

March 6, 2024

Dr. Lizbeth Martin CEO 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 16, 2024. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Special Visit to NDNU November 30 to December 1, 2023 using the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by NDNU prior to the Special Visit and the institution's January 11, 2024 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Gregory White, Provost and Senior Vice President, Tanya Tran, Dean of Enrollment, Kurt Allen, Vice President, Marketing and Communications, and Michael Renzi, Vice President for Finance and Administration. 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.

Procedural History

In spring 2023, the Commission continued a Warning after finding the university out of compliance with Standard 3. Under the Commission's policies the timeframe for an institution to be on sanction may not exceed two years. Since NDNU had been on Warning since March 2022, the two-year sanction period expires in March 2024. A special visit was scheduled in fall 2023 to assess the university's compliance with Standard 3, particularly CFR 3.4.

Actions

- 1. Receive the Special Visit team report that focused on: (1) finances and (2) planning
- 2. Remove a Warning
- 3. Issue a Formal Notice of Concern
- 4. Reschedule the next reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in spring 2025 and the Accreditation Visit in fall 2025
- 5. Schedule a Progress Report to be submitted by June 30, 2024 to include: (1) the completed audited financial statement; (2) an executed copy of the \$16 million

Line of Credit; and (3) an update on the status of the June 2024 option payment expected to be made by Stanford University.

Commendations

The Commission commends the institution for:

- 1. The significant and continuing financial support by the East-West Provence of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, which is guided by a commitment to the continued mission and impact of the university.
- 2. The seriousness and focus with which the university leadership has responded to the specific issues raised by the Commission.
- 3. The optimistic yet realistic outlook held by the Board of Trustees for the work that needs to be done for the university.
- 4. The dynamic and collaborative strategic planning process being implemented by the university, with clear integration across departments.
- 5. The university's efforts to improve operational efficiencies, including enrollment process mapping, development of curriculum standards, filling leadership vacancies, hiring instructional designers, making investments in information technology infrastructure, and investments in its academic success center with related restructuring to support adult and online students.

Notice of Concern

A Formal Notice of Concern provides notice to the institution that, while it currently meets WSCUC Standards, it is in danger of being found in noncompliance with one or more Standards if current trends or findings continue. Institutions issued a Formal Notice of Concern are scheduled for a Special Visit. If the issues are not addressed, a sanction could be imposed as described in the 2013 Handbook of Accreditation. A Formal Notice of Concern is public information and will be posted on the WSCUC website.

Standard at Risk of Non-Compliance and Requiring a Response

Although NDNU is currently in compliance with Standard 3, NDNU may be at risk of non-compliance with CFR 3.4 if it does not maintain financial sustainability. As a result, the Commission requires the institution to improve its approach to financial documentation and forecasting which includes:

- a. the use of fully substantiated enrollment projections to provide realistic budget projections based on clear and validated assumptions,
- b. strengthening the links among academic planning, enrollment planning, and budgeting, and
- c. implementation of budget and financial modeling that includes multiple scenarios to inform decision making by administrative and academic leaders as well as by the board of trustees.

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,

Jamienne S. Studley President

JSS/thh

Cc: Tracy Poon Tambascia, Commission Chair Gregory White, ALO Jean Stoner, Board Chair Members of the Special Visit Team Tamela Hawley, Vice President