

Osaka International School of Kwansei Gakuin (OIS)

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## Osaka International School of Kwansei Gakuin Head of School comment on 2017 WASC and IB accreditation process

The 2016-2017 academic year marks an important milestone in the school's history. The Western Association of Colleges and Schools (WASC) accreditation visit in February is the end of the 5-year accreditation cycle. This is the fifth time WASC has visited OIS, coming in 1994, 2000, 2006 and 2013. Simultaneously, we will also be seeking reauthorization to offer the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme, Middle Years Programme and Diploma Programme. An 8-member visiting committee will be conducting an evaluation from February 18-22. This is the culmination of an 18-month WASC self-study and self-studies and action plans for the three IB programmes we offer.

WASC also visited in April of 2017 to evaluate the Global Futures Programme, our international student boarding program. We received approval and a favorable response from WASC. However, WASC recognized a need for more pastoral care and intentional activities designed for boarding students to be implemented in the near future.

The end of the accreditation and authorization visit gives us the opportunity to create a new school-wide action plan and five-year strategic plan. Some of the same themes that were presented in the 2013-2018 strategic plan will be continued to be addressed in the new plan. Improvements were made in all areas. Below are the School-Wide Critical Learner Needs and a summary of progress made over the five years.

1. Coordinate and implement increasing amounts of technology between the two schools on the one campus to enhance student learning according to a developed technology vision.

The infrastructure is greatly improved, but we need to continue to build on this, particularly with an upgrade of the network. The Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy in high school and the use of Chromebooks in middle school and upper elementary are supporting student learning. Support for faculty integrating technology in their teaching is needed.

2. Develop a marketing strategy to effectively communicate the unique character of OIS in order to attract increased enrollment to maximize the capacity of the school and improve communication to the community.

We reached a record enrollment of students in 2017, 281, through improved marketing. However, maintaining that number and growing is a challenge in 2018 with increasing competition in the international school market. A goal of reaching 300 students has been set and much energy will be put into marketing and recruiting new families and students to the school.

3. Establish an organizational structure with specific roles to ensure that vertical articulation in all curricular areas from grades K-12 is regularly reviewed and strengthened. 4. Create and implement a K-12 system

approach for developing and utilizing formative assessments in order to monitor academic progress and provide timely feedback.

We made great progress with these two needs by using ManageBac, a software that facilitates assessment and curriculum documentation. Faculty need to be trained to provide more consistent information to the database to improve its functioning.

5. Continue and expand the communication between the KG Foundation and OIS by developing an enhanced structure in order to broaden the number of people working in regular collaboration between the Foundation and OIS.

The faculty is much more comfortable being part of the Kwansei Gakuin Foundation now than in 2013, a short time after the merger. We need to promote the benefits OIS receives from the foundation to our parent community.

6. Continue to provide timely training for teachers so that the IB programme is properly supported according to expected standards in PYP, MYP, and DP.

The faculty is very satisfied with the work of the professional development committee, making professional development more comprehensive and transparent. We want to continue to develop opportunities for professional development on the Senri Campus.