

March 3, 2021

Dr. Allan Cahoon  
Acting President  
Sofia University  
1069 East Meadow Circle  
Palo Alto, CA 94303

Dear President Cahoon:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Sofia University (Sofia) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting February 19, 2021. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Special Visit to Sofia University December 3-4, 2021. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by Sofia University prior to the Special Visit and the institution's January 22, 2021 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Chris Nyugen, Acting ALO, and Kathryn Laurin, chair, academic subcommittee of the board. 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.

### **Actions**

1. Receive the Special Visit team report that focused on: (1) enrollment trends; (2) financial update; (3) status of state authorizations to offer programs in other states; (4) update on implementation of the strategic plan; (5) board of trustees development and board operations; (6) leadership transitions since the 2019 Special Visit; (7) status of IR and assessment of student learning; and (8) analysis of impact of changes on academic offerings.
2. Continue with the previously scheduled reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in fall 2021 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2022.

The Commission commends Sofia University in particular for the following:

1. The Board of Trustees is a qualified and engaged group who take seriously their fiduciary responsibilities and have adopted robust by-laws, policies and procedures to guide their work and have dedicated themselves to data-driven decision-making and continuous improvement, both for the university and for their own work as board members.
2. The president and his senior staff are able leaders with qualifications and insight to help guide Sofia through the next phase of transformation, create a mature and

- stable institution and work to improve continuously the capacity, sustainability, and quality of the university.
3. Sofia's faculty members are qualified, engaged, and enthusiastically involved in the life and development of the University; particularly noticeable is their enthusiasm for the new direction of the institution and their embrace of the assessment of student learning and continuous improvement.
  4. The institution has developed an innovative graduate degree program, in partnership with a prominent Chinese university, with demonstrable and sustainable enrollment that can help Sofia reach the point where it may grow and thrive.

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

1. Align its various strategic planning initiatives, integrating its academic master planning, marketing and enrollment projects, and budgetary processes, which will require review and refinement, as well as clear ownership of the plan as a whole and in its parts, fully articulated and measurable goals, and demonstrable metrics that inform organizational decision-making (CFR 3.7, 4.6).
2. Ensure that curriculum and program development both domestic and international involves robust faculty oversight, which includes creating learning outcomes that are appropriate to the discipline, to the degree level, and to the university's mission and ILOs (CFRs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3; 2.4, 3.10, 4.5).
3. Continue to develop effective student learning assessment and program review processes that connect CLOs, PLOs, and ILOs in an observable and measurable way and that ensure faculty incorporates the appropriate learning outcomes into curricula to use for assessment and improvement of student learning (CFRs 2.4, 2.7, 4.3, 4.4).
4. Develop an appropriate feedback mechanism that ensures assessment information is both received and acted on by appropriate academic leadership to foster continual improvement in educational outcomes (CFRs 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5).

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter is being 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jamienne Studley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Jamienne S. Studley  
President

JSS/mbg

Cc: Phillip Doolittle, Commission Chair  
Chris Nyugen, ALO  
David Figuli, Board Chair  
Members of the Special Visit team  
Mark B. Goor, Vice President