

July 14, 2023

Dr. Lizbeth Martin
President
Notre Dame De Namur University
1500 Ralston Avenue
Belmont, CA, 94002

Dear President Martin:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Notre Dame De Namur University (NDNU) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 30, 2023. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Gregory White, Provost and Senior Vice President/ALO, Kurt Allen, Vice President for Marketing, and Sr. Mary Farren, Leadership Team, SNDdeN US East-West Province. Your comments were very helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations.

At that meeting, after considering the Institutional Report and exhibits submitted by NDNU, the Report of the April 26-28, 2023 Special Visit to NDNU, and the institution's response to the team report, the Commission determined that there should be no change to the institution's accreditation status. Accordingly, the institution remains on Warning. The Commission also scheduled a Progress Report to be submitted by October 15, 2023, to provide an update on the institution's progress in addressing its compliance with Standards 3 and 4.

NDNU has made improvements in operational integrity, support for student academic success, capacity to develop and deliver online programs, improved use of data for marketing, and shared governance.

The Commission found that NDNU has not demonstrated compliance with Standard 3. Under WSCUC policies, when the Commission finds that an institution fails to meet one or more of the Standards of Accreditation, it is required to notify the institution of the deficiencies and establish a time period within which the deficiencies must be corrected. Under the Commission's policies the timeframe may not exceed two years. If the Commission determines that the institution has not remedied the deficiencies at the conclusion of this sanction period, the Commission will withdraw the institution's accreditation or grant an extension of the timeframe for good cause shown which may not exceed two years.

NDNU has been on Warning since March 2022, which means the two-year sanction period will expire in March 2024. The institution must demonstrate, through a Special Visit, that it complies with the Standards. The institution may request an extension of the timeframe if it can demonstrate significant accomplishments in addressing the areas of noncompliance during the period of sanction AND demonstrate at least partial compliance with the Standard(s) cited, and for any remaining deficiencies, demonstrate an understanding of those deficiencies and readiness, institutional capacity and a plan to remedy those deficiencies

within the period of extension granted by the Commission.¹

The accreditation status of the institution continues during Warning. While on Warning, any new sites or degree programs initiated by the institution must be approved through the substantive change process.

Actions

1. Receive the Special Visit team report that focused on financial sustainability
2. Continue a Warning
3. Continue with the previously scheduled reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in spring 2024 and the Accreditation Visit in fall 2024
4. Schedule a Special Visit in fall 2023 to address the issues outlined below.

Issues to be Addressed

1. Finance

NDNU does not demonstrate compliance with CFR 3.4 due to structural deficits as a result of continuous enrollment declines. NDNU must expeditiously demonstrate a long-term financial plan sufficient for fiscal sustainability. (CFR 3.4)

2. Planning

The university has not fully demonstrated integrated planning that aligns academic program strategy and long-term enrollment growth plans. NDNU has eliminated its in-person undergraduate programs and transitioned to providing online and hybrid professional graduate and bachelor completion programs. It has also begun to develop new programs. NDNU must implement a clear process for alignment of academic program strategy with enrollment growth plans that inform multi-year budget development and scenario planning with all relevant stakeholders. In addition, NDNU must align operational, financial, and academic activities to grow the enrollment in their programs consistent with its mission and educational objectives. Growth in net tuition revenue is critical to the long-term financial viability of NDNU. The budgeted increase in fall 2023 net revenue as outlined in NDNU's draft FY2024 budget is a significant part of the financial plan. NDNU needs to validate their new budgeting and enrollment processes and the underlying assumptions for enrollment growth using fall 2023 enrollment as its initial key datapoint. (CFRs 3.4 and 4.6)

Further Recommendations

1. NDNU has begun to review, update, and create operational and academic policies. The recently reconstituted faculty governance committee has not had time to complete the formation of academic policies and procedures. NDNU leadership must continue this effort and improve communication about its plans

¹ WSCUC Handbook of Accreditation, Part IV: Commission Decisions on Institutions, Forms of Possible Commission Action, Sanctions, p. 4 of 6.

to stakeholder groups, in particular to its students, faculty, staff and the surrounding community. (CFR 1.7)

2. The college should ensure sufficient faculty capacity to provide adequate support for the institution's academic objectives. (CFR 2.2b)

NDNU is required to provide updated notifications of this continuing status to all current and prospective students within seven days of receipt of this letter. For prospective students, the notice must be available on NDNU home page of its website. NDNU must provide a copy of that notice to the Commission within the same seven-day period.

Institutions issued a Warning may request a review of this decision within 28 days of receiving the Commission's Action Letter according to the procedures outlined on pages 40-42 of the WSCUC 2013 Handbook.

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

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: Phillip Doolittle, Immediate Past Chair
Tracy Poon Tambascia, Chair
Gregory White, ALO
Jean Stoner, Board Chair
Members of the Special Visit team
Tamela Hawley, Vice President