

February 26, 2020

Dr. David Andrews
President
National University
11355 North Torrey Pines Road
La Jolla, CA 92037-1011

Dear President Andrews:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning National University (NU) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting February 14, 2020. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Accreditation Visit to NU October 22-24, 2019. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by NU prior to the Offsite Review (OSR), the supplemental materials requested by the team after the OSR, and the institution's January 17, 2020 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with your colleagues Gangaram Singh (EVP and Provost), Joseph Hoey (Vice Provost and ALO), and Jen Keys (CFO). 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 ten years
3. Schedule the next reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in spring 2029 and the Accreditation Visit in fall 2029
4. Schedule the Mid-Cycle Review to begin May 1, 2025
5. Schedule a Special Visit in fall 2023 to address all recommendations in this letter

The Commission commends NU in particular for the following:

1. The university for its leadership and reputation for excellence which helped create the possibility of the unrestricted gift of \$350 million from Denny Sanford; leadership's willingness to embrace experimentation and innovation to support a commitment to student success through such projects as the Precision Institute; and the constituency's belief in National University's mission and ability to provide access, affordability, and professional relevance for working adults and military service members.
2. Faculty's authentic use of assessment results to improve curricula (including General Education) at the course and program level, to inform budget decisions, and to increase their shared sense of purpose. Faculty, administration, and staff work together to evaluate and improve both the annual and five-year review processes to insure their meaningfulness to academic goals.
3. NU's exemplary use of integrated technological tools and services to support student success and institutional innovation.

4. NU's efforts to develop a data infrastructure and culture committed to data-guided decision-making.
5. The university-wide commitment to students and student success, as articulated by faculty, staff, and administration and well-recognized by students. This commitment is consistent across locations, programs, policies, and institutional initiatives which results in effective outcomes and student performance backed up by robust systems of educational effectiveness, including assessment measures.

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

1. Assure compliance with all current WSCUC requirements for the board structure and decision-making processes through a study of compliance with the WSCUC Governing Board Policy. (CFRs 1.8., 3.7, 3.9)
2. Articulate the financial and human resources, timelines, specific desired outcomes, and metrics needed to guide and monitor ongoing progress to achieve the 2023 strategic plan. (CFRs 4.5, 4.6, 4.7)
3. Continue to align adjunct and part-time faculty development and support with the significance of their contribution to NU's instructional process and academic quality. Consider revitalization of the Adjunct Academy, a robust orientation to and training on NU's distinct pedagogy, and formal processes to ensure their voice in critical academic decision-making as appropriate. (CFRs 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.10, 4.5)
4. Implement a comprehensive change management process that successfully prepares faculty, staff, and students to anticipate, understand, contribute to, and excel in the rapidly changing ecosystem of National University. Employ effective communication strategies that work (including face-to-face engagement where appropriate), particularly related to changes in existing structures and processes, faculty governance, staff roles, and responsibilities to enhance morale and trust throughout the institution. (CFRs 4.3, 4.6, 4.7)
5. Continue the improvement of student retention through the identification and implementation of impactful initiatives. Continue progress to measure and clearly articulate trends in student retention and graduation on a university-wide and a disaggregated basis, and communication of these trends to the community as a whole. (CFRs 1.2, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 4.1, 4.6)
6. Continue progress to ensure a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusiveness through the work of the President's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council, and its supporting committee work on access and equity, curricula, climate, andragogy, and the NU workplace. (CFRs 1.4, 3.1, 3.2)
7. Given the goal to produce graduates who are leaders in their fields, continue to develop and implement policies, services, and scholarly practices that support the distinct needs of doctoral faculty and students. (CFRs 2.2b, 2.6, 2.8, 2.9)

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that NU 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, NU 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 NU's governing board. A copy of this letter will also be sent to Chancellor Michael Cunningham, National University System. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on NU'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 National 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,



Jamienne S. Studley
President

JSS/rco

Cc: Reed Dasenbrock, Commission Chair
Joseph Hoey, ALO
Rebecca Henderson, Board Chair
Michael Cunningham, Chancellor, National University System
Members of the Accreditation Visit team
Richard Osborn, Retired Vice President, Staff Liaison at time of visit
Barbara Gross Davis, Vice President