

March 4, 2019

Mr. Peter Hsieh
President
Northwestern Polytechnic University
47671 Westinghouse Drive
Fremont, CA 94539

Dear President Hsieh:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Northwestern Polytechnic University (NPU) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting February 22, 2019. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 to NPU November 14-16, 2018. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by NPU prior to the Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 and the institution's January 21, 2019 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Dr. Jay Thompson, Chair, Board of Directors, Mr. Paul Choi, Executive Vice President, Dr. Nelly Mangarova, Chief Academic Officer, and Mr. David Linnervers, Director of Student Outreach & Enrollment. Your 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 Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 team report
2. Grant Candidacy for a period of five years
3. Schedule a Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 in fall 2020

The Commission commends NPU in particular for the following:

1. Astute investment in personnel, starting with the executive leadership at all levels. NPU is clearly investing for the future and has put together a well-skilled leadership team.
2. Progress made in the establishment and growth of a re-energized Board of Directors that is engaged and attentive to its fiduciary responsibilities, professional development, and structuring of committees that will put the institution on the road to meeting desired goals. The Board is encouraged to continue its progress by implementing the formal structures and processes it has put in place.
3. Highly competent, committed, and accomplished faculty who bring real-world knowledge and expertise to the classroom and work environment.
4. Dynamic student support services that are equipped and prepared to support and nurture students, particularly international students.

5. Strong and robust organization of structures and processes related to program review and student learning outcomes assessment. NPU is encouraged to continue the momentum established in this arena.
6. Managing and shepherding resources to sustain current operations and a strong statement of financial position, including high investment balances, excellent academic and administrative facilities, and no long-term debt.

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

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

The Commission finds that NPU has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 1 at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation.

Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objective through Core Functions

The Commission finds that NPU has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 2 at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation.

Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability

The Commission finds that NPU has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 3 at a level sufficient for Candidacy.

CFRs 3.9 and 3.10 require further work, as described in the following:

- **CFR 3.9 Independent governing board with appropriate oversight**, including hiring and evaluating CEO: The current NPU Board structure, membership, and formal committees are still relatively new and some important committees such as audit, finance, and nominations were all formed in May 2018. To date, the finance committee has met twice to review the financial status of the University. The audit committee has yet to meet. It is not clear whether a comprehensive charter for and charge to the new committees have been developed. As the committees continue to meet and develop, the charter for each should be more clearly defined and operationalized, including responsibilities and authority.
- **CFR 3.10 Effective academic leadership by faculty**: NPU should clarify and formalize the role of both full-time and adjunct faculty in governance structures and decision-making processes.

Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement

The Commission finds that NPU has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 4 at a level sufficient for Candidacy.

CFRs 4.2 and 4.6 require further work, as described in the following:

- CFR 4.2 Sufficient institutional research (IR) capacity; **data disseminated and incorporated in planning and decision-making**; IR effectiveness assessed: NPU should enhance its institutional research capacity to provide more sophisticated enrollment and demographic data; an institutional fact book; peer comparisons; and key performance indicators for the institution to support the executive leadership and Board of Directors in making decisions.
- CFR 4.6 Reflection and planning with multiple constituents; **strategic plans align with purposes; address key priorities and future directions; plans are monitored and revised as required**: NPU should provide evidence of a strategic plan which is developed, implemented, mature and aligned with academic, enrollment, marketing, and staffing objectives and connected to strategic priorities that link to budgeting and resource allocation.

In taking this action, the Commission confirms that NPU has met all of the WSCUC Standards at a level sufficient to grant Candidacy. The Commission has scheduled the Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 for Spring 2020.

Institutions granted the status of Candidate for Accreditation must use the following statement if they wish to describe that status publicly:

NPU has been recognized as a Candidate for Accreditation by WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), 985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100, Alameda, CA 94501, 510.748.9001. This status is a preliminary affiliation with the Commission awarded for a maximum period of five years. Candidacy is an indication that the institution is progressing toward Accreditation. Candidacy is not Accreditation and does not ensure eventual Accreditation.

Federal law requires that the WSCUC address and phone number appear in your catalog.

Institutions granted Candidacy are required to:

1. Submit an Annual Report in the format required by the Commission
2. Keep the Commission informed of any significant changes or developments. Any proposed new degree programs, off-campus sites, online offerings, and/or changes in governance or ownership require review and approval through the Substantive Change process.
3. Pay Annual Membership Dues prorated from the date of this action. An Annual Dues statement will be sent under separate cover.

In keeping with WSCUC review protocols, the required subsequent review and Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 will focus primarily on those issues identified under each Standard

(above) deemed to require additional development. (Please also reference the team report for additional context for the Commission's findings.)

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of NPU's governing board. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be 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.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that NPU 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,



Jamienne S. Studley
President

JSS/thh

Cc: Reed Dasenbrock, Commission Chair
Paul Choi, ALO
Jerome Thompson, Board Chair
Members of the Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 team
Tamela Hawley, Vice President