership to reflect the surrounding Stockton area and include a diversity of experience. The Board needs to establish a tradition of self-review and training in order to enhance its effectiveness. (CFR 3.8)*

### **Actions Taken by Humphreys University**

In response to the Commission Action Letter and the issues identified, the Board has taken steps to address the following recommendations presented in Issue #3:

1. The Board needs to revisit its protocols to ensure independence
2. The Board should expand its membership to reflect the surrounding Stockton area and include a diversity of experience
3. The Board needs to establish a tradition of self-review and training in order to enhance its effectiveness

*Recommendation 1 actions.* The Board and its Trusteeship Committee reviewed its established policies and protocols and analyzed the need for additional policies to articulate and strengthen Board independence and governance. The Trusteeship Committee reviewed the University's general and the Board's specific Conflict of Interest Policies to ensure their appropriateness and relevance. Additionally, the Committee reviewed the Board by-laws, again to determine if changes or updates were appropriate. The results of that discussion led the Committee to recommend revisions to the Board Conflict of Interest Policy (Attachment 3.A Board Conflict of Interest Policy) and the adoption of a Board Independence Policy at the Board's September 2022 meeting (Attachment 3.B Board Independence Policy). The newly adopted Board Independence Policy specifies the characteristics of an independent board member as well as characteristics that may warrant reflection or action apropos the Board's ability to remain independent. Additionally, the Trusteeship Committee and the Board agreed to a periodic audit of board membership through the lenses of conflict of interest and independence. The policies are intended to identify, mitigate, and remind the Board of the connection between its role as an independent governance body and what considerations or characteristics of board membership, roles, and responsibilities are important to retain their independence. The Board voted unanimously to adopt these policies.

A survey of Trustees was conducted in May 2022 to gauge skills and expertise of Trustees in conjunction with the Board's search process for candidates to fill empty seats on the Board (Attachment 3.C Survey of Board Members, Attachment 3.D Report of Board Survey Responses). While the main focus of the survey was assessing Board skills and expertise for the purpose of identifying qualities important in Trustee candidates, the majority of survey respondents also reported that they would benefit from more involvement in Board meetings from department heads/academic deans. While staff reports to the Board had been a frequent and regular characteristic of board meetings historically, the University lapsed in this regard. The

Board feels that it receives a fuller picture of the standing and challenges of the institution through direct interaction with academic and administrative leadership. The Board has now instituted a standing agenda item in its meetings starting with its May 2022 meeting to receive staff reports directly from relevant academic and administrative employees at the University in addition to the president's report (Attachment 3.E May 2022 Board Agenda). With the addition of the newly created provost position, the Board will receive a provost's report at each meeting, ensuring it is engaged in core matters of academics at the University. Similarly, the Board has continued and will continue to receive financial reports from the CFO, either directly or through the CFO's interactions with the Board's Finance Committee. Given the Commission's concern about the insular relationship between the president and the Board, these staff reports provide the Board with context, breadth and depth with which to understand the operation, performance, needs, and strategic challenges and opportunities of the University beyond the voice of the president.

At the September 2022 Board meeting, the former president of the University retired his position from the Board of Trustees. With this retirement, the Board has two open seats to fill after the installation of two new board members at the same September meeting, which is discussed in more detail below.

*Recommendation 2 actions.* In late 2021, the Trusteeship Committee initiated discussion on filling vacancies on the Board. The chair of the Trusteeship Committee reported to the Board at its January 2022 meeting that in light of the three outstanding vacancies on the Board, the Committee had, based on its recent discussions, developed a process to assess current membership to determine Board strengths and weaknesses in order to identify specific attributes to look for in seeking out and offering board membership to potential candidates. This process comports well with Association of Governing Boards (AGB) best practices on establishing and sustaining effective boards. This process comprised a matrix that surveyed the academic, personal, professional characteristics and qualities each current member brings to the board and was intended to help to identify characteristics the Board desired to consider in new members. This matrix was distributed to current Trustees before the Board meeting in April 2022. Results were collected, compiled, and summarized by the chair of the Trusteeship Committee. Based on the results of the completed matrices, areas of relevant experience and expertise of current Trustees were identified to include education administration, fund raising, finance, instruction, law, legislation, budgeting, strategic planning, personnel and business administration. Gaps were found in the racial/ethnic alignment of trustees with the community and student body, marketing and public relations, and experience in higher education. The Committee reported the results of the survey to the Trustees at the May 2022 Board meeting (Attachment 3.F May 2022 Board Minutes).

Several candidates were suggested to the Board by the Trusteeship Committee. Over the spring and summer of 2022, the Trusteeship Committee vetted the proposed candidates. Having determined two of the proposed candidates were of interest and aligned with the qualifications identified through the Board's skill analysis and survey, the Committee extended solicitations of interest to these two candidates, met with them, and submitted a recommendation to the full Board that it invite the nominated candidates to join the Board officially at the September 2022 board meeting. At that meeting, the two new trustees were seated (Attachment 3.G Duron Resume, Attachment 3.H Clay Resume), enhancing its diversity, depth of experience, and service capacity to the University and its students.

*Recommendation 3 actions.* Between the Action Letter in March and the submittal of this response in November 2022, Board members discussed in several of the Board meetings and related committee meetings how best to approach board development. Trustees discussed their desire for training to help existing and new trustees get a more complete exposure to and understanding of the governance, accreditation, financial, and administrative procedures and requirements of higher education in general, and Humphreys University in particular (Attachment 3.I May 2022 Trusteeship Committee Minutes, Attachment 3.F May 2022 Board Minutes). Additionally, the Board discussed reinstating its periodic retreats as an effective way to conduct board assessment and training. At the behest of the Trustees, the president researched and provided several possible approaches for board training and self-review including engaging local higher education faculty who provide board training and governance consulting services or joining the AGB. Because of the deep experience of current Trustees from having served on multiple local boards and foundations, there was sentiment that local consultants would be of limited incremental value and that greater value would be gained by engaging with board development resources more focused on higher education. There was considerable interest in the concept of joining AGB and using its resources as a board development and training platform. The Board tasked the president with researching it further with the goal of conducting several training opportunities over the next year.

In July 2022, the institution joined the Association of Governing Boards. The first action was for the Trusteeship Committee to review AGB literature on board assessment, governance, independence, principles of trusteeship, and top strategic issues in higher education. All Trustees received account access to AGB. At the September 2022 board meeting, the Trusteeship Committee recommended that the Board complete AGB's Board Self-Assessment program (Attachment 3.J September 2022 Board Minutes). The Trusteeship Committee met in late October 2022 to review the self-assessment tool and the Chair of the Committee communicated to all Trustees with an invitation and request for them to complete the self-assessment. Over the first half of November 2022, trustees completed the self-assessment program to inform a baseline evaluation of their effectiveness and where to focus development and training time (Attachment 3.K Board Self-Assessment Raw Data).

The results of the self-assessment were compiled and will be presented and discussed at the Board's December 5, 2022, meeting (Attachment 3.L Board December Agenda); the intention is to use the results of the self-assessment as the basis for AGB or otherwise-led consulting to develop findings and recommendations for board improvement in identified areas, as well as implementation plans to address the findings and recommendations. Further, the Board plans to reinvigorate its prior periodic tradition of bi-annual retreats, the first of which is scheduled to take place in the second half of 2023 and will focus further on aspects of effective board governance.

### **Analysis of Effectiveness of Actions**

The review and updating of relevant board policies has reinforced the Board's independence as well as strengthened its processes to ensure that potential conflicts of interest are appropriately considered. What it means to be independent has been defined in the Board Independence Policy and a process of periodic audits of Trustees against these standards is being established. The review and revision process has also fostered meaningful discussion among the Trustees on how they should best and most effectively govern. The task before the board is to maintain its inertia and, through the tangential benefits of regular self-assessment and training activities that it is



undertaking, ensure that these practices become part of its culture. Key to this inertia will be to institutionalize the practices of periodic assessment and training. Activities undertaken to date provide a solid framework and foundation for continued Board development.

Further, the Board has strengthened its membership with the addition of two new trustees as of the writing of this report. With the retirement of the former University president from the Board, there are two vacancies left to fill at the time of this writing, which were discussed preliminarily at the October 2022 Trusteeship Committee Meeting. The Board believes that the retirement of the former University president as a Trustee squarely addresses one of the Commission's concerns regarding independence. The Board endeavors to fill these remaining vacancies in 2023, informed by the Board's self-assessment work and identification of key attributes.

### **Next Steps**

As of the writing of this report, the results of the Board's AGB self-assessment are preliminary, and the Board plans at its next meeting in December to analyze results and determine how best to proceed based on the data. Ideas include engaging further consulting, either locally or via AGB, to provide directed board development based on the results of the self-assessment it conducted. The Board also intends to reinstitute its periodic retreats, likely on a once-every-two-year calendar. Retreats are and have been excellent ways for trustees to engage uninterrupted in the governance of the University as well as in the assessment of their own performance. Responses from the May 2022 survey indicate that trustees feel they would benefit from retreats focused on marketing, WSCUC accreditation and regulations affecting higher education, Trustee and board roles, expectations, and responsibilities, strategic planning, public relations, and trusteeship, among others. The Board agrees that a possible retreat in 2023 is appropriate.

Additionally, there are two board vacancies remaining to be filled as of the time of this writing. The Trusteeship Committee continues to meet and review potential candidates for the positions using the analyses it completed in April and May of 2022. The Committee, in continued consultation with the full board, will look toward addressing the considerations of the Board for expertise in marketing, human resources, and higher education, with a goal of filling the last vacancy in 2023.

#### **Issue 4: Leadership and Decision-making**

*The University's organizational structures and decision-making processes are not clear. Roles, responsibilities, and lines of authority are ambiguous. This can have a negative impact on the institution's ability to support strategic decision-making. In addition, the Commission is concerned that the CEO is fulfilling so many different organizational functions that it has become challenging to provide the leadership the university needs in areas like community visibility and fundraising. It is important that the university place priority on sustaining institutional capacity and educational effectiveness by clearly defining leadership roles and decision-making structures. (CFRs 3.6, 3.7, 3.8)*

#### **Actions Taken by Humphreys**

The University has taken the following actions concerning 1) leadership roles and 2) decision-making structures:

*Leadership roles.* The University has refined the organizational structure and decision-making processes by 1) revising the organizational chart to show updated roles, responsibilities, and lines of authority (Attachment 1.F Organizational Charts), 2) creating a provost position to fill the gap between the deans and president, and 3) expanding the Chief Financial Officer's (CFO) responsibilities.

This revised organizational chart is clearer than before. The new provost position fills the gap between the deans and president, and it oversees the academic side of the University. These previously were overseen by the president. The provost position now relieves the president from having to fulfill those organizational functions. The expanded CFO position is included in the revised organizational chart and shows the CFO will oversee the University's business operations and finances. With input from Board, Executive Committee, and in the case of the provost, the faculty, institutional leadership created position job descriptions for president, provost, and CFO, and is in the process of creating dean job descriptions. (Attachment 1.C Senior Position Descriptions)

As the positions of the CFO and provost become ingrained in operations, the president will have more time to be visible in the community. While traditional forms of fund raising have never been part of the Humphreys culture, raising funds other than through tuition has been a focus ever since the previous visit team recommended that the University begin to navigate additional streams of revenue. At that time, 95% of University revenue came from tuition. Now, 75% of revenue comes from tuition.

Over the past few years, the president has been leading the University to develop and purchase real estate for the purpose of renting property to the ABLE Charter School, which is housed on the Stockton campus. As a result of these efforts, the University receives annually \$1.5 million in rental income.

*Decision-making structures.* The University has expanded its input into decisions to include additional voices. The Strategic Planning Committee added student, alumni, and trustee members. The Academic Senate added an additional adjunct faculty member. The Executive Committee added the Academic Senate chair and a full-time faculty person, selected by the Academic Senate, as members. The Board of Trustees filled vacant memberships in September 2022.

To further expand and update its decision-making structures, the University asked the faculty to revise the institutional Shared Academic-Governance Matrix to add the provost position and update the roles of all involved. It now is linear in nature, with a flow reflecting the following progression of levels in the decision-making process, where applicable: Input, Decision, Preliminary Approval, Approval 2, Approval 3, and Final Approval. The matrix previously was just for the undergraduate level. It now has been expanded to incorporate both undergraduate- and graduate-level programs, excluding the law school. The law school has created its own separate governing matrix (Attachment 1.G Shared Governance Matrices).

In another significant rearrangement of decision making, the president decided to move the reporting of the Academic Senate, Graduate Council, and Law Council from the president to the provost. The provost, in turn, decided to move the reporting of those faculty governance groups from the provost to the respective deans. Now, the input and decisions made by the faculty are directly made to their deans. Making these changes has shifted academic decision-making two layers down the organizational chart.

### **Analysis of Effectiveness of Actions**

Humphreys has gone far beyond clarifying organizational structures and decision-making processes. Not only has participation in decision-making been broadened, but it has also decidedly moved away from the president and toward the faculty. A number of processes that had required the president's final approval on the Shared-Governance Matrix have shifted to the provost and deans. The deans now report to the provost instead of directly to the president. Budgeting, often seen as the lifeblood of decision making, now flows through the faculty, deans, provost, and CFO. A great deal has been improved upon in less than a year.

### **Next Steps**

The next step is to observe the long-term impact of the changes by evaluating their effects as part of an ongoing analysis of leadership and decision-making efforts. How well did the changes stick? To what extent has the financial outlook improved? Have enrollments increased? Have student outcomes improved? Did the University get off Warning and back on firm accreditation footing? Then, another layer of improvements can be contemplated. Are more reforms needed? Do adjustments need to be made? Are all constituencies adequately supported and provided opportunities to contribute?

## **Issue 5: Faculty and Academic Leadership**

*The absence of designated academic leadership above the level of the deans threatens educational effectiveness. Deans do not have control of budgets and have no authority to make decisions about academic programs or establish educational priorities. Reductions in staff have exacerbated a heavy faculty workload which may have impacted other aspects of faculty work, including the assessment of student learning. Humphreys should prioritize ensuring academic leadership that is empowered to make decisions about programs, budgets, and faculty workload. (CFR 3.10)*

### **Actions Taken by Humphreys**

*Provost.* The first part of Issue 5 centers on the absence of designated academic leadership above the level of the deans and how that threatens educational effectiveness at Humphreys University. Since the site visit, multiple actions have been taken to address this point. The Executive Committee, which includes the president, deliberated on the need for a provost in response to WSCUC's report and recommendations (Attachment 5.A Discussion of Provost Position).

A job description for a provost position was developed (Attachment 1.C Senior Position Descriptions) and circulated for input. Furthermore, in addition to the job description, the president emailed University stakeholders for input on a provost position by providing an anonymous survey link (Attachment 5.B President Email re Provost Input). Results were discussed by the Executive Committee and a decision to seek wider input from a variety of stakeholders was merited. Various constituencies—such as the Academic Senate and Graduate Council, which represent a cross-section of deans, faculty, and adjuncts—discussed and provided input on the creation of a provost position at Humphreys. Additionally, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies provided clarification to the Academic Senate based on various questions and input that arose (Attachment 5.C Faculty Bodies Discuss Provost).

Then, a WSCUC Task Force that was chaired by Jason Wolins, Academic Senate Chair, and comprised of a myriad of faculty and adjunct instructors, began work on analyzing and making recommendations to the University administration based on the visit team's report and findings. This included all components focused on this issue. Finally, the four deans met in a closed session and recommended Dr. Jess Bonds, Dean of Graduate Studies, for the provost position with his 30+ years of experience at Humphreys University. They cited that his in-depth understanding of the institution and vast experience could make him ready within a matter of weeks to take on the provost position. Dean Matthew Reynolds, Law School, released a detailed statement from the closed session that was shared at the Executive Committee meeting (Attachment 5.D Deans Statement re Provost). As part of the agreement with the dean, the provost will shift the remainder of his MBA IT responsibilities to the Business Administration Department, and, after Warning is removed, will relinquish ALO duties to Dean Matthew Reynolds.

Academic Senate Chair Jason Wolins circulated the provost job description, a decision tree on the position, Dean Reynolds' statement from the deans, and asked for a vote from the Senate on whether it supported the deans' statements that recommended Dr. Bonds as provost (Attachment 5.E Academic Senate Provost Vote). The Academic Senate responded with unanimous support for Dr. Bonds and the deans' recommendations. The Graduate Council also provided input and concurred with the Academic Senate.

After all stakeholders shared support, including the Board, Dr. Bonds was promoted to provost of Humphreys University in July 2022. The president emailed the Humphreys community with the announcement of the new provost (Attachment 5.F President Email re Provost).

*Budget and Deans.* The second part of Issue 5 focuses on the fact that deans do not have control of budgets and have no authority to make decisions about academic programs or establish educational priorities. Since the site visit, multiple actions have been taken to address these points.

The Executive Committee, which includes the president, deliberated on the need to reestablish a bottom-up budget process that is iterative and inclusive of deans, chairs, and faculty to effectively support decisions on academic programs. Additionally, the Executive Committee examined the history of the budgeting process at Humphreys and reviewed former documents associated with the process itself such as previous roles and responsibilities as well as a former budgeting calendar. Documents were revised to meet the University's evolving dynamics and needs (Attachment 2.B Budget Calendar and Process). Deans were tasked to work with chairs and directors to develop the upcoming budget based on each department's specific budgetary needs adhering to the updated calendar. The Library and Learning Center was included in this budgeting process.

The deans sent out the request to chairs and directors to develop their budgets as well as provided several support resources, such as budget development instructions, a University budget calendar, a department budget template, as well as enrollment and revenue data (Attachment 5.G Dean Email re Budget Docs). Deans encouraged chairs to ask questions and offered to work together on the endeavor as needed. The chairs worked with their department faculty to identify budgetary needs such as anticipated conferences and professional memberships, various instructor resources, and other proposed program items. Once departments finalized their budget drafts, they were submitted to the respective deans for review. Documents were then forwarded to the CFO, Miles Denniston, who was charged with creating the preliminary budget summary.

In April 2022, the CFO presented the preliminary budget summary to the Academic Senate, as well as a crosscut of deans, faculty, and adjuncts for further comment (Attachment 5.H CFO Prelim Budget at Academic Senate). He answered questions and discussed multiple aspects to the budget process. In early May 2022, the budget draft was submitted to the Board of Trustees for review. No revisions were requested. In late May, the Trustees voted to adopt the 2022-2023 budget (Attachment 3.F May 2022 Board Minutes). The approved undergraduate and graduate studies budgets were extracted and sent to the respective deans to monitor and oversee throughout the new fiscal year (Attachment 5.I Final Budgets Sent to Deans).

During annual performance reviews of chairs and directors, department academic plans were shared, and discussions resulted for further tying a department's academic plan to its approved budget. Additionally, the deans are actively monitoring their respective budgets and conferring with the provost on various budgetary aspects. For example, an unanticipated expense of an external reviewer for the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program review came about that was not included in the initial budget draft. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies, who oversees program reviews and works closely with the Program Review Committee chair, consulted with the provost on the matter. The dean then reached out to the ECE department chair for permission

to pull these funds from the ECE budget under an agreed-upon item on the budget. This collaborative process allowed for input from all stakeholders and a mutual consensus (Attachment 5.J Dean and Chair Budget Collaboration).

Additionally, a committee was formed to update the Shared Academic-Governance Matrix that affirms the role of deans in the decision-making. The progress on the matrix was presented by the Committee lead, Dean Cynthia Becerra, to the Executive Committee for review. This document was also forwarded to the Academic Senate for further input at the August 2022 meeting. The Academic Senate provided recommendations, and it went back to the Committee for further revision. In late August 2022, a revised version was circulated among the Academic Senate for a final vote of approval. This key document demonstrates the active role of the deans in the decision-making process, particularly with approval on department budgets, professional developments, and academic advising matters (Attachment 1.G Shared Governance Matrices).

Finally, the deans are all members of bodies of shared governance, such as Executive Committee, Academic Senate, Graduate Council, and Law Council. Many reside on multiple shared-governance bodies as well as work within various departments. For instance, Dean Cynthia Becerra is also the chair of Liberal Studies and Associate Dean Donna Roberts chairs Early Childhood Education. As a result, they both work closely with their faculty and engage in quarterly department meetings and advisory committees to identify strengths and areas of need regarding the department's continuous data-driven improvement efforts.

Chairs and directors regularly confer with their dean on both an informal and formal basis regarding department-level academic priorities, particularly through the program assessment process and annual performance reviews (i.e., when the department's academic plan is submitted). See Attachment 5.K Deans Collab on Ed Priorities for examples of how deans collaborate with departments to establish educational priorities which are then tied to the budgeting process. Educational priorities are identified through collaboration between the dean and the respective departments as well as within these governing bodies. Furthermore, the deans work closely with the provost to ensure continuous improvement efforts and educational effectiveness. The organizational chart demonstrates this coordinated effort and chain of command (Attachment 1.F Organizational Charts).

*Faculty Workload.* The third part of Issue 5 concerns a heavy faculty workload as a result of reductions in staff which may have impacted other aspects of faculty work, including the assessment of student learning. The faculty workload at Humphreys is organized by a model consisting of five areas: Community, Development, Advising, Teaching, and Assessment. The names of these five areas are used to create the model's acronym: C-DATA.

To address the important faculty workload issue, the University created a Faculty Workload Policy Committee that included full-time faculty from different programs to include broader participation through the faculty lens. Meeting in July and August, the Committee examined the Faculty Workload Policy (Attachment 1.E Faculty Workload Policy) and updated these areas of importance: Professional Development Leave, the General Description of the C-DATA Model as it relates to the Community workload, and full-time development requirements to measure performance in the area of Community.

Excerpts of those changes from the Task Force Report and published in the updated Employee Handbook represent broad faculty input in expectations and added clarification of the importance of Community as a faculty member are included in the following:

*Professional Development Leave Eligibility:*

*Full-time faculty members and department chairs, as well as the director of the Library & Learning Center with a teaching load, may apply for professional leave of one quarter every four years.*

*General Description of the C-DATA Model: Community:*

*The faculty at Humphreys University are viewed as members of a community of scholars. In the Community workload area, faculty members interact with internal committees and external groups to gather information about improving in the other four areas of the model. To meet annual Community benchmarks, faculty members must involve themselves in committee work, attend professional conferences/seminars, participate in faculty-sponsored learning events, attend in-service days hosted by the academic dean, and attend the professional development activities sponsored by the Academic Senate.*

Another area of concern, as noted in the University's WSCUC Task Force Report, was the full-time faculty workload in the area of Teaching. The Committee updated the Handbook's workload description and made note that a teaching load may be reduced by the chair if the faculty member is allocated another agreed-upon assignment, as stated in the following:

*Full-time faculty members teach three courses per quarter, or 48 quarter units per year (roughly equal to 30 semester units). However, consideration is given for a reduced teaching load by the chair if a faculty member is allocated another assignment, with approval by the dean.*

In addition, in examining workload considerations for flexibility, the Committee reviewed the performance expectations in the areas of Advising and Community. In the area of Advising, which has become one of the primary responsibilities of the chair, faculty, in consultation with their chair, may play a very limited role in academic advising or a more active one, if warranted. Those with a limited advising workload would be expected to "have a more informal role as advisors to improve student experiences and retention." Other faculty may advise a proportionate share of students in the majors offered by their departments; therefore, their workload in other areas would be adjusted.

In the area of Community, Committee members finalized a more flexible approach to faculty expectations in this regard as expressed in the following:

*Full-time faculty members are required to attend at least one lecture hosted by the Academic Senate or another accredited University, professional development workshop, or seminar for the purpose of improving the quality and effectiveness of faculty members in their roles. As part of the annual performance review, the faculty member will include a brief summary of the event and its importance.*

In previous workload descriptions, faculty were expected to attend at least two Academic Senate, formerly Academic Council, presentations and at a minimum one professional development workshop or seminar per year.

With the reductions in these two areas—Advising and Community—as well as the opportunity for teaching load reduction, faculty will be able to commit time to Assessment. In the Assessment area, there were no changes by the Committee as the full-time faculty members

recognize the importance of their commitment to having a major role in the development and implementation of program assessment plans. As restated in the revised Employee Handbook regarding the faculty's role in assessment:

*Such plans reflect regular, ongoing assessment efforts and identify bases for measuring quality of programs; the designs of measurement instruments; when and by whom measurements will be implemented; how results will be collected, organized, analyzed, and reported; and how assessment results will be used to improve program quality.*

In addition to the faculty's workload, another committee created by the University examined the Department Chairs' workload in the Handbook. Similar to the reduction in teaching workload granted to faculty allocated to other assignments, the description of the Chair's teaching responsibilities was updated:

*Full-time chairs will teach two courses per quarter, or 32 units per year (roughly equal to 21 semester units). However, consideration is given for a reduced teaching load by the Academic Dean if the chair is allocated another assignment.*

For example, a chair of a program may request a reduced teaching load for writing the program's self-study, which initiates the program review.

*Empowering Academic Leadership.* The final concern identified in Issue 5 is that the institution has not elevated the importance of empowering academic leadership as it relates to decision making from programs to budgets to workload. In addressing this matter, the University's WSCUC Task Force recommended that:

- 1) the University consider hiring a provost
- 2) the academic governance matrix be revised adding the position of provost and to update the roles of all involved
- 3) the organizational chart be examined and updated according to any changes
- 4) entities which influence decision making--such as the Academic Senate and Graduate Council as well as the Strategic Planning Committee and the Executive Committee--expand their membership to include broader engagement and voices from the University community
- 5) the CFO's role be expanded to include financial analysis of programs and full engagement with the deans, chairs, and, in general, the campus community
- 6) faculty workload determinations reflect empowered academic leadership.

As stated previously, the University elicited input from the college community for the role and duties of a provost, including the Academic Senate and Graduate Council. Once that process was complete, the deans met to consider the nomination of Dr. Jess Bonds. The decision to recommend Dr. Bonds was unanimous by both the deans and the governing councils.

While the consideration of the provost position was being conducted, a separate committee examined and subsequently began the updating of the shared academic-governance matrix. Once the provost's position was created, it was applied to the matrix. For the approval of the governance matrix, it was submitted to the governing councils. The Academic Senate made some recommendations, which were integrated into the final submission that was approved in August 2022 (Attachment 5.L Senate Minutes August 3, 2022).



With the sanctioning of the new position of provost and its role in decision-making, the organizational chart, noted above, was also updated. The 2022 Organizational Chart adds clarity to the lines of decision making, defining academic leadership and its connection to the provost.

Faculty representation on key governing and influential committees and task forces, such as the WSCUC Task Force, is essential for ensuring that academic leadership is empowered to make decisions about programs, budgets, and faculty workload. To further this goal, the Academic Senate updated its by-laws to include the following: (1) one member who would represent the Senate on the Executive Committee; and (2) one adjunct member who would serve as a liaison for part-time faculty concerns. In addition, the Executive Committee augmented its representatives to include the Academic Senate's chair as a standing member.

Incorporating this guiding principle of broader representation, the current Strategic Planning Committee welcomed a member of the Board and two students to augment University constituency input and to widen the lens of perspectives.

One of the most important elements identified in the Task Force Recommendations is the hiring of a CFO. The formalization of the role of the CFO has effectively brought about changes in development of the University budget, in general, and the department budgets, in particular. In 2022 program chairs were required to submit department budgets to their dean for review and approval by the end of June. Discussions regarding the budget took place during the Chairs Committee meetings and during the performance reviews. For example, the allocation of a portion of the budget for adjunct salaries was adjusted if chairs anticipated release time from teaching for full-time faculty or themselves. Once the dean approved the department budget, it was sent to the CFO for review. Essential to this new process is communication with and access to the newly expanded role of Miles Denniston. With his attendance at the Academic Senate meetings and his responses to our questions, as well as his timely follow-up, he has proven effective in illuminating the process.

To ensure that concerns regarding faculty workload were addressed, a committee was formed to examine the faculty workload policies as expressed in the Faculty section of the employee handbook. As outlined above, faculty will have more opportunities for a reduced teaching load with other assignments. Inherent in the robust discussion during the committee meetings was that faculty emphasized the importance of flexibility in workload distribution and the opportunity for professional leave every four years. In addition, the workload allocation, based on the C-DATA Model, for advising was, in general, redistributed for most full-time faculty; however, if an instructor was assigned to be a program advisor, then the faculty member's workload would be adjusted accordingly.

### **Analysis of Effectiveness of Action**

The creation and filling of the provost position has been instrumental in promoting a strong and positive effect on the University. Greater transparency and communication between upper administration and stakeholders in the Humphreys community as well as a renewed focus on educational effectiveness endeavors have resulted.

The creation of a provost role has promoted stronger lines of communication among constituencies. For example, after the announcement of the provost position, an organizational chart that clearly lays out the hierarchy of the institution was updated and shared with various stakeholder groups such as Academic Senate for input. Additionally, a committee was formed to

update the Shared Academic-Governance Matrix which was to include the role of the provost in the decision-making process. The progress on the matrix was presented by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies to the Executive Committee for review. This document was also forwarded to the Academic Senate for further input at the August 2022 meeting. The Academic Senate provided recommendations and it went back to the Committee for further revision. In late August 2022, a revised version was circulated among the Academic Senate for a final vote of approval.

The provost has begun working on several projects to increase educational effectiveness. A clear example of this is his work on improving the existing Accommodations Policy and procedure so that it better serves the needs of students. A revised Accommodation Policy was sent out to all deans to share with chairs, faculty, and instructors for their fall 2022 syllabi. Then, the provost has recently worked with the Business Administration Chair and the lead faculty member to shift personnel toward the growing MBA-IT program to support greater efficiency within this fast-growing program.

Initiated by the provost, a new faculty role was created and filled by the Business Administration lead faculty member to focus on student advising, retention, and online-course quality control to ensure greater educational effectiveness when sustaining the MBA's flourishing student enrollment and quality education endeavors in this specialized field. Additionally, the provost has worked with stakeholders to revise the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) process to improve the University-wide suspension letter for students who are dismissed from the University. The letter now provides a clearer understanding and next steps for dismissed students. The provost shared this revised letter as well as defined terms of various SAP statuses for input from key stakeholders such as Graduate Council. Additionally, the provost worked with faculty and staff to update and clarify the University's accommodations policy to protect the confidentiality of students and to ensure a broader range of voices in developing and implementing accommodations for students with disabilities or injuries.

With the hiring of a provost who possesses the ability to lead and broad knowledge, as well as understanding, of the University, the elevation of the role of academic leadership has been solidified. Moreover, with the faculty's support, as evidenced by both Councils and the deans being in favor of the position and the selection, the changes are sustainable. Both the organizational chart and the updated shared academic governance matrix articulate the roles of academic leadership and have been communicated to the University community as well.

The efforts of the University to address Issue 5 have clearly affirmed the deans' roles and responsibilities in shared governance. Furthermore, all stakeholders better understand the multifaceted role of the deans in the decision-making process as identified in the Shared Academic Governance Matrix. It has been widely circulated among constituencies so that greater understanding of the University at large as well as the deans' roles result. Furthermore, recent efforts to highly involve deans and their respective departments in the budget planning process and monitoring have further empowered deans on academic decision making and establishing educational priorities. The University feels this has been a strong step forward in shared-governance efforts and establishing clearer lines of communication.

Regarding the faculty workload issues, the actions taken reflect the Task Force Responses to the WSCUC Visiting Team Final Report Recommendations and the impact of these actions taken on addressing the concerns. With broad and inclusive participation of faculty and chairs on the

review and subsequent updating of the workloads for both faculty and chairs in the Faculty Section of the Employee Handbook (2022), the heavy teaching load has been addressed with significant revisions to faculty expectations based on the C-DATA Model.

More diverse representation on committees and task forces has become more purposeful and ultimately influential in decision making, especially when applied to the governing councils, the Executive Committee, and the Strategic Planning Committee. Important to the sustainability of shared academic governance is allowing for faculty to have time to participate in such committees. With the adjustments available for faculty workload and recognition of the importance of their voices, faculty and chairs can exert influence in directing academic leadership, having the time needed to participate in influential committees.

Therefore, with the implementation of the revised Organizational Chart, the expanded Shared Academic Governance matrix, and the updated faculty workload, the issues regarding academic leadership have been addressed.

With the expansion of the CFO role, the University has added an important lens of transparency for academic leadership. The outlining of a program budget with an academic plan that emphasizes curriculum development and review assures that chairs have the necessary support to carry out their plans. As noted by the Task Force, it is important that there be access to the CFO and incremental reporting requirements to ensure that academic governing entities are well informed of budgetary impacts on academic planning and program review, including the MOU—a key instrument in linking program improvement with the department budget. Therefore, the CFO's expanded role and the inclusion of academic leadership in budgeting provides a framework that addresses the issue.

Overall, the actions of creating a provost position and having Dr. Bonds serve in this capacity have benefitted the University as demonstrated above. As Dr. Bonds grows in his role, even greater educational effectiveness endeavors can and will take place in the coming years to further strengthen the University. The involvement of deans, chairs/directors, and faculty in the budgeting process has been pivotal in greater levels of involvement among constituencies and transparency efforts. Additionally, the sharing of budget summaries for input as well as having the CFO, Miles Denniston, available to present at the Academic Senate has opened doors of communication and allowed all stakeholders voices to be heard on budgeting matters. Furthermore, the CFO has made himself readily available for questions and inquiries through email or phone.

The diversified Shared-Academic Governance Matrix Committee was instrumental in revising the Shared Academic-Governance Matrix along with a document that clearly defines the type of governance: *Input*, *Decision*, and *Approval*. Additionally, having the Academic Senate and Graduate Council review and provide input on these documents was a prime vehicle for reaching the larger Humphreys academic community. Requests for revision were made and the Academic Senate approved the finalized version. This document clearly affirms the deans' authority to make decisions about academic programs. Furthermore, with the instatement of a provost who regularly collaborates with the deans on educational effectiveness endeavors, educational priorities are identified early and pursued through data-driven efforts. Finally, the provost and deans are part of the Executive Committee, which the president serves on, where the vision and mission of the University at large are discussed and analyzed on a regular basis. This creates a

critical platform for the provost and deans to express and share progress on educational priorities.

## **Next Steps**

Though great strides have been made to develop a more inclusive budgeting process, more work needs to be done. However, there has been limited direction in the development of budgets for the deans and provosts themselves. For example, the office of the dean of undergraduate studies that is responsible for the assessment of all undergraduate programs and quarterly academic standing reports, as well as retention, does not have its own budget. Therefore, the elevation of each dean's office—the undergraduate, graduate, law school, and institutional research—should be a primary goal in empowering academic leadership to carry out the University mission with a budget that supports that effort.

The provost recognizes the importance of communication and has initiated scheduled meetings with the deans; therefore, this particular issue will be addressed in upcoming meetings before the next budgetary cycle. It's important to note that the 2022-23 budget was the first experience for departments and deans to develop a budget draft in a short timeframe. There were certainly budgetary components to be learned to create an even stronger outcome the following year. The provost and deans will continue to reflect, plan, and discuss next steps for effective budget planning processes at the department level. They will collectively decide how to best handle perceived needs on this endeavor. They will further strengthen the process using multiple analyses such as SWOT and aligning efforts with the University's Strategic Plan.

Regarding an academic leadership position above the deans, the provost has been widely supported in this position among all stakeholder groups in the Humphreys community. A continued focus on transparency and fostering strong lines of communication from the provost with all constituencies will result in expanding educational effectiveness university-wide over time as well maintaining clear lines of communication. The provost will continue to work under the president and demonstrate accountability through performance results on endeavors within the University.

Regarding shared governance, these new steps in place have helped to secure a robust shared academic-governance system at the University where the deans are effectively participating in the budgetary process with their respective departments as well as making decisions on academic programs and establishing educational priorities based on data outcomes.

The redistribution of both faculty and chair workload as well as the inherent flexibility provided for a reduced teaching load has resulted in shared expectations regarding performance. Consequently, there are no further concerns anticipated pertaining to these issues. With the articulation of faculty workload, including teaching, in the Faculty Section of the Employee Handbook, such issues have been addressed by the faculty itself. The chairs and faculty are represented in both the Academic Senate and Graduate Council as well as the Executive Committee. Therefore, those bodies would address workload items or appoint a task force or committee to do so.

The deans will continue to work closely with chairs and directors on effectively preparing a budget as well as tying the budget to the department's academic plan. This may involve one-on-one work between the deans and chairs/directors on specific needs or could stem into trainings.

## **Concluding Statement**

Humphreys University has undertaken serious, collaborative, and inclusive steps to address the Commission's issues of concern based on the 2021 team visit. In the span of approximately eight months – between the team report and the submittal of this report – Humphreys has engaged in a faculty-driven response to the five issues and has made significant progress in improving its processes in the areas of transparency, financial development and inclusiveness, board governance, independence, and assessment, decision-making, and faculty and academic leadership. Based on an initial faculty-driven analysis of the issues and recommendations to address them, Humphreys has, among other important improvements, initiated or completed the following key actions and activities:

- The University has improved institutional transparency and decision making through greater involvement of campus constituencies, most notably the faculty through faculty governance and direct responsibility.
- The University has improved financial analysis and decision making with the involvement of the institution's CFO. Ongoing discussions about program performance, viability and relationship to budgeting are now normal processes. Input into budget development has been greatly expanded, with budget owners – faculty and administrative leadership – responsible for the development of budget parameters as well as accountable for results. Budget decisions are demonstrably more tied to academic quality and need decisions.
- Board independence has been affirmed through the adoption of new conflict and independence policies, the expansion and altered composition of board membership.
- Board governance is being strengthened through self-assessment and the building of a culture of review, development, and improvement.
- Academic leadership has been strengthened, elevated, and clarified through the appointment of a provost.
- Decision-making processes have been clarified and communicated through an inclusive, faculty-driven review.

Humphreys University believes it has addressed the Commission's concerns with integrity, transparency, and vigor and that it is now in compliance with all four standards and is on a strong footing to continue compliance through the next comprehensive review.

**Other Documents to be Made Available**

No additional supplementary materials have been identified by time of report submission.