

March 4, 2019

Mr. Neils Schaumann
Dean
California Western School of Law
225 Cedar Street
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Dean Schaumann:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning California Western School of Law (CWSL) 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 California Western School of Law on September 10-13, 2018. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by CWSL prior to the Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 and the institution's November 28, 2018 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues: Don Smythe, Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs; Pam Duffy, Chief Financial Officer; and Wendy Bashant, Vice President of Student Life and Accreditation Liaison Officer. 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 to review compliance with the Standards and Criteria for Review (CFRs) that the Commission determined were not sufficiently met for Initial Accreditation

The Commission commends CWSL in particular for the following:

1. Demonstrating prudent financial management in the period leading up to and during an unprecedented time of constriction experienced nationally in the market for legal education.
2. Developing and maintaining a cohesive, urban campus with an emphasis on the student experience and creating a community of learning that promotes interaction between and among students, faculty and staff.
3. Providing students with meaningful and valuable experiential learning opportunities that develop students' legal skills in real-world settings.

4. Supporting student diversity and emphasizing student success through an array of academic support services; focused analyses of behavioral and academic factors for at-risk students; and programmatic interventions designed to promote student achievement.
5. Building a strong and caring community of faculty, staff, and alumni who are deeply committed to students and dedicated to the California Western School of Law.

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

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

The Commission finds that CWSL has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 1 at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation. The following CFR requires additional attention and development:

- CFR 1.2: Make publicly accessible educational objectives for the non-JD programs. Refine learning outcomes to more easily accommodate measurement and assessment.

Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objective through Core Functions

The Commission finds that CWSL has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 2 at a level sufficient for Candidacy and that CFRs 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, and 2.11 require further work, as described in the following:

- CFR 2.1: Ensure that non-JD programs are appropriate in content, standards of performance, rigor, and nomenclature for the degree level awarded.
- CFR 2.3: Refine Student Learning Outcomes for all courses. The assessment process for non-JD learning outcomes has yet to be implemented; assessment of JD learning outcomes needs to mature. The Commission appreciated learning that CWSL is committed to assessment cycles for its non-JD programs.
- CFR 2.4: Ensure that the faculty takes collective responsibility for establishing appropriate standards of performance for students and demonstrating through assessment the achievement of these standards.
- CFR 2.6: Demonstrate that graduates consistently achieve stated learning outcomes and established standards of performance. Ensure that expectations for student learning are embedded in the standards faculty use to evaluate student work.
- CFR 2.7: Develop a program review process for all degree programs that incorporates assessment of student learning.

- CFR 2.10: Demonstrate, via a more formal institutional research function, that students make timely progress toward the completion of their degrees. Collect and analyze student data, track achievement, satisfaction and the extent to which the student climate supports student success. Use data to improve student achievement. The Commission appreciated learning that retention and graduation rates will be posted on the school's website.
- CFR 2.11: Assess the effectiveness of co-curricular programs and use the results for improvement, as appropriate.

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

The Commission finds that CWSL has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 3 at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation.

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

The Commission finds that CWSL has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 4 at a level sufficient for Candidacy and that CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7 require further work, as described in the following:

- CFR 4.1: Employ a deliberate set of quality assurance processes to collect, analyze and interpret data, track results over time; use comparative data. Foster a pervasive faculty-led culture that values the assessment of student learning.
- CFR 4.2: Ensure an institutional research capacity consistent with the institution's purposes and characteristics. The Commission appreciated learning that a current staff member will be appointed as director of institutional research.
- CFR 4.3 Work toward an evidence-based culture employing data for improvement and engaging in systematic assessment of teaching, learning, and the campus environment.
- CFR 4.5: Involve appropriate stakeholders in regular assessment of institutional effectiveness.
- CFR 4.6: Engage in institutional reflection and planning processes that are based on the examination of data and evidence. Create a strategic plan that aligns with purposes, addresses key priorities and future directions. The Commission appreciated learning that work is underway on a strategic plan.

- CFR 4.7: Respond to a changing higher educational environment, especially in legal education.

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 keeping with WSCUC values, California Western School of Law 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 taking this action, the Commission confirms California Western School of Law has met all of the WSCUC Standards a level sufficient to grant Candidacy. The Commission has scheduled the Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 for fall 2020.

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

California Western School of Law 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 accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of California Western School of Law'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 California Western School of Law 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/bgd

Cc: Reed Dasenbrock, Commission Chair
Wendy Bashant, ALO
Jeffrey Lewin, Board Chair
Members of the Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 team
Barbara Gross Davis, Vice President