July 20, 2018

Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, President
Zaytuna College
1712 Euclid Ave
Berkeley, CA 94709

Dear President Yusuf

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Zaytuna College (Zaytuna) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 28, 2018. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Special Visit to Zaytuna College February 5-7, 2018. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by Zaytuna College prior to the Special Visit and the institution’s April 19, 2018 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with your colleagues: Dr. Hatem Bazian, Provost; Mr. Pervez Oureshi, Chairman, Board of Trustees; Ms. Catherine Hamze, Head of Operations; and Ms. Sumaira Akhtar, 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 Special Visit team report that focused on
   a. Board development through engagement with organizations that will aid the continuing embrace of best governance practices in higher education (CFRs 3.6, 3.7, 3.9)
   b. Institutional research with emphasis on building internal capacities to obtain, analyze, and use key performance data (CFRs 4.1, 4.2)
   c. Policy development, particularly with regard to faculty roles and human resources (CFR 3.2)
2. Continue with the previously scheduled reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in spring 2019 and the Accreditation Visit in fall 2019

Commendations

The Commission commends Zaytuna College in particular for the following:

1. The institution’s considerable success in advancement and in acquiring highly desirable Berkeley Hills real estate in an effort to expand its campus.
2. Its inspiring mission and steadfast commitment to cultivate spiritual and intellectual leaders grounded in the Islamic tradition.
3. Offering strongly competitive compensation to recruit and retain qualified faculty committed to the mission and vision of the college.
4. Recruiting and appointing highly qualified new board members, expanding needed expertise on the board.

5. Deliberately dedicating resources to develop internal institutional research capacity and for the Office of Institutional Research’s proactive approach in educating and facilitating the campus’ use of IR capacity.

Recommendations

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

1. Establish clear board policies, procedures, and criteria for evaluation of the president, placing in writing clear performance standards for conducting formal annual evaluation. (CFR 3.9)

2. Engage both board and outside counsel regarding the appropriate roles of and potential conflicts with the three founders of Zaytuna as full voting board members while holding other leadership positions at the College. (CFR 3.9)

3. Adopt best practices for the operation of college governing boards (e.g., standard formatting of, and more detailed, minutes; ongoing training of all Board members, and mentoring of new board members). Rewrite board bylaws to reflect current best practices. (CFR 3.7)

4. Formally incorporate the use of IR capacity to assist decision-making and planning in its core quality assurance processes such as learning outcome assessment and program review. (CFR 4.1)

5. Continue to develop the IR capacity, especially in gathering direct evidence for student learning and to appropriately share data externally, including publishing data of student success on the college’s webpage. (CFRs 1.2, 4.2)

6. Review the most current Faculty Handbook with faculty to reach agreement on the content of the Handbook and align the content of the Faculty Handbook with the Employee Handbook. Consult legal counsel before finalizing the Faculty Handbook. (CFR 3.2)

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of Zaytuna College’s governing board in one week. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the Zaytuna College’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 Zaytuna College 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/mbg

Cc: Reed Dasenbrock, Commission Chair
Sumaira Akhtar, ALO
Pervez Qureshi, Board Chair
Members of the Special Visit team
Mark Goor, Vice President