

March 3, 2021

Dr. Ching-Hua Wang
President
Samuel Merritt University
3100 Telegraph Avenue
Oakland, CA 94609

Dear President Wang:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Samuel Merritt University (SMU) 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 Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation (TPR) of Accreditation Visit to SMU October 14-16, 2020. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by SMU prior to the Accreditation Visit, and the institution's November 17, 2020 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Fred Baldini, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Celeste Villanueva, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs; and Leslie Wasson, Director of Institutional Effectiveness 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 ten years
3. Schedule the next reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in spring 2030 and the Accreditation Visit in fall 2030
4. Schedule an Interim Report to be submitted by March 1, 2025 to address:
 - a. implementing the *Strategic Vision for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - 2021-2026*.
 - b. centralizing the assessment and institutional effectiveness and research structure.
 - c. creating effective shared governance across the institution.
 - d. facilitating collaboration across academic, co-curricular, administrative, and organizational lines.

The Commission commends SMU in particular for the following:

1. Using the TPR to establish a model for authentic and collaborative processes designed to improve student success and institutional learning.

2. Initiating changes in structures and leadership to promote a culture of shared governance.
3. Recruiting and supporting a diverse student population and taking initial steps toward diversifying the senior leadership and Board of Regents.
4. Responding to the rapidly changing ecology of health care, including strategies to address health care disparities.
5. Creating a model Interprofessional Education Program and serving as a hub for regional collaboration.
6. Infusing faculty and staff development throughout the university, through the work of the Center for Innovation and Excellence in Learning and the Office of Academic Instruction & Innovation.
7. Improving the relationship with Sutter Health.

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

1. Adopt and implement the *Strategic Vision for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - 2021-2026* with a particular focus on supporting students of color and diversifying the faculty and staff to reflect the diversity of the student body. (CFR 1.4, 3.1)
2. Build a centralized assessment and institutional effectiveness and research structure to systematically collect, disseminate, analyze, and act upon data for student success. (CFR 4.2, 4.3)
3. Foster shared governance based on cultural changes that extend throughout the university. (CFR 1.4, 3.6, 3.10)
4. Develop integrative systems and processes that facilitate collaboration across academic, co-curricular, administrative and organizational lines. (CFR 3.7, 4.2, 4.3)

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirmed that SMU addressed the three Core Commitments and successfully completed the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation institutional review process conducted under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. In keeping with WSCUC values, SMU 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 is being sent to the chair of SMU's governing board. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the SMU'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 Samuel Merritt University undertook in preparing for the 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: Phillip Doolittle, Commission Chair
Leslie Wasson, ALO
Jonathan Brown, Board Chair
Members of the TPR Accreditation Visit team
Maureen A Maloney, Vice President