

# **REPORT OF THE WSCUC VISITING TEAM SEEKING ACCREDITATION VISIT 2**

For Institutions Seeking Initial Accreditation

To Reiss-Davis Graduate School

Wednesday, March 18, 2020, to Saturday, March 21, 2020

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The team evaluated the institution under the WSCUC Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective judgment for consideration and action by the institution and by the WASC Senior College and University Commission. The formal action concerning the institution's status is taken by the Commission and is described in a letter from the Commission to the institution. Once an institution achieves either candidacy or initial accreditation, the team report and Commission Action Letter associated with the review that resulted in the granting of either candidacy or initial accreditation and the team reports and Commission Action Letters of any subsequent reviews will be made available to the public by publication on the WSCUC website.

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# **SECTION I: OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT**

## **A. Description of the Institution and Visit**

The Reiss-Davis Graduate School (RDGS) traces its founding to 1976 as an independent non-profit, non-sectarian institution offering post-baccalaureate PhD, PsyD, MA, and certificate programs in Psychology and related specialties. Originally named the Graduate Center for Child Development and Psychotherapy (GCCDP), the PhD and PsyD programs achieved approval by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Vocational Education's (BPPVE), predecessor to today's Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE), which continues to approve RDGS. During its first 31 years of operation, the GCCDP awarded 56 degrees in psychology doctoral programs. In 2006-7 the doctoral programs were suspended due to insufficient financial resources and low enrollment.

In 2007 GCCDP proposed a merger with the Reiss-Davis Child Study Center, a division of Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services (VDM), which had been successfully offering postgraduate psychodynamic training in child and adolescent diagnosis and psychotherapy for several years. The merged program was named the Graduate Center for Child Development and Psychotherapy and began to operate a graduate program of the Reiss-Davis Child Study Center and Institute, still a part of the larger, well-established VDM. The GCCDP administrative coordinator continued as the administrator. It should be noted that the graduate programs have maintained continuous BPPE/BPPVE approval throughout all program and name changes, including when RDGC was renamed Reiss-Davis Graduate School (RDGS).

VDM traces its history to 1908, as an orphanage for Jewish children in the Los Angeles area. Over the years, VDM expanded its residential and community based services and programs to children in need of all faiths and ethnicities. Today VDM is a successful, non-sectarian,

comprehensive child and family services agency drawing on extensive governmental as well as private support. Since the merger in 2007, RDGS programs are offered on the VDM campus in separate buildings, which house administrative offices and three large classrooms.

Shortly after the merger, PsyD and PhD programs' curricula were revised and modeled into a "Traditional PsyD program," maintaining the psychodynamic approach used in prior curriculum. The program continued with largely the same faculty members from the prior programs. In 2018, the faculty revised the PsyD program format from a fully on-ground program to a hybrid program with four ten-week terms - three weekend on campus and seven weeks online.

The institution began preparation for WSCUC accreditation in 2014, as a strategy to improve program quality and gain access to federal financial aid for students; and was granted WSCUC eligibility in 2016. The institution submitted its institutional report for SAV 1 in August 2017; the SAV1 team visit was conducted in October 2017; and candidacy status was granted by WSCUC in March 2018.

### **SAV1 Team Visit and Conclusions**

The SAV1 visiting team recognized the faculty dedication, commitment, and hard work in preparation for the visit, and VDM's strong support to the continued sustainability of the institution and its programs. The team recognized the institution had substantially met the CFRs related to Standard 1, with which the WSCUC Commission concurred, highlighting that continued attention to CFR1.7 would be needed. Components of Standards 2, 3 and 4, identified by the team and commission as needing additional work are identified below. The institution's responses to these recommendations and the SAV2 team's findings and conclusions are detailed in the narrative report sections later in this report.

Areas of further development outlined in the WSCUC SAV1 action letter include:

### **Standard 1**

The SAV1 review asked RDGC to decrease applicants 'and students 'confusion by increasing degree outcome transparency, ensuring that marketing and website material clearly state that the degree does not lead to licensure, and clarifying how students can ultimately achieve licensure after graduation (CFR 1.7).

### **Standard 2**

Content and rigor of some courses do not appear to be at doctoral level (CFR 2.1). The level of achievement for graduation are not all at the graduate level (CFR 2.2b). Successful development of assessment tools is not yet adequate (CFR 2.3). Established processes and procedures for interpreting evidence are at a nascent stage (CFR 2.4). RGDC could not demonstrate that graduates consistently achieve stated learning outcomes (CFR 2.6). Institutional research is not yet at a level of tracking aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data (CFR 2.10). The program does not offer many co-curricular activities nor do students have time to take advantage of such programs (CFR 2.11). Appropriate student support is provided by faculty members on an individual basis rather than on a program-wide basis (CFR 2.13). Transfer credit units have been accepted from non-regionally accredited institutions (CFR 2.14).

### **Standard 3**

Faculty and staff policies, practices and evaluation will need to be developed and applied as full-time faculty grow (CFR 3.2). Financial stability will require a full, multi-year enrollment plan to be developed (CFR 3.4). Clear, consistent decision-making structures and processes are needed (CFR 3.7). The governing board should develop clear leadership succession plans (CFR

3.9). One full time faculty member carries too heavy a burden, suggesting more full time faculty are needed (CFR 3.10).

#### **Standard 4**

Academic assessment programs are fairly new and co-curricular assessment is non-existent (CFR 4.1). Overall data collection, institutional research, and effectiveness efforts are relatively new (CFR 4.2). There is a growing commitment to formalized assessment; there is a need to increase the processes for systematic data-driven decision-making (CFR 4.3). There is no evidence about non-academic assessment present nor in the strategic plan; changes in higher education need to be considered in future planning efforts (CFR 4.6).

#### **Overview**

Two central issues in the SAV1 review took much of the team's time to clarify. First was whether a PsyD without clinical practice requirements within the program was viable and appropriate for a WSCUC accredited institution and whether such a program had a place in the programs approved for a PsyD by the California Board of Psychology.

It was determined during the SAV1 visit that WSCUC does accredit institutions having PsyD without clinical training components and that the California Board of Psychology does not require clinical training hours be a part of the PsyD program, only that certain courses should be taken within or outside of the graduate PsyD program. The board recognizes other such programs in clinical psychology and other specialties. As noted in institutional actions since SAV1, this issue has been and continues to be addressed.

The second issue that took much of the SAV1 team's time was that of sustainability. As a very small program, which did not have federal financial aid access at the time, there was concern about long-term program sustainability without continued support from the parent

organization, VDM. This was addressed in the SAV 2 institutional report and was addressed in the SAV2 visit.

### **1. Seeking Accreditation Visit Report: Quality and Rigor of Review and Report**

The SAV 2 report from Reiss-Davis Graduate School (RDGS) was thorough and documented institutional changes and improvements undertaken since the WSCUC action letter was received in March 2018. Significant changes and improvements since 2017 were chronicled by RDGS across the campus communities.

In administrative leadership areas, RDGS welcomed a new VDM president and interim CFO due to retirements. The number of board members was expanded and committees were developed, including involvement in strategic planning. The degree title was changed to PsyD in Psychodynamic Child Psychology and Psychotherapy. Additional institutional positions were created and staffed, including the assistant dean, an admissions counselor, a faculty development director, and ten adjunct faculty members with diverse backgrounds.

Related to academics and assessment, degree credit hours were reviewed and updated as needed. The institution implemented a new learning management system, developed a curriculum grid, and aligned coursework with program learning outcomes (PLOs). The PLOs and an assessment inventory were refined, and several rubrics were established and implemented. An environmental scan of PsyD psychotherapy program coursework informed curriculum development and strategic planning. The curriculum was changed from three four-month terms or trimesters to four ten-week terms or quarters per year structure while transitioning to a hybrid delivery format, with gradually increased online activity. Syllabi were enhanced with the use of master templates to reflect the hybrid structure, align learning

outcomes, identify assignments, and clarify assessments. Cyclical data collection and review systems were developed for academic outcomes.

RDGS expanded professional development opportunities by completing FERPA training for staff, administrators, and faculty. Opportunities for faculty support were embedded in syllabi template notes and the institution held its first annual faculty assessment workshop.

From a macro perspective, RDGS developed a 2020-2024 strategic plan, including a strategic enrollment management (SEM) plan, and changed the institutional name from Reiss-Davis Graduate Center to Reiss-Davis Graduate School. In addition, the mission statement was modified to include a focus on “...cultural humility and equity.”

In order to improve institutional outreach and student service, RDGS established a new marketing strategy and reviewed all catalog entries, including institutional policies. Transfer students from Ryokan College were admitted in 2019 after RDGS developed a custom-made curriculum for them. Employee enrollment incentives were proposed to Vista Del Mar, including future joint clinical services. Finally, RDGS achieved federal financial aid approval status in August, 2019, when students began applying for loans.

## **2. Response to Issues Raised in SAV1 WSCUC Action Letter**

As noted by the changes implemented since 2017, RDGS sought to be thorough and diligent in following up on the SAV1 team report recommendations and WSCUC action letter. Detailed documentation of changes was provided in the SAV2 report’s appendices. The institution quickly responded to requests for additional information and updates made by the SAV2 team.

### **3. Organization of the SAV2 Team Visit March 18-21, 2020**

The SAV2 visiting team organized its visit specifically around the standards and CFRs cited by the commission as requiring attention and organized this report in accordance with those standards and CFRs. Evidence was analyzed and representatives were further consulted to determine the quality and effectiveness of the institution's current status with regard to each recommendation.

Originally designed as an on-site visit, online meetings were substituted for in-person meetings per emergency governmental advisement to shelter in place due to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, Covid19. Through excellent coordination between institutional and site visitors' support, effective online meeting capacity was provided, including the ability to share documents real time. Small and large group meetings, which addressed requested content areas, were well hosted, and impromptu meetings were easily accommodated to follow up on new lines of inquiry. The SAV2 team was able to meet privately with WSCUC liaisons to further process content and procedural questions.

## **SECTION II: EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE WITH WSCUC'S STANDARDS AND IDENTIFIED CFRs FROM PRIOR SEEKING ACCREDITATION VISITS**

### **Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives**

#### **Integrity and Transparency**

##### **CFR 1.7**

*The institution exhibits integrity and transparency in its operations, as demonstrated by the adoption and implementation of appropriate policies and procedures, sound business practices, timely and fair responses to complaints and grievances, and regular evaluation of its*

*performance in these areas. The institution's finances are regularly audited by qualified independent auditors.*

RDGC was asked as a part of their SAV1 review to increase degree outcome transparency by ensuring that marketing and website material clearly state that the degree does not lead to licensure and to clarify how students can ultimately achieve licensure after graduation. The institution developed a comprehensive presentation for SAV2, which highlighted marketing plans, efforts, social media involvement, marketing collateral, and dashboard data. In an excellent example of data-informed decision making, marketing data is reviewed periodically with the chancellor who weighs in on recommendations for subsequent actions. Language and graphics throughout marketing collateral clearly outline processes required for licensure. It was further reported that these same processes are reviewed in great detail during admissions events as well as individual applicant meetings.

## **Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions**

### **Teaching and Learning**

#### **CFR 2.1**

*The institution's educational programs are appropriate in content, standards of performance, rigor, and nomenclature for the degree level awarded, regardless of mode of delivery. They are staffed by sufficient numbers of faculty qualified for the type and level of curriculum offered.*

The SAV1 team found that course content and rigor did not appear to reflect graduate level work, nor was much of the content current. In response, RDGS provided a curriculum grid demonstrating alignment between course and program outcomes. Academic scaffolding generally occurred as a result of faculty conversations about course content and was particularly clear in relation to dissertation development skills, which were integrated into the curriculum beginning with initial coursework. Learning outcomes assessment previously revealed that

students were not prepared with the necessary skills when they progressed into dissertation writing.

A clear definition of doctoral level criteria was requested to clarify how rigor is conceptualized, implemented, and assessed. RDGS bases the definition of rigor on a range of doctoral level criteria, including GPA, admissions requirements, environmental scanning, cognitive skills, dissertation requirements, and faculty qualifications.

Formal definitions of meaning, quality, and integrity have not yet been established. However, faculty members testified to students' identifiable professional growth over the course of enrollment. Evidence of mastery is derived primarily from a summative, second-year comprehensive exam, which is scored by faculty who are trained and calibrated on the approved exam rubric. Dissertation proposal defense and oral dissertation defense provide further evidence of mastery. Data derived from comprehensive exam scores forms the basis of subsequent curriculum reviews and revisions.

**CFR 2.2 (b)**

*All degrees awarded by the institution are clearly defined in terms of entry-level requirements and levels of student achievement necessary for graduation that represent more than simply an accumulation of courses or credits. The institution has both a coherent philosophy, expressive of its mission, which guides the meaning of its degrees and processes that ensure the quality and integrity of its degrees.*

In their SAV2 report, RDGS responded to a SAV1 concern that not all academic achievement appeared to meet graduate levels. As noted above, the absence of a guiding definition for meaning, quality, integrity, and rigor makes achieving and evaluating that goal difficult. With regard to assessment, program outcomes were clearly identified, including references to low outcomes results. Subsequent attention to remediating low outcomes was explored and a request for sample actionable processes produced a list of curricular changes

made in response to various qualitative and quantitative assessment efforts. For example, the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force worked to revise the institution's mission statement to include cultural humility as a central value, which is now infused throughout the curriculum and assessed in the second year comprehensive exam.

### **CFR 2.3**

*The institution's student learning outcomes and standards of performance are clearly stated at the course, program, and, as appropriate, institutional level. These outcomes and standards are reflected in academic programs, policies, and curricula, and are aligned with advisement, library, and information and technology resources, and the wider learning environment.*

It was noted in the SAVI report that successful development of assessment tools, such as signature assignments and signature activities to assess every learning outcome, was not yet adequate. Since that time, comprehensive and well-crafted scoring rubrics were developed for students' second year comprehensive examinations and for the dissertation proposal and defense. While course level outcomes are defined, assignment scoring rubrics are limited for the most part to standardized options, with intentions to begin integrating content specific mastery skills.

Students are provided with instructions for accessing each assignment's scoring rubric within the institution's college management system. Review of those instructions reveals a simple access process. RDGS offers faculty the use of eight standardized scoring rubrics modeled after VALUE rubrics, which address: critical thinking, cultural sensitivity, discussions, oral communication, participation, written communication, case study, and dissertation. Content mastery is assumed by some faculty to be an implicit element, which is scored within the standardized rubrics. It was also reported that a few faculty members have already developed their own content focused rubrics. While that would currently be an exception, it falls within expectations for future implementation.

#### **CFR 2.4**

*The institution's student learning outcomes and standards of performance are developed by faculty and widely shared among faculty, students, staff, and (where appropriate) external stakeholders. The institution's faculty take collective responsibility for establishing appropriate standards of performance and demonstrating through assessment the achievement of these standards.*

In response to SAV1 concerns about the nascent processes and procedures for interpreting evidence, syllabi have been revised to include clear alignment between assignments, course learning outcomes, and program learning outcomes. In addition, faculty engaged in their first annual assessment workshop. RDGS provided additional narratives chronicling a series of seven actionable items which arose from student performance scores on the second year comprehensive exam. Actions ranged from modifying paper page requirements to updating content delivery. Assessment also revealed that a subset of course learning outcomes data was not collected, triggering remedial action to include that data in analysis and follow-up action.

Program learning outcomes are developed in committee settings, which include faculty representation, and are processed with input from multiple constituents, including the Faculty Council, Curriculum Committee, WSCUC Steering Committee, and Center Management Committee. Course learning outcomes are developed by faculty members in collaboration with their dean and with input from related offices, such as the diversity and inclusion task force.

Students participate in pre- and post-course self-assessments to reveal their perceptions of learning outcomes mastery for each course and students also engage annually in a student experience survey. A sample of comparisons between pre and post-course self-assessments was provided for review and it was reported that these results contribute to curricular review and revisions. Due to low enrollment numbers, survey results have not yet been disaggregated to reveal demographic needs or trends. Nevertheless, the pre- and post-course self-assessment results contribute qualitative information for faculty conversations during an annual assessment

workshop. The qualitative evidence revealing students' perceptions of learning is reviewed as part of the annual assessment workshop. Sample data revealed perceptions of increased learning from pre to post-course assessment.

### **CFR 2.6**

*The institution demonstrates that its graduates consistently achieve its stated learning outcomes and established standards of performance. The institution ensures that its expectations for student learning are embedded in the standards that faculty use to evaluate student work.*

To address the question about whether students consistently achieve established learning outcomes expectations, RDGS employs two primary instruments, a comprehensive exam rubric and a well-developed dissertation rubric. Students may access the dissertation rubric along with other course-level assignment rubrics through the college management system. The dissertation rubric results are processed by RDGS' Dissertation Progression Committee and have resulted in curricular changes to better develop students' reading and writing skills prior to completing coursework so they are fully prepared to succeed with dissertation research and writing.

### **Student Learning and Success**

#### **CFR 2.10**

*The institution demonstrates that students make timely progress toward the completion of their degrees and that an acceptable proportion of students complete their degrees in a timely fashion, given the institution's mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs it offers. The institution collects and analyzes student data, disaggregated by appropriate demographic categories and areas of study. It tracks achievement, satisfaction, and the extent to which the campus climate supports student success. The institution regularly identifies the characteristics of its students; assesses their preparation, needs, and experiences; and uses these data to improve student achievement.*

The SAV1 team found that institutional research was not yet at the level of tracking aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data. In response, RDGS initiated a process for tracking aggregated student achievement data through program learning outcomes

assessment, student retention and graduation rates, and student progress towards dissertation completion.

The institutional report provided evidence that RDGS is collecting and analyzing program learning outcomes assessment data, that retention and graduation rates are tracked, and that progress toward dissertation and degree completion is monitored. The institutional report provided no evidence of benchmarking of retention and graduation rates against peer institutions.

RDGS does not yet disaggregate student learning outcomes data according to racial, ethnic, gender, age, or other demographic categories due to small cohort sizes, and the institutional report does not present a plan for how to disaggregate this data in the future. During the SAV2 visit, the visiting team requested a demonstration of capacity for disaggregating student learning outcomes data along one or more demographic characteristics. In response, RDGS disaggregated program level student learning outcomes data by gender and ethnicity for three cohorts. As a result of this exercise, RDGS noted that because their learning management system does not seamlessly generate this data, disaggregating demographic data is currently a labor intensive process, which may warrant utilizing a different assessment management system.

### **CFR 2.11**

*Consistent with its purposes, the institution offers co-curricular programs that are aligned with its academic goals, integrated with academic programs, and designed to support all students personal and professional development. The institution assesses the effectiveness of its co-curricular programs and uses the results for improvement.*

The SAV1 team found that RDGS is not designed to provide many co-curricular activities, nor are the students likely to have the time to take advantage of such offerings. In response, RDGS reported offering professional development opportunities consistent with the institution's mission, which are free of charge to students. These opportunities include public lecture events, Saturdays at the Center, and an annual Edna Reiss-Sophie Greenberg Chair

conference, which include opportunities for students to attend private luncheons and question and answer sessions with prominent experts in the field. In addition, some faculty promote relevant events offered by other institutions. The institutional report stated that event attendees complete presentation evaluation forms, but no evidence was provided of how these evaluations are used to assess the extent to which these events enhance student learning.

Institutional report evidence confirmed that professional development opportunities were made available during the 2018-2019 academic year. The SAV2 team requested evidence that these opportunities have been sustained through the 2019-2020 academic year as well as evidence of student participation rates. RDGS reported that during the 2019-2020 academic year three events were scheduled. One was cancelled due to the outbreak of the novel Coronavirus, COVID19, two are planned for early summer, and very few students attended the Saturday events offered during the 2018-2019 academic year.

### **CFR 2.13**

*The institution provides academic and other student support services such as tutoring, services for students with disabilities, financial aid counseling, career counseling and placement, residential life, athletics, and other services and programs as appropriate, which meet the needs of the specific types of students that the institution serves and the programs it offers.*

RDGS submitted evidence of expanded academic and other student support services in response to the SAV1 team concern that forms of support are provided by individual faculty rather than on a program wide basis. Services include the development of a dissertation handbook, template and rubric; achieving approval for students to apply for federal financial aid; providing disability accommodation services to students; and distributing a student services referral guide. During the SAV2 meetings, staff emphasized that student support services are tailored to the particular needs of their student population by, for example, delivering services remotely while students are off campus and offering drop-in hours when students are on campus;

faculty reported that deficiencies in students' ability to adequately achieve student learning outcome expectations are remedied through one-on-one instruction and mentoring; and students reported that academic support, particularly for the dissertation process, has significantly improved over the past several years.

The SAV2 team recognizes faculty and staff members' excellent attention and responsiveness to student needs, yet notes that the institution lacks formalized avenues for students to convey their needs and participate in institutional decision-making beyond the completion of the student experience, course, and instructor feedback surveys.

#### **CFR 2.14**

*Institutions that serve transfer students provide clear, accurate, and timely information, ensure equitable treatment under academic policies, provide such students access to student services, and ensure that they are not unduly disadvantaged by the transfer process.*

The SAV1 team report expressed concern that the transfer policy allowed units to come from non-regionally accredited institutions, and recommended that such transferred coursework receive greater scrutiny. In response, the institutional transfer credit policy was revised such that transfer credits earned from regionally accredited institutions of higher education are accepted, and that exceptions for non-regionally accredited institutions must pass greater scrutiny. This greater scrutiny is based upon competency evaluations and consultation with WSCUC and California's Bureau of Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE).

The SAV2 institutional report described how RDGS implemented an exception for students from Ryokan College, a non-regionally accredited institution, which closed in December 2018. In consultation with BPPE and WSCUC, RDGS developed a formalized policy exception for these students, including a modified curriculum and dissertation completion plan and a waiver of the credit unit limit. The modified curriculum entails additional coursework to

remedy gaps identified through careful comparison of RDGS to Ryokan College curriculum. During SAV2, faculty and staff reported their commitment to ensure that Ryokan College students meet the same learning outcomes as other RDGS students, a goal to be assessed through dissertation completion.

### **Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability**

#### **Faculty and Staff**

##### **CFR 3.2**

*Faculty and staff recruitment, hiring, orientation, workload, incentives, and evaluation practices are aligned with institutional purposes and educational objectives. Evaluation is consistent with best practices in performance appraisal, including multisource feedback and appropriate peer review. Faculty evaluation processes are systematic and are used to improve teaching and learning.*

RDGS remains committed to an adjunct teaching model as it is aligned with higher education's scientist-practitioner model. Faculty are differentiated between core adjunct faculty who teach at least two or more courses per academic year and associate adjunct faculty who teach less frequently, with one full-time faculty. This model is appropriate for RDGS's small single degree program at this time. All faculty have terminal degrees in their area of teaching, training in psychodynamically oriented models, and work in private practice, which serves to provide a rich classroom experience. Since the SAV1 visit, RDGS hired an additional 10 new faculty, with almost 40% of faculty members being bilingual. Through interviews with full-time and part-time or adjunct faculty, it was determined that many of those in attendance were actively involved with both curriculum development and assessment activities. Several spoke quite highly of their involvement, openness to feedback and input, and noted that onboarding, orientation, and mentoring provided by the curriculum director and assistant dean allowed them

to be more engaged in their disciplines 'long-term learning activities. Since the SAV1 visit, faculty performance evaluation has become more robust, includes good record keeping, and improved communication with individual faculty members. A more formalized structure that includes timelines for performance measurement and follow-up is in development. A faculty handbook is now in place, which includes the frequency and expectations of faculty meetings, the role of faculty in the faculty review process, and faculty expectations and academic ranks.

RDGS has a fully formed employee manual with policies and procedures in place. Though many of the employees at RDGS are part-time, a collaborative approach is practiced. There is an annual employee evaluation and review process with clearly stated goals and steps for staff to achieve them. Since the SAV1 visit, RDGS has an enrollment management strategy and plan identifying the market segments served by RDGS, and a multi-year plan for enrollment. The SAV2 team recognized the rare quality, transparency, and effectiveness of RDGS high regard and unwavering commitment to shared decision-making at all levels.

The Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan includes growth in enrollment from the current level of around 40 students to 50 to 60 by 2023-2024.

## **Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources**

### **CFR 3.4**

*The institution is financially stable and has unqualified independent financial audits and resources sufficient to ensure long-term viability. Resource planning and development include realistic budgeting, enrollment management, and diversification of revenue sources. Resource planning is integrated with all other institutional planning. Resources are aligned with educational purposes and objectives.*

In assessing financial stability, the team reviewed audited financial statements from Vista Del Mar (VDM) for the years ended June 30, 2018, and June 30, 2019. VDM finished its fiscal years with losses of \$2.5M and \$3.8M respectively, though reflecting positive overall net assets.

The SAV2 visit occurred during the week in which the stock market lost approximately one third of its value. This caused VDM to intensify its complete review of all programs currently receiving support, including RDGS and other Reiss-Davis programs, to determine which and to what extent programs will be funded. The CEO of VDM, in consultation with the board, will provide a statement of financial commitment after one to three months, following a board assessment of commitments which can be supported by the VDM endowment.

Prior to this time, VDM's continued financial support has been key to RDGS 'success while it continued to grow student enrollment and maintain a path toward accreditation. A multi-year agreement of support was not included in the SAV2 report. A memo from VDM's CEO to the RDGS chancellor suggests that VDM support would be provided until accreditation is conferred. An internal review of RDGS 'financial statements from FY 2017 to YTD FY 2020 shows a downward trend in tuition with increasing deficits from \$400K to \$700K over this time period. All deficits were addressed annually through VDM support, with no carry over of cumulative deficits.

RDGS developed two five-year financial forecasts projected to achieve financial sustainability within the next five years. Influencing these financial forecasts is the timing for achieving accreditation along with identifying realistic enrollment targets, such as increasing the incoming cohort from 5 to 15 by FY 2024. The first scenario, achieving accreditation in June 2020, shows sustainability achieved in FY 2023. The second plan, achieving accreditation in June 2021, shows sustainability achieved in FY 2024. RDGS is projecting a cohort of 10 for FY 2021 but preliminary data does not indicate this outcome. Initial applications have more than doubled from the prior year (from 4 to 10 applications), with one accepted application at the time of the visit. The team asked about contingency plans should revenue projections not materialize.

Both the board and administration are aware of their financial vulnerabilities but did not yet have contingency plans in place at the time of the visit. Looking at these various factors holistically, the team is concerned about RDGS 'viability, financial stability, and sustainability and remains hesitant that the financial projections can be achieved as stated.

The team was very impressed by the well-developed Strategic Enrollment Management plan (SEM), and its alignment to the budget plan. It is a multi-pronged approach, targeting student enrollment and retention, alumni and donor cultivation, and appealing to a wider demography. The board, faculty, and administration stated that the lack of accreditation remains a barrier to enrollment and in turn to financial sustainability. It is certainly one of the main challenges RDGS faces as it tries to successfully implement strategies and plans outlined in the SAV2 report.

### **Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes**

#### **CFR 3.7**

*The institution's organizational structures and decision-making processes are clear and consistent with its purposes, support effective decision making, and place priority on sustaining institutional capacity and educational effectiveness.*

RDGS effectively addressed the concerns of the SAV1 team regarding their structure by appointing the position of a chancellor who also sits in on the RDGS board but not on the VDM board. Given that RDGS is part of Vista Del Mar, which has an appointed president, the team is in agreement that the chancellor position fits in the overall structure of VDM. RDGS also has a provost, overseeing all academic affairs, and a director of operations responsible for executing and implementing day-to-day management of the staff and school. These members, along with the academic dean, meet weekly to discuss and decide on academic and student affairs.

RDGS is noteworthy for its ongoing commitment to include and engage faculty and staff in institutional decision making. Team meetings with the board, faculty, and staff affirmed shared understandings about SAV2 evidence, which were operationalized in response to SAV1 recommendations: 1) Lines of authority and accountability from the board of trustees to the chancellor, faculty, and staff. 2) An organizational chart indicating that academic, student affairs, finance, and administrative areas report to the chancellor. 3) A faculty structure that facilitates faculty participation in a broad range of decision making, and faculty and other committees' schedules. RDGS' high regard and unwavering commitment to shared decision-making at all levels was noted.

### **CFR 3.9**

*The institution has an independent governing board or similar authority that, consistent with its legal and fiduciary authority, exercises appropriate oversight over institutional integrity, policies, and ongoing operations, including hiring and evaluating the chief executive officer.*

As suggested in the SAV1 report and 2018 WSCUC commission letter, the board of directors approved a plan stating that, in the event the chancellor retires or can no longer meet the responsibilities, the provost will assume the chancellor's responsibilities while the board engages in a national search for qualified personnel. A final decision would follow input from various RDGS stakeholders. RDGS continues work on succession plans for other integral staff, and has hired an assistant dean who will assume needed additional responsibilities when the current dean retires.

### **CFR 3.10**

*The institution's faculty exercises effective academic leadership and acts consistently to ensure that both academic quality and the institution's educational purposes and character are sustained.*

Following their SAV1 team visit, RDGS dedicated itself to establishing clarifying institutional structures, administrative positions, and committees to create a well-defined set of procedures that facilitate communication and decision-making. The organizational chart provides clear lines of authority, and systems mapping further clarifies the roles. Interviews with the board, faculty, and staff indicated that these documents have achieved their intended purpose.

The SAV1 report indicated that having only one full-time faculty imposed too heavy a burden. However, given that RDGS is a single degree program, one full time faculty member appears to be appropriate for the current structure. Ten new adjunct faculty and a part-time assistant dean have been hired since the SAV1 team visit. A collaborative spirit among the administrative and academic leaders was noted, as well as a sense of integrity, purpose, accountability, and spirit of compliance among all stakeholders.

#### **Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement**

##### **Quality Assurance Processes**

##### **CFR 4.1**

*The institution employs a deliberate set of quality-assurance processes in both academic and non-academic areas, including new curriculum and program approval processes, periodic program review, assessment of student learning, and other forms of ongoing evaluation. These processes include: collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data; tracking learning results over time; using comparative data from external sources; and improving structures, services, processes, curricula, pedagogy, and learning results.*

It is apparent RDGS took the SAV1 team recommendations seriously. Based on the SAV2 report, processes are in place to track success. The institution now uses a Populi system for multiple functions, one being to track student data through surveys, report out on this data, and make improvements based on the results. It appears that survey data and instructor feedback

data are collected regularly, however, there are few examples of how that data is tracked over time so that benchmarking, analysis, interpretation, and subsequent decisions about funding and implementation can occur. Additionally, while the institution states that they do, "...not engage in co-curricular programs" they should begin to assess all student related activities that occur outside the classroom. Additionally, academic support areas such as institutional research, student services, and the library need to be on assessment cycles to be even more responsive to students 'continued success.

While a great amount of work and focus seems to be around academic assessment and strengthening the dissertation assessment process, they are still at emerging stages. Data is new and there have not yet been enough cycles of data to prove useful in solid decision-making. There is little evidence of completed cycles, such as program review, that include collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. Additional efforts are needed tracking results over time, using comparative and benchmark data, and applying the results towards decisions to make improvements in all areas.

Overall the new processes look inclusive, however, there are still areas of opportunity such as benchmark data, external reviews, and reviewing and reporting on all assessment results.

#### **CFR 4.2**

*The institution has institutional research capacity consistent with its purposes and characteristics. Data are disseminated internally and externally in a timely manner, and analyzed, interpreted, and incorporated in institutional review, planning, and decision-making. Periodic reviews are conducted to ensure the effectiveness of the institutional research function and the suitability and usefulness of the data generated.*

Institutional research (IR) is described as the institutional component responsible for data “...such as enrollment, student demographics, persistence, retention, and graduation rates.” Based on the IR schedule and projected calendar, the data is tracked and reported.

The extent to which actionable responses to data are developed, resourced, and tracked is somewhat unclear. In their institutional report, RDGS noted that they use “...indirect and direct assessment sources...” Currently, the primary data sources include course and program learning outcomes, surveys, IPEDS, admissions, and marketing. While they are a small institution, the availability of all constituents to access assessment data resources, such as co-curricular data, is needed.

It was also noted that progress to engage the campus in data collection and collective understanding processes for collection and assessment is still emerging. There are no concrete examples of improvements based on data in areas other than academics and the dissertation process, such as admissions, operations, and marketing. There is a need to demonstrate cycles of data and the collaborative decisions made for these data. RDGS relies heavily on survey data. To avoid survey fatigue in constituents, especially students, the team suggests diversifying data collection tools, such as focus groups, benchmark data, external reviews, and even observational data.

### **CFR 4.3**

*Leadership at all levels, including faculty, staff, and administration, is committed to improvement based on the results of inquiry, evidence, and evaluation. Assessment of teaching, learning, and the campus environment – in support of academic and co-curricular objectives – is undertaken, used for improvement, and incorporated into institutional planning processes. Guidelines: The institution has clear, well-established policies and practices – for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting information – that create a culture of evidence and improvement.*

RDGS has spent a great deal of time building capacity and infrastructure. The next step is to focus on implementation and creating solid cycles of continuous assessment. It is now time to

focus efforts on analysis and implementation phases. RDGS will benefit from long-term data trends, which are analyzed to subsequently inform academic, support areas, and resource allocation decisions.

Currently, academic improvements appear to be based primarily upon survey data, learning outcomes data, and limited collective decision-making. The institution initiated academic and administrative improvements based on analysis of results derived from these sources, but did not initiate any improvements to their assessment practices other than what was recommended by the SAVI.

RDGS engages in a multitude of surveys, which function well to capture qualitative trends. Additionally, they allude to a "...closing of the loop culture." However, in order to help make decisions focused on student success and to actually close the loop, RDGS needs to begin to collect, analyze, and report on aggregated and disaggregated quantitative data, combined with the already collected survey data, and consider incorporating benchmark and trend data to help focus on the task they wish to accomplish. They then need to bring the data back for decisions, link to fiscal support, and document these for improvement and future strategic goals.

#### **CFR 4.6**

*The institution periodically engages its multiple constituencies, including the governing board, faculty, staff, and others, in institutional reflection and planning processes that are based on the examination of data and evidence. These processes assess the institution's strategic position, articulate priorities, examine the alignment of its purposes, core functions, and resources, and define the future direction of the institution.*

The new strategic plan and process looks to be a strength of the work RDGS has undertaken. While the Strategic Planning Committee is composed of board members and administrative staff, feedback and input was solicited from the faculty. RDGS intends to present the strategic plan to the entire campus in April. At that time, additional feedback from students,

and all constituents will be gathered and considered. It is the chancellor's responsibility to oversee the entire process and ensure the identified strategy leads are on target with their assigned goals and tasks. Some work still needs to be done to complete resource and budget allocations on items marked as "TBD." Overall, the plan is a guide for RDGS' future and the identified goals show concerted efforts to address current and future needs.

#### **CFR 4.7**

*Within the context of its mission and structural and financial realities, the institution considers changes that are currently taking place and are anticipated to take place within the institution and higher education environment as part of its planning, new program development, and resource allocation.*

RDGS' performance shows a commitment to improvement. They made many changes to processes that will help sustain their program for the future. However, there is still work to be done, especially on the collection of data cycles, fiscal sustainability, and collaborative decision making. There is also a need for additional attention to higher education's focus on student learning, best practices in classroom and online course delivery, project implementation, new programs, and licensure considerations. Attention to diversity can be increased, as well as investigating the diversification of programs and income streams. Several current initiatives indicate that RDGS anticipates a more robust and collaborative approach to data informed decision-making with complete cycles of data. The current report reflects the institution's awareness of its strategic role in higher education.

### **SECTION III: FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Reiss-Davis Graduate School community took the recommendations and suggestions of the Commission and the SAV1 team seriously. Significant changes were undertaken in

response to each recommendation and for each CFR area cited by the commission. While described in detail in the standards review in Section II, above, it is important to note that there was a broadly-based self-study and change effort to address each CFR and significant progress was made in each cited area.

A new hybrid curricular format for the renamed PsyD in Psychodynamic Child Psychology and Psychotherapy was launched. Student learning outcomes were assessed through rubrics for the review of coursework, the second year comprehensive exam, dissertation proposal, and dissertation defense. Communication and decision-making were improved and clarified and students, staff, and faculty, all of whom expressed that they felt satisfied, informed, and listened to by RDGS. The fact that this PsyD program does not lead to licensure by the Board of Psychology is clearly expressed and understood by students through effective, increased communication and explicit documentation.

While continued improvement in assessment of course level learning outcomes is needed (CFR 2.1) the team was positively impressed with the significant improvements the institution has achieved in all areas.

However, there remains a significant question about RDGS' financial sustainability (CFR 3.4). During the SAV2 visit, the RDGS board pledged significant efforts at fundraising and made personal financial commitments to support the school. RDGS leadership continues to seek other external, long-term financial support. VDM has provided strong and continuous support for the past seven years; support which will also be needed for the future sustainability of the graduate school unless other revenue streams are secured. However, the visit occurred just a few days after the market crash, making it impossible to predict RDGS's future financial sustainability. Without commitments of clear multi-year support from the VDM board and/or other resources,

the financial sustainability of RDGS for the next few years cannot be assured. The VDM CEO plans to provide details about the extent of future VDM support in May or June of this year.

## **COMMENDATIONS**

The team commends Reiss Davis Graduate School for the following:

1. Initial implementation of learning outcomes tools, such as standardized rubrics, to assess, collect, and respond to outcomes data, including the use of rubrics directly related to program learning outcomes for the second year comprehensive exam, dissertation proposal, and defense.
2. Significant, broad-based institutional participation and preparation of self-study and documentary evidence, including interdepartmental familiarity with CFRs across standards.
3. Evidence of data-driven decision making as exemplified by the marketing process.
4. Development of specialized curriculum for students from Ryokan college, with a plan to assess achievement of learning outcomes with rubrics.
5. Robust use of a LMS/SIS (Populi) to make data-driven decisions related to lead prospects, marketing, admissions, and instruction.
6. Faculty and staff participation in and commitment to the institution as seen in council and planning meetings.
7. Well thought-out, inclusive, and comprehensive strategic plan and strategic enrollment management plan that reveal an understanding of the institution's future needs.
8. Excellent attention and responsiveness to student needs from faculty and staff.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Standard 1

**Overall, the team finds that Reiss Davis Graduate School demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 1 at a level sufficient for initial accreditation, recognizing that only the WSCUC Commission can make a final determination.**

### Standard 2

**Overall, the team finds that Reiss-Davis Graduate School demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 2 at a level sufficient for initial accreditation, recognizing that only the WSCUC Commission can make a final determination.**

The team identified the following Standard 2 recommendations for on-going and future efforts:

**CFR 2.4:** Build on the effectiveness of the second year comprehensive exam which assesses program learning outcomes to refine course content assessment.

**CFRs 2.4, 2.6:** Develop an institutional definition for meaning, quality, and integrity of the degree in ways that define and monitor minimum 'meets and exceeds' mastery levels for learning outcomes.

**CFRs 2.10, 4.1-4.3:** Further develop the capacity of institutional research to disaggregate student learning outcomes by demographic characteristics, analyze this data, and develop related actions to serve student needs.

**CFR 2.11:** Expand co-curricular offerings that are student accessible, aligned with learning outcomes, and implement comprehensive co-curricular assessment strategies to determine the effectiveness of these programs.

### **Standard 3**

**Overall, the team finds that Reiss-Davis Graduate School has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 3 at a level sufficient for candidacy, recognizing that only the WSCUC Commission can make a final determination.**

The team identified the following Standard 3 recommendations for on-going and future efforts:

**CFR 3.4:** Diversify sources of revenue and increase student enrollment and retention to ensure financial stability.

**CFRs 3.4, 3.9:** Expand the board's role in ensuring institutional financial stability and expand board coordination on the Vista Del Mar board.

**CFR 3.9:** Continue building and expanding the succession plans to include all leadership positions.

### **Standard 4**

**Overall, the team finds that Reiss-Davis Graduate School demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 4 at a level sufficient for initial accreditation, recognizing that only the WSCUC Commission can make a final determination.**

The team identified the following Standard 4 recommendation for on-going and future efforts, as noted in the recommendations discussed in Standard 4:

**CFRs 2,10, 4.1-4.3:** Further develop the capacity of institutional research to disaggregate student learning outcomes by demographic characteristics, analyze this data, and develop related actions to serve student needs.

## **Summary**

Reiss-Davis Graduate School has made significant improvements in almost all aspects of its programs and operations. RDGS continues to play a unique and important role in advanced, psychodynamic psychological education locally and nationally.

## **APPENDIX**

### **IEEI**

RDGS 'IEEI reflects good educational effectiveness structures and a strong understanding of student learning assessment. Since their first program review has not yet been completed, it is not possible to fully assess the effectiveness of these structures. The addition of demographic disaggregation would complete the assessment structure and reveal capacity, even if that interpretation is hampered by low enrollment numbers, in which case the resulting analyses would indicate such a qualification.

### Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (Reiss-Davis Graduate School)

This inventory demonstrates that RDGS has a system of assessing, collecting, and reviewing data for the purposes of improving student learning throughout the single degree program, the PsyD in Psychodynamic Child Psychology and Psychotherapy. RDGS has developed formal program learning outcomes (PLOs) and aligned course learning outcomes to them. PLOs are published in various locations and materials. Various assessments are provided to audiences to interpret the evidence of student learning, by term, in regular meetings, and annually at the assessment workshop.

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Category	(1) Have formal learning outcomes been developed?  Yes/No	(2) Where are these learning outcomes published (e.g., catalog, syllabi, other materials)?	(3) Other than GPA, what data / evidence are used to determine that graduates have achieved stated outcomes for the degree? (e.g., capstone course, portfolio review, licensure examination)?	(4) Who interprets the evidence? What is the process?	(5) How are the findings used?	(6) Date of the last program review for this degree program.
At the institutional and program (PsyD) level	Yes. There are three program learning outcomes (PLOs). Each PLO is aligned with course learning outcomes published in each syllabus. The learning criteria in each rubric are also aligned to the PLOs and to the specific assignments that are chosen in the course.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website: <a href="http://www.reissdavis.org/program-learning-outcomes.html">http://www.reissdavis.org/program-learning-outcomes.html</a></li> <li>Catalog: <a href="http://www.reissdavis.org/cohort-g.html">http://www.reissdavis.org/cohort-g.html</a>, p. 14</li> <li>Syllabi: Published in Populi</li> <li>Faculty Handbook (p. 12)</li> <li>Curriculum Map</li> <li>Curriculum Grid</li> <li>Dissertation Handbook (p. 3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course assignments. Identified competencies in each syllabus, assessed by faculty using institutional rubrics</li> <li>2<sup>nd</sup> year comprehensive exam. Identified competencies from first two years, assessed by faculty scorers with exam rubric</li> <li>Dissertation completion. Identified competencies aligned to PLOs and expectations of the dissertation, assessed by faculty with rubric</li> <li>Self-reported growth by students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre- and post-course surveys by learning outcomes</li> <li>Student Experience Survey (annual)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	The provost coordinates the review of data as evidence of student learning with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutional research analyst: Review of data for report preparation</li> <li>Individual faculty: Following submission of grades</li> <li>Curriculum committee: Review of aggregated data at regular meetings</li> <li>Faculty council: Review of aggregated data by term at regular meetings; annual assessment workshop</li> <li>Academic Council: Review of data by term at regular meetings</li> <li>Center Management Committee: Review of aggregated data at regular meetings</li> </ul>	Curriculum committee and faculty council use assessment of student learning outcomes data.  The findings are used to adjust PLOs, CLOs, course syllabi such as the selection of literature, expanding the variety of assignments and learning experiences, developing new rubrics, etc. to constantly improve students' competencies and address possible deficiencies	In process: 2018 / 2019 - Review of similar PsyD programs, analysis of coursework and dissertation expectations, PLOs; develop and align curriculum to PLOs, assessments, rubrics 2019 / 2020 - Review courses, assessment data, assessment techniques, prepare for external peer reviewer
For general education if an undergraduate institution	N/A					