

July 14, 2023

Dr. Lynnette Zelezny
President
California State University, Bakersfield
9001 Stockdale Highway
Bakersfield, CA 93311

Dear President Zelezny:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 30, 2023. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Special Visit to CSUB March 8-10, 2023. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by CSUB prior to the Special Visit and the institution's May 4, 2023, response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Vernon Harper, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Debra Jackson, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of Academic Programs and ALO, Monica Malhotra, Associate Vice President of Institutional Research and Assessment, Claudia Cotato, Chief Diversity Officer, and Deborah Boschini, Associate Vice President for Faculty Affairs. 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) institutional research; (2) program review; (3) academic support services; (4) graduation rates; (5) faculty and staff diversity; (6) strategic planning; and (7) assessment of administrative units
2. Continue with the previously scheduled reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in spring 2027 and the Accreditation Visit in fall 2027
3. Schedule an Interim Report to be submitted by March 1, 2025, to address progress in these three areas:
 - a. Enhancing the effectiveness of advising by clarifying the roles of faculty advisors and professional advising staff, strengthening relationships, implementing collaborative training, standardizing terminology, practices and policies across schools and departments, while maintaining discipline-specific flexibility, and developing clear success metrics. (CFR 2.12)
 - b. Cultivating a campus culture that embraces data-informed decision-making by promoting the use of resources provided by the office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment (IRPA), while also

providing continued support for IRPA's initiatives focused on improving data quality, accuracy, and accessibility. (CFRs 4.1, 4.2)

- c. Finalizing, approving, and implementing the Faculty and Staff Diversity Plan, including defining essential measures of success and integrating the plan with budget planning, resource allocation, and organizational structure. (CFR 1.4)

The Commission commends CSUB in particular for the following:

1. Strengthening the office of Institutional, Research, Planning and Assessment (IRPA)'s data reporting and analysis by building a campus data warehouse, improving data quality, defining campus data using the systemwide data dictionary, and starting to develop self-service data dashboards.
2. Developing and implementing the strategic plan through a collaborative, inclusive and transparent process that involved metrics for measuring progress, a widely shared dashboard, and clear alignment between the plan and budgeting, resource allocation, campus priorities, and fundraising.
3. Improving retention and graduation rates for both first-time freshmen and transfer students, with expectations of meeting Graduation Initiative 2025 targets, due in part to the successful efforts of the GAT (Graduation Action Team) and the CARE Team (Caring Advocates and Responsive Engagement).
4. Launching the cluster hire initiative using DEI best practices to build capacity and awareness for recruiting and onboarding a diverse applicant pool.
5. Establishing a clear process and strong foundation to assess administrative units, which included developing mission statements for all areas and an initial assessment plan for the majority of the 61 units.
6. Demonstrating its commitment to its mission and values by successfully leading and supporting both the campus and surrounding communities through the pandemic, including efforts to support student well-being, prepare faculty to teach online, and establish the Community Vaccination Hub.

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

1. Enhance the effectiveness of advising by clarifying the roles of faculty advisors and professional advising staff, strengthening relationships, implementing collaborative training, standardizing terminology, practices and policies across schools and departments, while maintaining discipline-specific flexibility, and developing clear success metrics. (CFR 2.12)
2. Cultivate a campus culture that embraces data-informed decision-making by promoting the use of resources provided by IRPA, while also providing continued support for IRPA's initiatives focused on improving data quality, accuracy, and accessibility. (CFRs 4.1, 4.2)
3. Coordinate the collective efforts of IRPA, the Campus Assessment Team, and faculty assessment coordinators to enhance the capacity for student learning outcomes assessment, making student success analytics easily accessible to support assessment initiatives and enabling data-informed actions for continuous improvement of the student learning experience. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 4.3, 4.4)

4. Continue to focus on closing equity gaps in graduation rates, particularly among Pell recipients, underrepresented minority (URM) students, and first-generation students, while also developing appropriate dashboards to effectively analyze and communicate relevant data. (CFRs 1.4, 2.10)
5. Finalize, approve, and implement the Faculty and Staff Diversity Plan, including defining essential measures of success and integrating the plan with budget planning, resource allocation, and organizational structure. (CFR 1.4)
6. Enhance faculty recruitment and retention by implementing strategies similar to those employed in the successful cluster hire initiative. (CFRs 1.4, 3.2)
7. Foster a campus culture that actively promotes a sense of well-being and belonging for all faculty, staff and students, empowering the university community to fully engage and thrive. (CFR 3.7)

The Commission appreciated learning about the work underway to address these issues.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter is being sent to the chair of California State University governing board. A copy of this letter will also be sent to Chancellor Joelene Koester. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the CSUB 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 California State University, Bakersfield 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: Phillip Doolittle, Immediate Past Chair
Tracy Poon Tambascia, Chair
Debra Jackson, ALO
Wenda Fong, Board Chair
Joelene Koester, Chancellor, California State University
Members of the Special Visit team
Barbara Gross Davis, Vice President