

July 20, 2018

Dr. Lisa Rossbacher  
President  
Humboldt State University  
One Harpst Street  
Arcata, CA 95521-8299

Dear President Rossbacher:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Humboldt State University (HSU) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 27-29, 2018. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Accreditation Visit to HSU March 21-23, 2018. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by HSU prior to the Offsite Review (OSR), the supplemental materials requested by the team after the OSR, and the institution's June 8, 2018 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleague, Rock Braithwaite, Interim Vice Provost, Dean for Undergraduate and Graduate Studies and Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO). 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 Accreditation Visit team report
2. Reaffirm accreditation for a period of eight years
3. Schedule the next reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in fall 2025 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2026
4. Schedule the Mid-Cycle Review to begin May 1, 2022
5. Schedule a Special Visit in spring 2021 to address progress on
  - a. Budgeting, enrollment management, and diversification of revenue sources
  - b. A comprehensive university-wide assessment program

### **Commendations**

The Commission commends HSU in particular for the following:

1. Student recruitment efforts, particularly in the Los Angeles region, are an appropriate response to the increasing diversity in California.
2. Educational objectives are widely recognized throughout the institution and consistent with stated priorities. HSU regularly generates, evaluates, and makes public its retention and graduation data. The HSU students' commitments to the environment, sustainability, and social justice issues are impressive.
3. The institution's academic programs actively involve students in learning, challenge students to meet high standards, and offer opportunities for them to practice,

generalize, and apply what they have learned. The students demonstrated their commitment to their academic degrees and expressed close connections to faculty mentors.

4. Co-curricular programs are aligned with academic goals, integrated with academic programs, and designed to support student personal and professional development. The Klamath Connection program is an example of such a co-curricular program; HSU actively assesses the effectiveness of this program and uses results for improvement.
5. The institution has a robust institutional research capacity. Data are disseminated internally and externally in a timely manner, and data analyses and interpretation are incorporated in planning and decision-making. Websites, interactive dashboards, and formal reports assist the university in reaching the goal of a data-driven institution. HSU has engaged in a strategic planning process that guides the future direction of the institution by articulating priorities, especially around student success, aligning purposes and core functions to help guide resource reallocation. HSU ensures that resource allocations reflect strategic goals.

## **Recommendations**

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

1. Implement and sustain appropriate responses to the increased diversity of HSU's students. The evaluation of HSU's academic and student support services, including tutoring, housing, students with disabilities programs, financial aid counseling, career counseling and placement, and multicultural centers, and the adaptation of services based on evaluation results will better meet the needs of different students. Evidence-based decisions would ensure that curricular and co-curricular programs are aligned, and are sufficiently funded and staffed by qualified faculty and staff. (CFR 1.4, 2.13)
2. Continue and advance efforts to orient prospective students from large, urban areas to HSU's rural, small city context. As HSU incorporates a more diverse student body, intensifying efforts on student grievances and complaints, safety, and life in the local community will help students to feel supported and avoid feelings of alienation and isolation. (CFR 1.6)
3. Improve the university leadership's communication strategies and efforts across the campus, including continued transparency about HSU's budget challenges. Change management training will assist HSU in making critical choices among the myriad of campus initiatives. (CFR 1.7)
4. Implement a comprehensive university assessment plan developed by faculty so that effective assessment is consistent across the institution, and widely shared among faculty, staff, and students. Improving the assessment of GEAR and consistently embedding the expectations for student learning in the standards faculty use to evaluate student work are components of effective assessment. (CFR 2.4, 2.6)

5. Prioritize diversification of faculty and staff demographics, including the use of new hires, to align with the diversity of the student body. Engaging faculty and staff in cultural competency professional development will further the academic achievement of students and contribute to the achievement of the institution's educational objectives. (CFR 1.4, 3.1, 3.3)
6. Engage in realistic budgeting, enrollment management, and diversification of revenue sources. Strengthening fundraising and private partnerships will help alleviate the stress on the budget in the upcoming years. More detail in the 2017 Environmental Scan Visualization Plan will clarify how HSU will counter current trends and reach its enrollment, graduation, retention, and achievement gap targets. (CFR 3.4)

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that HSU has addressed the three Core Commitments and has successfully completed the two-stage institutional review process conducted under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. Between this action and the time of the next review for reaffirmation, the institution is encouraged to continue its progress, particularly with respect to student learning and success.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of HSU's governing board in one week. A copy of this letter will also be sent to Chancellor White, California State University. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the HSU 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 HSU 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/mam

Cc: Reed Dasenbrock, Commission Chair  
Rock Braithwaite, ALO  
Adam Day, Board Chair  
Timothy White, Chancellor, California State University  
Members of the Accreditation Visit team  
Maureen A Maloney, Vice President