

March 4, 2019

Dr. Steve Stargardter
President
United States University
7675 Mission Valley Road
San Diego, CA 92108

Dear President Stargardter:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning United States University (USU) 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 Special Visit to USU November 27-30, 2018. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by USU prior to the Special Visit and the institution's January 2, 2019 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues: Patricia Potter, Chair of the Board; William Titera, Chief Financial Officer, and Eileen Heveron, Interim Provost. 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 Special Visit team report that focused on USU's progress in:
 - a. Strengthening the quality of academic programs;
 - b. Promoting student success;
 - c. Enhancing institutional research and planning;
 - d. Building financial sustainability;
 - e. Monitoring the differences between actual and planned enrollments;
 - f. Continuing to serve underserved populations;
 - g. Ensuring an effective Board of Trustees;
 - h. Monitoring the shared services infrastructure.
2. Remove the Formal Notice of Concern
3. Continue with the previously scheduled reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in fall 2021 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2022
4. Continue with the previously scheduled Mid-Cycle Review to begin on May 1, 2019
5. Schedule a Special Visit in Spring 2020 to address the following:
 - a. Enrollment
 - i. Provide a description of the process used to set realistic enrollment targets
 - ii. Explain the differences, if any, between enrollment targets and actual enrollments for degree and non-degree programs since fall 2018
 - b. Finances

- i. Provide projected and actual budgets for FY 2018, 2019, 2020 (as available)
 - ii. Explain the differences, if any
- c. Service Level Agreement
 - i. Provide an update on the status of the implementation of the services identified in the agreement
 - ii. Provide evaluations or reviews of the efficacy and quality of the services provided by Aspen Group, Inc. (AGI)

The Commission commends United States University in particular for the following:

1. A high level of enthusiasm, energy and optimism regarding the future of USU at all levels of the organization, including the Board of Trustees, Board of Managers, administrators, faculty and staff.
2. Improvements in advising, marketing, enrollment, data analytics, technology and early warning tools to increase student success.
3. Established policies and processes for the assessment of student learning outcomes including academic program review.
4. A commitment to creating an affordable pathway to higher education through the monthly payment plan.

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

For the Special Visit:

1. Evaluate and set realistic enrollment targets based on market analysis and resource allocations necessary to sustain program quality. (CFR 3.4) The Commission was pleased to learn about the growth in enrollment.
2. Closely monitor financial performance relative to plan to ensure that realistic budgets based on accurate estimates of enrollment are developed. (CFR 3.4)
3. Optimize the implementation of the Service Level Agreement through regular assessment, including all stakeholders, of the efficacy and quality of services provided. (CFRs 2.13, 3.5) The Commission was pleased to learn that an instrument has been developed to evaluate the Service Level Agreement.

At the time of the next comprehensive review:

4. Complete the strategic plan and establish protocols for monitoring its progress and outcomes. (CFRs 4.1, 4.5, 4.6) The Commission was pleased to learn that a final version of the strategic plan is to be presented to the Board of Trustees.
5. Use the existing assessment infrastructure of student learning outcomes to ensure the quality and rigor of academic programs. (CFRs 2.6, 4.1)
6. Clarify the decision-making process for the selection and development of the academic program portfolio including degree levels and content areas. (CFRs 3.7, 3.10)

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



Jamiene S. Studley
President

JSS/[bgd]

Cc: Reed Dasenbrock, Commission Chair
Patricia Potter, Board Chair
Members of the Special Visit team
Barbara Gross Davis, Vice President