

July 20, 2018

Dr. Mikhail Brodsky
President
Lincoln University
401-15th Street
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear President Brodsky:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Lincoln University (LU) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 27-29, 2018. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 to Lincoln University April 17-19, 2018. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by Lincoln University prior to the Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 and (*if applicable*) the institution's May 30, 2018 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues: Dr. Allan Samson, Chairman, Board of Trustees, Ms. Annique Dalley Asghedom, Board member, and Ms. Reenu Shrestha, Assistant to the President. 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 Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 team report
2. Grant Candidacy for a period of five years
3. Schedule a Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 in fall 2019 to review compliance with the Standards and Criteria for Review (CFRs) that the Commission determined were not sufficiently met for Initial Accreditation.

Commendations

The Commission commends Lincoln University in particular for the following:

1. Lincoln University has a clearly defined mission and objectives that are closely related to the institution's educational philosophy. Moreover, the students, faculty, staff, and administration have a clear understanding of this mission and demonstrate a deep commitment to the University's mission and objectives.
2. The university has institutional policies on freedom of expression for faculty and students that are clearly articulated in the Catalog and Faculty Handbook. These policies clearly emphasize the institution's commitment to academic freedom while simultaneously striving for accuracy and respect for others.
3. Staff and administration serving on the Committee on Teaching and Learning have articulated opportunities for faculty development, and are working to further engage faculty. The institution is encouraged to continue its support for

the scholarship on teaching and learning.

4. LU has dedicated a significant amount of fiscal and human resources to support educational technology and maintains current hardware, software and virtual applications that support the institutions educational objectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

1. Review general education policies and engage in an external review of the program at the earliest opportunity (CFR 2.2a)
2. Review and systemize its policy for providing financial support for faculty research, and scholarly and creative activity (CFRs 2.8, 2.9)
3. Develop a formalized framework of assessment for student services, building on current surveys distributed after student events, and develop a schedule for program review of academic support programs. (CFRs 2.11, 2.12, 2.13)
4. Implement a formal recruitment and hiring process to ensure that faculty and administrative staff hiring processes adhere to newly adopted policies. (CFR 3.1 and 3.2)
5. Develop a coordinated enrollment management function that informs realistic resource planning scenarios in response to external impacts and seek diversified revenue sources. (CFR 3.4)
6. Continue to clarify roles and responsibilities and decision-making structures, as many full-time faculty play significant administrative roles and leadership as a whole is overextended. (CFR1.7 and 3.8)
7. Continue development of the Board of Trustees and further institutionalize its committee structures. (CFR 3.9)
8. Supported by administration, expand faculty engagement in order to provide effective academic leadership. (CFR 3.10);
9. Increase support to the Office of Institutional Research to support using additional measures to gauge student satisfaction and campus climate, such as the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE). Moreover, deepen the quality assurance work of the Office of Institutional Research by shifting from a compliance orientation to attention to quality through additional disaggregation of data and analysis of issues related to the student experience and student success. (CFR 2.10, 4.1, 4.2);
10. Further develop and institutionalize the assessment and quality assurance processes and expand faculty involvement in assessment and program review. (CFR 4.1, 4.3)

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

The Commission finds that Lincoln University has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 1 at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation.

Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objective through Core Functions

The Commission finds that Lincoln University has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 2 at a level sufficient for Candidacy.

LU has shown sufficient evidence in the following CFRs **2.1; 2.2; 2.3, 2.5, 2.6 2.12, 2.13, and 2.14** for Initial Accreditation:

The following CFRs **2.2a; 2.4, 2.7, 2.8; 2.9, 2.10 and 2.11** require further work, as described in the following:

- **CFR 2.2a *Undergraduate degree requirements, including general education and core competencies***: Faculty approach and understand general education differently and inconsistently. Therefore, there is inconsistency in application of the approaches of general education that continues through the upper-division level and is fully realized at the capstone level within a major. Lincoln should work to ensure a consistent definition of general education that aligns with WSCUC core competencies. The faculty should have a consistent understanding of what the GE definition is and apply assessment approaches as appropriate.
- **CFR 2.4 *Faculty's collective responsibility for setting SLOs and standards, assessing student learning, demonstrating achievement of standards***: It appears that individual faculty and faculty as a unit, concentration, or program do not have full responsibility for setting SLOs and choosing appropriate program level assessment methods. LU should ensure greater faculty involvement of assessment at the program level.
- **CFR 2.7 *Program review includes SLOs, retention/graduation data, external evidence and evaluators***: The program review process as articulated in the program review handbook is systematic and detailed, though more ownership by stakeholders involved in each program is necessary for writing self-studies and a policy for establishing a follow up during the successive cycle should be developed. The Diagnostic Imaging program might serve as a model for other programs.
- **CFR 2.8 *Scholarship, creative activity, and curricular and instructional innovation for both students and faculty valued and supported***: The institution's process, policy, and procedure for retention and promotion of faculty are unclear. The institution distributes a document entitled "Individual Faculty Development Plan" by which it tracks membership in professional organizations, publications, and presentations, but there is not a clear connection between the articulation of these activities, institutional financial support of them, and the mission of the institution itself. The Institutional Report provided a table of faculty research and scholarly activities. However, the listing was not organized along timelines, so it was difficult to determine the yearly level of scholarship activities. Going forward the Provost's Office should maintain records of faculty scholarship and creative activities disaggregated by year and by type of activity, so the level of activity is more transparent.
- **CFR 2.9 *Faculty evaluation links scholarship, teaching, student learning, and service***: Though many faculty publish and remain active in their respective fields,

- scholarship and creative activity are not emphasized at the university and there is little financial support for professional development of this sort; limited stipends are provided by the president's office on an ad hoc basis for travel for presenting at conferences. Recognition for faculty scholarship should be emphasized through institutional support and expected through faculty evaluation.
- CFR 2.10 *Institution identifies and supports needs of students; tracks aggregated and disaggregated student achievement, satisfaction and campus climate; demonstrates students' timely progress*: The institution provides data, but has not yet developed a framework for providing consistent, public, longitudinal data tracking student success. In particular, student satisfaction or campus climate data is extremely limited.
 - CFR 2.11 *Co-curricular programs aligned with academic goals and regularly assessed*: Data collection and analysis reflecting trends and gaps in student success are in the nascent stages. LU should develop a comprehensive program review process for co-curricular programs that support student success.

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

The Commission finds that Lincoln University has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 3 at a level sufficient for Candidacy.

LU has shown sufficient evidence in the following CFRs **3.3; 3.5, 3.6, and 3.10** for Initial Accreditation:

The following CFRs **3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.7, 3.8, and 3.9** require further work, as described in the following:

- CFR 3.1 *Sufficient, qualified, and diverse faculty and staff to support programs and operations*: The institution prides itself on cultural diversity, and the cultural and gender balance of students and staff is strong. However, the faculty is not as gender-balanced, though recent hires show movement in this direction. LU should continue to work toward a diverse balance of faculty and staff to serve the student population.
- CFR 3.2 *Faculty and staff policies, practices and evaluation well developed and applied*: LU should implement a formal recruitment and hiring process to ensure that the faculty and administrative staff hiring processes adhere to their newly adopted policies.
- CFR 3.4 *Financial stability, clean audits, sufficient resources; realistic plans for any deficits; integrated budgeting; enrollment management; diversified revenue sources*: Given the current dependence of the university on international student revenue and the volatility that exists in this area, the university should seek diversified revenue sources.
- CFR 3.7 *Clear, consistent decision-making structures and processes; priority to sustain institutional capacity and educational effectiveness*: Lines of authority and decision-making seem unclear among existing staff across functions of academic

- support, financial planning and management, academic planning, and assessment. LU should work to clarify scope of authority and responsibility across all its staff and administrative positions, highlighting the expertise of its personnel, so that functions related to human resources, facilities, and financial administration are clearly understood.
- CFR 3.8 *Full-time CEO and full-time CFO; sufficient qualified administrators*: The CFO position was recently created and the controller was promoted into the position and continues to manage the accounting functions of the university. However, the provost, who also serves as full-time faculty and has a business and finance background, has assumed the core strategic aspects of the CFO role and communicates financial information to the board. The institution should create and hire for a formal CFO position.
 - CFR 3.9 *Independent governing board with appropriate oversight, including hiring and evaluating CEO*: LU should continue its movement towards greater gender balance in recruiting additional board members. To help address areas for growth, including the implementation of the university's strategic plan, university advancement and appropriate roles of the board subcommittees, the board should continue its self-review and training and further develop its oversight over compliance with policies and effectiveness of ongoing operations.

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

The Commission finds that Lincoln University has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 4 at a level sufficient for Candidacy.

LU has shown sufficient evidence in the following CFRs **4.5; and 4.6** for Initial Accreditation:

The following CFRs **4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.7** require further work, as described in the following:

- CFR 4.1 *Quality-assurance processes in place to collect, analyze, and interpret data; track results over time; use comparative data; and make improvements*: The practice of assessing and tracking the PLOs and ILOs has not been uniformly adopted. As the institution continues to implement this process, it will be important to determine the extent to which it provides meaningful information on student learning to the faculty. Moreover, it will be important in the next review to demonstrate how the assessment data lead to changes that impact student learning.
- CFR 4.2 *Sufficient institutional research (IR) capacity; data disseminated and incorporated in planning and decision-making; IR effectiveness assessed*: A more robust analysis of the data sets could provide the institution with meaningful data that identify areas for improvement and decision points for issues related to student success. In particular, more comprehensive, nationally normed satisfaction surveys for students and employers should provide fruitful

- information /data for further analysis and a source for comparative analysis. Moreover, further disaggregation of student and faculty data will likely lead to research questions that could improve the institution's understanding of the challenges to student success. A data report is disseminated annually to internal stakeholders. At this point, the IR Office is well positioned to shift from a compliance orientation to continuous self-improvement, converting data to actionable information to better understand the student population and student experience.
- **CFR 4.3 *Commitment to improvement based on data and evidence; systematic assessment of teaching, learning, campus environment; utilization of results:*** The process of assessing and analyzing data based upon PLOs mapped to CLOs and ILOs is at a developmental stage. LU should continue institutionalizing the use of data in assessment of teaching and learning and incorporating an engaged faculty.
 - **CFR 4.4 *Ongoing inquiry into teaching and learning to improve curricula, pedagogy, and assessment:*** The areas requiring the most attention at LU are the continued institutionalization of outcomes assessment and program review processes, faculty involvement in leadership and faculty governance, and faculty engagement in assessment and teaching and learning.
 - **CFR 4.7 *Anticipating and responding to a changing higher educational environment:*** A large portion of the faculty is part-time (42%). In addition, six of the part-time faculty have both administrative and teaching responsibilities. These characteristics present challenges for constituting faculty governance committees and for generally maintaining faculty with a commitment to develop the shared governance necessary to support the academic infrastructure of the institution. In addition, many if not most of the faculty, are very senior and in the final phase of their academic careers. While this profile has the advantage of providing Lincoln with remarkably experienced educators, it also suggests the need for a solid succession plan that will ensure the future stability of the university.

In taking this action, the Commission confirms that Lincoln University has met all of the WSCUC Standards a level sufficient to grant Candidacy. The Commission has scheduled the Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 for fall 2019.

Institutions granted the status of Candidate for Accreditation must use the following statement if they wish to describe that status publicly:

Lincoln University has been recognized as a Candidate for Accreditation by WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), 985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100, Alameda, CA 94501, 510.748.9001. This status is a preliminary affiliation with the Commission awarded for a maximum period of five years. Candidacy is an indication that the institution is progressing toward Accreditation. Candidacy is not Accreditation and does not ensure eventual Accreditation.

Federal law requires that the WSCUC address and phone number appear in your catalog.

Institutions granted Candidacy are required to:

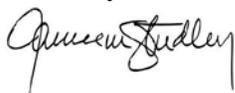
1. Submit an Annual Report in the format required by the Commission
2. Keep the Commission informed of any significant changes or developments. Any proposed new degree programs, off-campus sites, online offerings, and/or changes in governance or ownership require review and approval through the Substantive Change process.
3. Pay Annual Membership Dues prorated from the date of this action. An Annual Dues statement will be sent under separate cover.

In keeping with WSCUC review protocols, the required subsequent review and Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 will focus only on those issues identified under each Standard (above) deemed to require additional development. (Please also reference the team report for additional context for the Commission's findings.)

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of Lincoln University's governing board in one week. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be 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.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that Lincoln University 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: Reed Dasenbrock, Commission Chair
Igor Himelfarb, ALO
Allan Samson, Board Chair
Members of the Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 team
Tamela Hawley, Vice President