

July 12, 2021

Dr. Michael Beals
President
Vanguard University of Southern California
55 Fair Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Dear President Beals:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Vanguard University of Southern California (VUSC) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 25, 2021. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Special Visit to VUSC February 24-25, 2021. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by VUSC prior to the Special Visit and the institution's April 9, 2021 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Ludmila Praslova, Professor/ALO, Chip Espinoza, Interim Provost/Dean of Strategy & Innovation, Kim Johnson, Vice President for Enrollment Management, Justin McIntee, Vice President for Advancement, Jeremy Moser, Chief Financial Officer, and Amanda Lebrecht, Associate Dean of Student Success. Your comments were very helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations. The date of this action constitutes the effective date of the institution's status with WSCUC.

Actions

1. Receive the Special Visit team report that focused on: (1) aligning enrollment planning and recruitment with strategic and financial planning; (2) diversifying revenue streams, growing enrollment, and increasing the endowment; (3) integrating and implementing strategic and operational plans; (4) ensuring support services targeted at closing the achievement gap for students of color; and (5) increasing the number and diversity of faculty and staff sufficient to support student and programmatic needs.
2. Continue with the previously scheduled reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in fall 2024 and the Accreditation Visit in Spring 2025
3. Schedule a Special Visit in fall 2022 to address:
 - a. the implementation of new institutional and faculty governance structures.
 - b. collaboration with all appropriate stakeholders when aligning strategic priorities with academic programs.
4. Schedule a Progress Report to be submitted by December 1, 2021 to address an update on the completion of the new faculty handbook.

The Commission commends VUSC in particular for the following:

1. The consistent and long-term use of a strategic and continuous planning model aligned with the University's mission, vision, and values that has enabled Vanguard to effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic;
2. The significant increase in net assets, growth in traditional undergraduate and graduate enrollment, increased diversification of major revenue sources, strategic use of debt financing in a low interest rate environment, success in raising funds including grant awards, and the growth in endowment assets over the last four years;
3. The productive partnership with student and academic affairs and the evidence-based practices implemented by the student success team, producing early results in closing the achievement gap between Hispanic students and non-Hispanic White students;
4. The progress made as a result of collaboration of the student success, spiritual formation, and academic affairs offices on equity and inclusion for students through curriculum development and co-curricular programming.

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

1. Ensure effective faculty academic leadership by actively and collaboratively engaging faculty in developing and applying clear, consistent decision-making structures and clearly defined faculty governance roles and processes (CFR 3.7 and 3.10);
2. Ensure the involvement of all appropriate stakeholders when aligning strategic priorities with academic programs (CFR 4.5);
3. Review faculty and staff policies, including the faculty handbook, to ensure they are well-developed, consistent, communicated, and applied (CFR 1.7 and 3.2);
4. Support data-informed strategic planning and operational decision making by providing sufficient institutional research capacity, including the use of key performance indicators to measure success (CFR 4.1 and 4.2);
5. Apply mission and data-informed support services and programs more broadly to increase retention and close achievement gaps for disaggregated student groups (CFR 2.10, 2.11, 2.13);
6. Continue to focus on diversifying revenue sources, building the endowment, and addressing enrollment management to effectively meet the challenges of the rapidly changing higher education environment (CFR 3.4, 4.7); and
7. Provide sufficient resources (e.g., faculty, staff, facilities, marketing, etc.) for new programs and innovations while continuing to adequately support current programs (CFR 3.1, 3.3, 3.5)

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

Cc: Phillip Doolittle, Commission Chair
Ludmilla Praslova, ALO
John Martin, Board Chair
Members of the Special Visit team
Tamela H. Hawley, Vice President