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March 2, 2016

Mr. Jim Reeves
Dr. Ariane Schauer
Co-Presidents
Marymount California University
30800 Palos Verdes Drive East
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275-6299

Dear Co-Presidents Reeves and Schauer:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Marymount California University (MCU) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting February 17-19, 2016. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Accreditation Visit to MCU September 22-25, 2015. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by the university prior to the Offsite Review (OSR), the supplemental materials requested by the team following the OSR, and the institution's January 21, 2016 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the review with both of you and Randy Bower, Chair, Board Finance Committee. Your comments were very helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations. The date of this action constitutes the effective date of the institution's reaffirmation with WSCUC.

Actions

1. Receive the Accreditation Visit Team Report
2. Reaffirm accreditation of Marymount California University for six years
3. Schedule the next reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in spring 2021 and the Accreditation Visit in fall 2021
4. Schedule the Mid-Cycle Review in spring 2019
5. Schedule a Special Visit in spring 2018 to address all recommendations cited below

The Commission has serious concerns about the issues identified in the team report. They were encouraged to hear the steps already taken place to create a sustainable future with plans for strengthening the finances based on more effective marketing, realistic enrollment projections, and tightened financial management.

Commendations:

The Commission endorses the commendations cited in the team report and especially commends Marymount California University for the following:

1. For the ambitious path it has chosen in moving from a two-year institution to a University granting both bachelor's and master's level degrees; for a willingness to seize new opportunities and accept new challenges.
2. For MCU's academic leadership's managing this transition, leading the challenging work of academic program development and implementation, and aligning this work with WSCUC protocols and best practices in higher education.
3. For MCU's clarity around mission and identity, evidenced in the way new faculty are oriented; for attention to issues of social justice and change rooted in Catholic faith and practice; and for community engagement as evidenced in faculty scholarship and student service learning.
4. For faculty and staff's living out the "Marymount Way" in service to students to "meet them where they are," often going beyond what might be expected in order to help students thrive.
5. The work done in the area of technology to develop the online services needed to support a distributed campus, including training, maintenance, library access, and career services.

Recommendations

The Commission identifies the following areas for further development which will be focused on during the Special Visit:

1. Lay the groundwork for a new president's success by addressing outstanding issues, most importantly the financial deficit; create appropriate flexibility in the 2020 plan so that new leadership can own and refine Marymount 2020 (CFR 3.4, 3.6, 3.7, 4.7).
2. Fully evaluate the Marymount 2020 plan to adjust program and enrollment targets appropriate to the context of the broader environment of higher education, an environment which anticipates declining numbers of high school graduates, a saturated degree completion market, and growth of Pell-eligible and first generation students (CFR 1.4, 4.2, 4.7).
3. Individually evaluate the variety of initiatives taken to expand enrollment and make decisions to eliminate, redistribute or invest as appropriate CFR 4.6, 4.7).
4. Evaluate the long-term viability of the Lakeside Campus. Develop appropriate plans to make it financially viable or create an exit strategy (CFR 4.7).
5. Develop a strategic approach to creating a three-year budget plan that realistically reflects enrollment scenarios for a tuition-driven institution (CFR 4.2, 4.6, 4.7).
6. Develop a comprehensive three-year undergraduate and graduate admissions and marketing plan aligned with the institution's strategic plan and with its academic programs (CFR 4.7).

7. Reorient the assessment process to streamline the collection of data, refining and implementing recommendations in order to close the assessment loop and sustain a culture of evidence-based decision-making (CFR 4.2, 4.4).
8. Complete the faculty-led review of terms of employment to align with institutional vision and strategic plan (CFR 2.8, 2.9, 3.2).
9. Develop a strategy for international recruitment that aligns more closely with MCU's mission and vision and budget realities (CFR 4.7).

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that Marymount California University has addressed the three Core Commitments and has successfully completed the two-stage institutional review process conducted under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. Between this action and the time of the Special Visit, the institution is encouraged to continue its progress, particularly with respect to student learning and success.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent in one week to the Chair of the Marymount California University Board of Trustees. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the MCU website and widely disseminated 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 Marymount California University undertook in preparing for and supporting this accreditation review. WSCUC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while assuring public accountability, and we are grateful 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,

Mary Ellen Petrisko
President

cc: William Ladusaw, WSCUC Commission Chair
Burt Arnold, Board Chair
Members of the Accreditation Visit team
Richard Osborn, WSCUC Staff Liaison