July 08, 2016

Dr. William Hynes
President
Holy Names University
3500 Mountain Blvd
Oakland, CA 94619-1699

Dear President Hynes:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Holy Names University (HNU) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 22-24, 2016. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Accreditation Visit to HNU March 22-24, 2016. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by the university prior to the Offsite Review (OSR) and the supplemental materials requested by the team following the OSR. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the review with you and your colleagues: Lizbeth Martin, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty, and Annette Tommerdahl, Associate Dean for 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 reaffirmation with WSCUC.

Actions

1. Receive the Accreditation Visit team report
2. Reaffirm the accreditation of Holy Names University for eight years
3. Schedule the next reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in fall 2023 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2024
4. Schedule the Mid-Cycle Review in spring 2020
5. Schedule a Special Visit in spring 2019 to address:
   a. The development of a comprehensive retention plan. HNU should provide evidence that the plan is being operationalized and include enrollment data from 2016 through 2019.
   b. The development and implementation of processes to generate, report and analyze data. HNU should provide evidence of decisions and plans made, particularly by leadership, that were informed by lessons learned from the implementation of these processes including why students leave HNU, particularly in or after the second year of study.
   c. The coordination of academic and student service programs to improve educational effectiveness, including the results of the assessment of student success efforts.
d. The assessment of core competencies, general education, and program-level learning outcomes.

e. Evidence of an improved and stable financial base reflected, in part, in the achievement of strategic enrollment goals.

f. The regular evaluation of the president and succession plans for all key university leaders.

Commendations
The Commission commends HNU in particular for the following:

1. The guidance and support of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary to help maintain and advance HNU's faith-based tradition, particularly including social justice and outreach to the local community. HNU is also commended for its commitment to providing equitable access to high-quality education for a richly diverse student body.

2. The application of institutional learning outcomes across academic and co-curricular programs and the establishment of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) as an important resource to align curriculum development, instructional design, and assessment of student learning.

   The development and revision of the annual assessment of student learning outcomes, the program review process, and services and programs to support student success.

3. The use of solar energy and exploration of other environmentally-responsible and cost-effective energy sources.

4. The strong commitment of faculty and staff to the values and mission of the university and the support of students in and out of the classroom.

5. Transparency regarding the institution’s financial standing and efforts to promote frequent and open communication from the administration to the HNU community.

Recommendations
The Commission identifies the following areas for further development:

1. Appropriate structures and processes to ensure the generation, reporting, and analysis of meaningful data to inform decision-making and lead to planning that is effective in anticipating and responding to rapid changes in the external environment (CFR 4.1, 4.3, 4.7).

2. Clear and sustainable methods of assessing student achievement with respect to the core competencies, general education, and program-level learning outcomes (CFR 2.2a, 2.2b, 2.3, 2.4).

3. Continued coordination of efforts across HNU’s academic departments and student service divisions to improve the educational effectiveness of the university’s academic and co-curricular programs and to assess the impact of student success strategies designed to maximize learning (CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.11).

4. A comprehensive retention plan that defines student success and articulates the means by which to evaluate the effectiveness of its various retention strategies (CFR 2.10, 3.4).
5. A stable financial base, including clear, strategic enrollment goals that will sustain HNU well into the future (CFR 3.4).

6. Regular evaluation of the university president and succession planning for key university leaders by the Board of Trustees to ensure continuity of operations in keeping with the university’s mission and vision (CFR 3.9).

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that Holy Names University 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 the Holy Names University Board of Trustees in one week. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the HNU website and widely disseminated 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 Holy Names University 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,

Mary Ellen Petrisko
President

CC:    William Ladusaw, Commission Chair
        Annette Tommerdahl, ALO
        Barbara Hood, Board Chair
        Members of the Accreditation Visit team
        Maureen Maloney, WSCUC Staff Liaison