

July 12, 2019

Dr. Barry Ryan
President
Sofia University
1069 East Meadow Circle
Palo Alto, CA 94303

Dear President Ryan:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Sofia University by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 28, 2019. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Special Visit to Sofia University April 1-4, 2019. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by Sofia University prior to the Special Visit and the institution's June 6, 2019 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Stuart Sigman, Provost, and Lucille Sansing, Former 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
 - (1) Rebalancing the mission to prioritize academics over profits;
 - (2) Providing student support services and hire critical staff;
 - (3) Employing a collaborative model of strategic planning to guide the future of Sofia
2. Remove the Formal Notice of Concern
3. Continue with the previously scheduled Offsite Review in fall 2021 and Accreditation Visit in spring 2022
4. Schedule an Interim Report to be submitted by May 1, 2020 to address
 - a. The status of the permanent CFO.
 - b. Enrollment management and status update.
 - c. Financial status and progress toward sustainability.
 - d. The status of the implementation of the strategic plan.
 - e. The status of the IR function, especially focused on assessment of student learning

The Commission commends Sofia University in particular for the following:

1. The leadership provided by the CEO in expeditiously resolving compliance issues with the US Department of Education and California Bureau for Private Post-secondary Education (BPPE).
2. Strong institutional commitment to the essential mission and vision as expressed through the strategic plan.
3. The Strategic Planning Committee's inclusive and comprehensive process and their commitment to continuing their work as a standing committee.

4. Cultivating a renewed environment of trust, collaboration and openness to support institutional success.
5. Recruiting new board members with knowledge of higher education and creating structures that align with best board practices.

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

1. Continue to develop the strategic plan to include explicit academic planning with milestones and outcomes. As next steps, cultivate data sources in order to identify specific measurable outcomes that support the KPIs and demonstrate results to the Sofia community. (CFRs 4.1, 4.4, 4.6)
2. Provide evidence of academic excellence through assessment of student learning outcomes and program review, making the process consistent across the institution. This includes codifying the process of program review. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7)
3. Build and expand the role and capacity of institutional research in data informed decision making. The institution needs to create an environment where data is gathered and routinely analyzed for continuous improvement. (CFRs 3.1, 3.7, 4.2)

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

Cc: Reed Dasenbrock, Commission Chair
Lucille Sansing, ALO
Allen Huang, Board Chair
Members of the Special Visit team
Mark Goor, Vice President