

February 26, 2016

Dr. John Derry
President
Hope International University
2500 E. Nutwood Ave
Fullerton, CA 92831

Dear President Derry:

During its February 17-19, 2016 meeting, the WASC Senior College and University Commission ("WSCUC") and the full Commission considered the proposal submitted by Hope International University ("HIU") for a merger between HIU and Nebraska Christian College ("NCC"). The merger involves the dissolution of NCC and its assimilation into HIU as a branch campus.

Consideration of this structural change follows submission by the institution of a proposal and review of the proposal by a panel of the Substantive Change Committee via teleconference call on October 27, 2015, which was followed by a site visit on December 15, 2015. The Structural Change Committee of the Commission reviewed these materials and submitted its recommendations to the Commission during this meeting. Both the Committee and Commission had access to the proposal, Substantive Change Committee action letter of November 2, 2015, and the Site Visit Report dated December 15, 2015. The Committee and Commission also had access to Hope International University's accreditation history and past Commission letters.

After deliberation, the Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Site Visit Report and the recommendations of the Structural Change Committee.
2. Approve the proposed merger between HIU and NCC, such that NCC will become a branch campus of HIU, with a deadline for implementation under this approval of July 1, 2016, subject to the institution's meeting the recommendations and stipulations contained in WSCUC legal counsel's memorandum of review dated October 23, 2015 (attached as an addendum to this letter). Please consult with your WSCUC staff liaison to ensure that a record of compliance with the memorandum's recommendations and stipulations is maintained.
3. Schedule a Progress Report to be submitted by September 15, 2017, documenting the effects of the merger on enrollment and an appraisal of the impact of the merger on the student culture of the NCC campus.

The Commission endorsed the following commendations:

1. HIU's executive leadership and board of trustees are to be commended for their strategic innovation and approaching the university's current challenges by methodically conducting extensive due diligence on a wide range of options and for their phased approach to decision-making.
2. HIU's President is to be commended for initiating a strategic planning process early on, when it was clear new strategic priorities were needed to address financial and enrollment growth.
3. HIU and NCC are to be commended for the foundation they have laid in identifying the risks and benefits, unique contributions of both institutions, and possible synergy from the merger, and for their commitment that both institutions are to benefit from the new structure.

In addition, the Commission endorsed the following recommendations:

1. HIU should carefully monitor the growth of the enrollment at the NCC Branch Campus to ensure the same quality and consistency of the students' educational experience that students receive at the Fullerton campus. Consideration should be given to identifying an academic program director for each academic program offered at the NCC Branch Campus. (CFR 2.1, 2.2, 2.2a, 2.3, 2.6)
2. HIU should carefully monitor mission alignment at the NCC Branch Campus and continue onboarding the faculty and staff to the HIU continuous improvement culture, quality assurance, mission, and core values. (CFR 1.2, 1.5)
3. HIU should ensure that the strategic plan to be released in September 2016 includes a NCC Branch Campus master plan with costs carefully tracked during the merger. (CFR 4.6)

It is the responsibility of Hope International University to notify the Commission immediately of the date of closing of the merger and the completion of all other necessary approvals for implementation of that change, so that the Commission can be advised of any conditions placed on the transaction by other parties.

This letter will be posted on the WSCUC website in accordance with WSCUC Commission policy. If Hope International University would like to respond to the Commission's findings, a link to your response will be posted on the WSCUC website.

In conclusion, the Commission wishes to commend you and your colleagues, who have worked with deep and broad collaborative intent, on this successful merger.

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Mary Ellen Petrisko
President

Cc: Members of the Substantive Change Committee
Members of the Structural Change Committee
Christopher Oberg, WSCUC Vice President and HIU Staff Liaison