

July 8, 2020

Ms. Margot Doucette, Esq.  
Chief Executive Officer  
Design Institute of San Diego  
8555 Commerce Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92121

Dear Ms. Doucette:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Design Institute of San Diego (DISD) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 26, 2020. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Special Visit to Design Institute of San Diego April 15-17, 2020. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by Design Institute of San Diego prior to the Special Visit and the institution's June 9, 2020 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Dennis Doucette, CFO; Natalia Worden, Program Director; Jessyca Houchins, Director of Operations; and Lisa Schattman, Library Director and Assessment Coordinator. 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) the collection, analysis, and use of data to support key operational metrics, student success, and evidence-based decision making across all areas of the institution, including the further development of capacity for institutional research (IR) and student learning outcomes assessment;
  - (2) a comprehensive, scalable institutional technology strategy;
  - (3) a comprehensive human resources strategy, including an appropriate faculty and staffing plan, to ensure risk mitigation, succession planning, and sustainable organizational structure;
  - (4) a comprehensive market analysis and scenario planning for each identified new program opportunity to determine its viability and probability for success; and
  - (5) potential changes to organizational structure, policy, and culture that could result from dramatic enrollment growth or the addition of graduate programs.
2. Continue with the previously scheduled reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in spring 2023 and the Accreditation Visit in fall 2023
3. Continue with the previously scheduled Mid-Cycle Review to begin May 1, 2021

The Commission commends Design Institute of San Diego in particular for the following:

1. Improving organizational structure and processes with strategic hires in key leadership and operational positions.
2. Preserving and developing its deep and pervasive culture of critique, one that operates at all levels of the institution.
3. Carefully and deliberately developing its institutional research capacity, as evidenced by its understanding of and ability to use IR data for ongoing institutional decisions and by expanding staff and faculty skills in data literacy.

4. Rapidly and creatively responding to the COVID-19 pandemic with a student-centered approach that met students' needs and positioned them for success.

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

1. Continue to formalize data governance and implement quality control measures to ensure accurate and consistent data reporting for use in decision making. (CFRs 1.7, 3.5, 3.7)
2. Develop and implement a formal plan and methods of assessing Program Learning Outcomes more frequently than required by the Council for Interior Design Accreditation, integrating assessment and IR data, and closing the loop with assessment data in decision-making, planning and budgeting. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 3.4, 4.1, 4.3)
3. Expand current technology plan and organizational capacity to implement interoperable and streamlined technology systems to support future growth and scaling of operations and to minimize risk. (CFRs 1.7, 3.5, 3.7)

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of Design Institute of San Diego's governing board. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the Design Institute of San Diego'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 Design Institute of San Diego 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/[so]

Cc: Phillip Doolittle, Commission Chair  
Margot Doucette, ALO  
Robert Wright, Board Chair  
Members of the Special Visit team  
Barbara Gross Davis, Vice President  
Susan Opp, Vice President