

March 4, 2019

Mr. Steven Weiner
President
Menlo College
1000 El Camino Real
Atherton, CA 94027-4301

Dear President Weiner:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Menlo College (MenC) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting February 22, 2019. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Special Visit to MenC November 14-16, 2018. The June 2014 Commission voted to impose a Formal Notice of Concern on MenC following the institution's OSR and Accreditation Visit in March 2016. The focus of the Special Visit was to determine progress made on the recommendations that led to the Notice of Concern and to determine if the Notice could be removed. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by MenC prior to the Special Visit and the institution's January 24, 2019 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues: Angela Schmiede, Vice President for Student Success and Accreditation Liaison Officer, Grande Lum, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Kristina Powers, Director of Institutional 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 new status with WSCUC.

Actions

1. Receive the Special Visit team report that focused on eight issues: (1) attrition and achievement; (2) financial operating deficits; (3) strategic plan; (4) meaning, quality, and integrity of the degree; (5) assessment; (6) program review and credit hour policy; (7) institutional research capacity; and (8) faculty governance
2. Remove the Formal Notice of Concern
3. Continue with the previously scheduled reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in fall 2021 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2022
4. Continue with the previously scheduled Mid-Cycle Review to begin May 1, 2019
5. Schedule an Interim Report to be submitted by November 1, 2020 to address all the recommendations contained in this letter

The Commission commends MenC in particular for the following:

1. Significant improvements made to campus facilities, especially including the increased capacity in the residence halls and major improvements made to the residence halls. This commitment to improving the physical space is enhancing

- the living and learning experiences of students, which contributes to overall campus health.
2. The turn toward becoming cash positive through fundraising, the drawing down of cash reserves, and stabilization of enrollment.
 3. The rebranding initiative which included the engagement of students in efforts to develop a marketing plan through an innovative new course led by a trustee. Engaging students in real-world application of knowledge towards innovative solutions is a positive example of the mission in practice.
 4. Improved communication between administration and faculty which has resulted in new levels of collaboration and trust.

The Commission requires the institution to respond to the following issues by the time of the Interim Report due November 1, 2020:

1. Continue to build capacity for institutional understanding to increase student retention and degree completion, including engaging in a deeper analysis of student attrition data to look beyond most commonly identified causes, and developing solutions and plans to address those needs. (CFRs 2.7, 2.10, 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3)
2. Develop more realistic budgeting scenarios that are in line with peer institutions and market trends, and reflect resource allocations that are in alignment with strategic priorities. Leadership should work towards matching expenses with revenues and carefully examine the current resource allocations made to athletics and academics and determine the appropriate levels of funding. (CFR 2.1 and 3.1)
3. Build on the progress evidenced in strategic planning but that greater effort be placed on alignment with Menlo College's mission & vision. The plan should explicitly address target markets (e.g., student athletes, transfer students, diverse populations and business and psychology career focused students who have high potential and who are interested in the innovation economy). Management should highlight Menlo College's differentiated offerings and competitive advantages. The plan should also include timelines for accomplishment of objectives, metrics that will allow the tracking of progress, and include clear definitions for successful accomplishment of the plan. (CFRs 3.4 and 4.6)
4. Continue building a culture of assessment with provision made for greater professional development, especially around assessment, for faculty, and that greater staff support be provided to advise and assist faculty with this work. (CFRs 2.4, 2.6, 2.9 and 3.3)
5. Examine the role and responsibilities of the Director of Institutional Effectiveness to determine capacity for completing both the institutional research and assessment functions of the college, as well as providing support for academic, co-curricular, and administrative program review processes. Menlo College needs to ensure sufficient support for academic and co-curricular program review, either through the Institutional Effectiveness position or through other highly trained resources; examine models for leadership and accountability for the program review process. (CFRs 2.2, 2.2a, 2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 2.10, 3.7, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5)

6. Continue to update and edit the Faculty Handbook for accuracy and clarity of policy, procedure, and accountability through the Faculty Senate. Documentation and differentiation between Senate By-Laws and academic roles and responsibilities should be addressed as well as systems for tracking the policies and decisions made. (CFR 3.10)

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of MenC's governing board. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on MenC'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 MenC 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,



Jamiene S. Studley
President

JSS/do

Cc: Reed Dasenbrock, Commission Chair
Angela Schmiede, ALO
Geir Ramleth, Board Chair
Members of the Special Visit team
Richard Osborn, Vice President