

July 12, 2019

Dr. Ronald Ellis
President
California Baptist University
8432 Magnolia Avenue
Riverside, CA 92504

Dear President Ellis:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning California Baptist University (CBU) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 28, 2019. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Accreditation Visit to CBU May 7-9, 2019. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by CBU prior to the Offsite Review (OSR) and the supplemental materials requested by the team after the OSR. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with your colleagues Charles Sands, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Elizabeth Morris, Associate Provost for Educational Effectiveness and Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO). Their 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 Accreditation Visit team report
2. Reaffirm accreditation for a period of six years
3. Schedule the next reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in fall 2024 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2025
4. Schedule the Mid-Cycle Review to begin May 1, 2021
5. Schedule an Interim Report to be submitted by March 1, 2022 to address:
 - a. Alignment of learning outcomes for degrees with the same name offered by different delivery methods; differentiated stated expectations for undergraduate and graduate degree programs.
 - b. Program reviews that reflect sophistication and maturity connoted by deep analysis and reflection.
 - c. An analysis of graduate student retention and graduation rates.
 - d. A formalized debt management policy; multiple budget models reflecting best and worst case scenarios.
 - e. Financial reporting that clearly separates operating and non-operating changes in net assets.

The Commission commends CBU in particular for the following:

1. Impressive growth in student enrollment, facilities and resources under the leadership of the president. Equally impressive has been the growth in students from historically underrepresented groups.
2. A mission that is well understood and deeply supported by the university community. The university's core values (biblically rooted, globally minded, academically prepared and equipped to serve) align well with the mission and provide a way for internal and external constituents to understand CBU's identity.
3. Support for overall educational success by proactively monitoring and meeting student needs.
4. Vice presidents and deans who exhibit a strong commitment to the mission and work collegially and entrepreneurially to advance CBU's success. CBU is taking steps to build collaboration across the university, "holding the doors open" between different areas of responsibility.
5. A well-defined assessment and program review system. The Assessment Committee is an effective source for sharing and disseminating assessment work and its successes, including co-curricular assessment. This work will be further strengthened by the planned migration to software systems that are consistent throughout the university.

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

1. CBU should define the meaning, quality and integrity of their degree programs to reflect greater clarity and coherency. Graduate programs consistently require stated objectives differentiated from and more advanced than undergraduate programs. Degree programs by the same name, offered by different modes of delivery, should have comparable if not the same content, outcomes, standards of performance, rigor and nomenclature. Similarly, general education requirements should be comparable across modalities. (CFR 2.1, 2.2, 2.2a)
2. Program review across degree programs should reflect critical reflection and deep analysis including the consistent and effective evaluation of assessment data to improve student learning. (CFR 2.7)
3. The CBU board of trustees and senior leadership should reflect the kinds of diversity evident among the university's student body. (CFR 1.4, 3.6, 3.9)
4. CBU should improve graduation and retention rates for underrepresented minority (URM) students by, among a variety of efforts, providing support for the proposed Summer Bridge program. The efficacy of student success support efforts should be assessed. Finally, ongoing analysis of graduate student retention and graduation rates is needed. (CFR 1.4, 2.2b, 2.6, 2.10)

5. Faculty will need additional release time from teaching and other responsibilities, and additional resources to support growth and development in faculty scholarship. (CFR 2.8)
6. CBU should establish a more formalized debt management policy that bases decisions on multiple, standard higher education metrics and articulate that policy through a debt management plan that reflects alternative budget scenarios. (CFR 3.4)
7. CBU should work with the new auditor to adopt reporting practices that clearly separate operating and non-operating changes in net assets. (CFR 3.4)

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that CBU has addressed the three Core Commitments and has successfully completed the two-stage institutional review process conducted under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. In keeping with WSCUC values, CBU should strive for ongoing improvement with adherence to all Standards of Accreditation and their associated CFRs to foster a learning environment that continuously strives for educational excellence and operational effectiveness.

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



Jamiene S. Studley
President

JSS/mam

Cc: Reed Dasenbrock, Commission Chair
Elizabeth Morris, ALO
Steve Davidson, Board Chair
Members of the Accreditation Visit team
Maureen A Maloney, Vice President