

July 12, 2021

Dr. Sylvia Manning
Interim President
Western University of Health Sciences
309 East Second Street College Plaza
Pomona, CA 91766-1854

Dear Dr. Manning:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Western University of Health Sciences (WUHS) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 25, 2021. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Special Visit to WUHS April 8-9, 2021. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by WUHS prior to the Special Visit and the institution's June 9, 2021 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Richard Bond, Chairman of the Board, David Baron, Senior Vice President & Provost, Stephanie D. Bowlin, Deputy Chief Operating Officer/Dean, College of Health Sciences/Associate Professor, and Juan R. Ramirez, Associate Vice President, Institutional Research and Effectiveness. Your comments were very helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations. The date of this action constitutes the effective date of the institution's status with WSCUC.

Actions

1. Receive the Special Visit team report that focused on: (1) improving capacity and effectiveness of the Board of Trustees; (2) creating a diverse and inclusive learning environment including diversity of Board members; and (3) strengthening shared governance
2. Issue a Formal Notice of Concern
3. Schedule a Special Visit in spring 2023 to address:
 - a. issues related to the Formal Notice of Concern with regard to compliance with Standard Three, particularly CFRs 3.6, 3.7 and 3.10 outlined in Recommendation 1.
 - b. status of Board of Trustees matters as outlined in Recommendation 2.
 - c. status of equity and inclusion efforts as outlined in Recommendation 3.
4. Schedule an Interim Report to be submitted by March 1, 2022 to address:
 - a. an update on the progress of shared governance and evidence of inclusive process.
 - b. the status of revisions to the Faculty Handbook.

The Commission commends WUHS in particular for the following:

1. The University's demonstrated commitment to honest and open communication with the Accrediting Commission, to undertaking the accreditation review process with seriousness and candor, and to informing the Commission promptly of the issue with Shared Governance.

2. The Board's commitment to expanding its membership; increasing diversity and expertise; improving Board bylaws and independence; and executing its fiduciary responsibilities.
3. The passion and responsiveness of the university's students, faculty, staff, administration, and Board to societal concerns about justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion as demonstrated through initiation of:
 - a. additional scholarships;
 - b. the enhancement of support services;
 - c. commitment to pipeline programs in the community;
 - d. enhancements of campus inclusivity;
 - e. planning of new programmatic and administrative structures (with resources);
 - f. changes in policy; and
 - g. the inclusion of DEI in the curricula.
4. The university community's response to the pandemic by converting to distanced delivery of education (including leveraging the experience of the Oregon campus distance learning team), maintaining financial stability, and continuing to educate learners.
5. The deep-seated dedication of the university's faculty, staff, administration, and the Board to student success.

The Commission requires the institution to respond to the following issues:

1. Shared Governance (CFRs 3.6, 3.7 and 3.10)
 Leadership at all levels (including faculty, staff, and administration), must commit to ensuring shared governance and maintaining effective communication by
 - a. clarifying and agreeing to the respective roles and lines of authority of all parties involved in shared governance;
 - b. ensuring the use of evidence to support decision-making; and
 - c. promptly and clearly communicating decisions along with the evidence and rationale so that stakeholders have a shared understanding of the evidence and rationale underlying the decision.
2. Board of Trustees (CFR 3.9)
 Although the board responded to the previous Commission Action Letter by executing its fiduciary authority with dedication and loyalty to Western University of Health Sciences, it must
 - a. continue to seek members with the qualifications required to govern an institution of higher learning;
 - b. regularly engage in self-review and training to enhance its effectiveness; and
 - c. maintain and honor clear policies on shared governance consistent with the Board's oversight role.
3. Equity and Inclusion (CFRs 1.4, 2.2 and 3.1, WSCUC Equity & Inclusion Policy)
 - a. WUHS should continue to assess and address the changing social and demographic diversity within the communities that it serves.
 - b. The administration, staff, and faculty should expand their efforts to create diverse and inclusive learning environments at both campuses and at community-based clinical sites including:
 - i. implementing and resourcing the H.E.A.R.T. Center and other DEI initiatives; and

- ii. collecting and analyzing data to track and address the extent to which the learning environments support student success and then to act on the data to improve student outcomes.
- c. The administration, staff, and faculty should continue to enhance institutional policies, educational and co-curricular programs, hiring and admissions criteria, and administrative and organizational practices with respect to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

A Formal Notice of Concern provides notice to the institution that, while it currently meets WSCUC Standards, it is in danger of being found in noncompliance with one or more Standards if current trends or findings continue. In the case of WUHS, Standard 3 is the Standard as to which it is in danger of being found out of compliance, in particular CFRs 3.6, 3.7, and 3.10 related to shared governance. Institutions issued a Formal Notice of Concern are scheduled for a Special Visit within four years. If the issues are not addressed within four years, a sanction could be imposed as described in the 2013 *Handbook of Accreditation*. A Formal Notice of Concern is public information and will be posted on the WSCUC website.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter is being sent to the chair of WUHS's governing board. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the WUHS's website and widely distributed throughout the institution to promote further engagement and improvement and to support the institution's response to the specific issues identified in these documents. The team report and the Commission's action letter will also be posted on the WSCUC website. If the institution wishes to respond to the Commission action on its own website, WSCUC will post a link to that response on the WSCUC website.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that WUHS undertook in preparing for and supporting this accreditation review. WSCUC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while contributing to public accountability, and we thank you for your continued support of this process. Please contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Jamienne S. Studley
President

JSS/thh

Cc: Phillip Doolittle, Commission Chair
Juan Ramirez, ALO
Elizabeth Zamora, Board Chair
Members of the Special Visit team
Tamela H. Hawley, Vice President