

July 12, 2019

Fr. Peter Rogers
President and CEO
Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology
2301 Vine Street
Berkeley, CA 94708-1816

Dear President Rogers:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology (DSPT) 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 Accreditation Visit to Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology March 5-7, 2019. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology prior to the Offsite Review (OSR), the supplemental materials requested by the team after the OSR, and the institution's June 5, 2019 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleague Fr. Chris Renz, O.P., 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 six years
3. Schedule the next reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in fall 2024 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2025
4. Schedule the Mid-Cycle Review to begin May 1, 2022
5. Schedule an Interim Report to be submitted by March 1, 2022 to address
 - a. Developing a clear and comprehensive strategic plan, building on its "Desired Ends Map" to link budgeting and planning, to set metrics and milestones for evaluating progress, and to determine how new programs will be chosen and evaluated.
 - b. Creating a strong plan for strategic enrollment management to ensure the mission-centric recruitment, enrollment and retention of lay students.
 - c. Developing a coherent vision for student learning and success, with a plan for measuring effectiveness.
 - d. Developing more fully and defining the co-curricular programs that contribute to students' holistic development.
 - e. Ensuring that the various roles and responsibilities of the two boards (Board of Trustees and Board of Corporate Members) are clear and that board members are fully engaged with strategic planning, institutional oversight, and fundraising. The Board of Trustees should also refine its protocol for evaluating the president and ensure that it is completed regularly.
 - f. Taking a more systematic approach to Institutional Research; DSPT must develop methods for disaggregating and publishing its student data to comply with WSCUC requirements.

- g. Becoming more systematic in the methods for program review and assessment and less anecdotal. The faculty are encouraged to study a range of best practices for qualitative assessment that reflect the ideals and the character of the liberal arts.

The Commission commends Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology in particular for the following:

- a. Earning the wholehearted affirmation of the Western Dominican Province and its Board of Corporate Members for its quality and programs. That affirmation is evident in a recent \$5 million dollar gift to the school's endowment, an increase in the annual contribution to the school's operational budget, and its enthusiastic support for its new expanded vision to educate more lay students.
- b. Cultivating an academic and spiritual community that is characterized by intellectual curiosity, open inquiry, notable rigor, and deep concern and care for one another—all within the Dominican Order's overarching framework for study and service.
- c. Maintaining a rich interdisciplinary spirit as one of its areas of educational distinctiveness, consistently integrating theology and philosophy at the program level and the course level.
- d. Blending clerical students and lay students into a common academic community and educational ethos. Reflecting the values of the Salamanca process, DSPT has achieved a healthy balance of vocational discernment and education for its own sake.
- e. Navigating the withdrawal of shared support services formerly provided by the Graduate Theological Union, even as it has continued to welcome students from other theological institutions into its classes as an enrichment and diversification of its educational environment.
- f. Demonstrating considerable willingness to learn from their assessment endeavors and to make changes in course design and pedagogy even though the process of program review and the assessment of student learning is still nascent.
- g. Managing its resources prudently and communicating about its finances, its opportunities, and its challenges with transparency.
- h. Engaging its faculty, staff, and students, along with the Board of Trustees and Board of Corporate Members, in the self-study process.

The Commission requires the institution to respond to the following issues in a progress report as specified in this letter and in the next institutional report for reaffirmation:

- a. Developing a clear and comprehensive strategic plan, building on its "Desired Ends Map" to link budgeting and planning, to set metrics and milestones for evaluating progress, and to determine how new programs will be chosen and evaluated.
- b. Creating a strong plan for strategic enrollment management to ensure the mission-centric recruitment, enrollment and retention of lay students.
- c. Developing a coherent vision for student learning and success, with a plan for measuring effectiveness.
- d. Developing more fully and defining the co-curricular programs that contribute to students' holistic development.
- e. Ensuring that the various roles and responsibilities of the two boards (Board of Trustees and Board of Corporate Members) are clear and that board members are fully engaged with strategic planning, institutional oversight, and fundraising. The Board of Trustees should also refine its protocol for evaluating the president and ensure that it is completed regularly (CFR 3.9).

- f. Taking a more systematic approach to Institutional Research; DSPT must develop methods for disaggregating and publishing its student data to comply with WSCUC requirements (CFRs 1.2, 4.2).
- g. Becoming more systematic in the methods for program review and assessment and less anecdotal. The faculty are encouraged to study a range of best practices for qualitative assessment that reflect the ideals and the character of the liberal arts (CFRs 2.7, 3.3, 4.1).

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology has addressed the three Core Commitments and has successfully completed the two-stage institutional review process conducted under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. In keeping with WSCUC values, Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology should strive for ongoing improvement with adherence to all Standards of Accreditation and their associated CFRs to foster a learning environment that continuously strives for educational excellence and operational effectiveness.

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

Cc: Reed Dasenbrock, Commission Chair
Fr. Christopher Renz, ALO
Eileen Bitten, Board Chair
Members of the Accreditation Visit team
Lori Williams, Vice President