

March 8, 2022

Dr. Lizbeth Martin  
President  
Notre Dame De Namur University  
1500 Ralston Avenue  
Belmont, CA 94002-1908

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 February 25, 2022. At that meeting, the Commission removed the Notice of Concern and acted to issue a Warning. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Special Visit to NDNU October 28-29, 2021. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by NDNU prior to the Special Visit and the institution's January 3, 2022 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleague Gregory P. White, VPAA and CFO. 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.

The Commission found that NDNU has failed to meet WSCUC Standards One and Three and acted to issue a Warning. When the Commission finds that an institution fails to meet one or more of the Standards of Accreditation, it notifies the institution of these findings and gives the institution no longer than two years from the date of this action to correct the situation. If an institution has not remedied the deficiencies at the conclusion of the two-year sanction period, the Commission may take an "adverse action," in this case, the withdrawal of accreditation. An institution under sanction must address the areas cited by the Commission expeditiously, with seriousness and the full attention of the institution's leadership. It is the responsibility of the Commission to determine, at the end of the sanction period, whether the institution has corrected the situation and has come into compliance with Commission Standards.

The accreditation status of the institution continues during Warning. However, 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:
  - (1) enrollment plans;
  - (2) financial status; and
  - (3) leadership capacity
2. Reschedule the previously scheduled reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in spring 2024 and the Accreditation Visit in fall 2024

3. Issue a Warning
4. Schedule a Special Visit in spring 2023 to address:
  - (1) compliance with Standard One, particularly CFRs 1.2 and 1.7, and
  - (2) compliance with Standard Three, particularly CFRs 3.4 and 3.8
5. Schedule a Progress Report to be submitted by October 1, 2022 to address:
  - (1) update on new and continuing enrollment, by program, for spring, summer, and fall 2022;
  - (2) audited financials for 2021-22; and
  - (3) evidence that the newly hired Chief Financial Officer is engaged effectively in the institution's financial leadership.

### Issues to be addressed

- **Fiscal Sustainability:** NDNU has experienced multiple years of financial losses and declining enrollment. The university's enrollment team does not express confidence in the institution's ability to meet projections for spring '22 and a strategic enrollment plan has not been developed. Key human resource needs have not been filled and are not budgeted. Despite the recent option payments for the purchase of the campus that have increased cash flow, the institution remains financially vulnerable. In addition, revenue diversification is lacking. NDNU must develop a resource planning model that is integrated with all other institutional planning including realistic budgeting, enrollment management, and diversification of revenue sources. The university needs to establish a realistic strategic enrollment plan, achieve enrollment projections, and diversify revenue beyond tuition. (CFR 3.4)
- **Administrative Capacity and Financial Leadership:** NDNU has recently hired a CFO. The institution needs to ensure that the CFO is engaged and has primary responsibility for leading the financial affairs of the institution. (CFR 3.8)
- **Educational Purpose and Objectives:** NDNU has begun the transition to online and hybrid professional graduate programs and bachelor completion programs. NDNU must align all operational, financial, and academic activities with its mission and clearly articulate its plan such that educational objectives are aligned and consistent with stated purposes. (CFR 1.2)
- **Operational Integrity and Shared Governance:** NDNU has dissolved many of its existing policies and procedures. The faculty's role in academic leadership and shared governance are not clearly defined beyond what's delineated in the collective bargaining agreement. The university must review, update, and create operational and academic policies to ensure integrity and transparency in its operations and governance structures. (CFR 1.7)
- **Strategic Planning:** NDNU has not formalized a strategic plan that is tied to a long-range budget and that incorporates revenue diversification, resources for new programs, standards for educational delivery, and student success metrics. NDNU needs to collaboratively work with its stakeholders to develop a strategic plan and long-range budget to prioritize and resource future changes. (CFR 3.7, 4.6)

### Further Recommendations

1. NDNU has transitioned from primarily resident undergraduate programs to professional graduate and bachelors' completion programs for adult learners and underrepresented populations, yet the institution has not clearly evolved its institutional identity. The institution needs to develop and implement an institutional strategy for recruiting, supporting, and teaching such learners to support its new direction. NDNU needs to define the objectives of success for these programs and the institution. (CFRs 1.2)

2. NDNU should continue to promote faculty involvement and leadership in simplifying and deepening assessment processes. (CFR 2.4)
3. NDNU should continue its progress in diversifying faculty and staff. (CFR 3.1 and WSCUC Equity and Inclusion Policy)

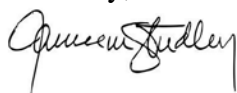
In keeping with WSCUC values, NDNU should strive for ongoing improvement with adherence to all Standards of Accreditation and their associated CFRs to foster a learning environment that continuously strives for educational excellence and operational effectiveness.

Institutions issued a Warning may request a review of this decision within 28 days of receiving the Commission 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.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that NDNU 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/thh

Cc: Phillip Doolittle, Commission Chair  
Greg White, ALO  
Sr. Jean Stoner, Board Chair  
Members of the Special Visit team  
Tamela Hawley, Vice President