February 26, 2020

Mr. James Smolich, Esq.
President
Lincoln Law School of Sacramento
3140 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95816

Dear President Smolich:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Lincoln Law School of Sacramento (LLS) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting February 14, 2020. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Seeking Accreditation Visit #2 to LLS September 25-27, 2019. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by LLS prior to the Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 and the institution’s November 22, 2019 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues, Mr. James Schiavenza, Dean, and Mrs. Brittney Adkins-Neumann, Director of Accreditation and 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 Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 team report
2. Grant Candidacy for a period of five years
3. Request a Progress Report to be submitted by May 31, 2020 on the following:
   a. Update on Pass Rates from the most recent administration of the California Bar Exam including breakdowns of first time and repeat exam takers for February 2020 and cumulative over five years.
   b. Progress on the impact of programs and services designed to support student achievement and close achievement gaps in California Bar Pass Rates

The Commission commends LLS in particular for the following:

1. LLS has made substantial overall improvements since SAV1 and has demonstrated evidence of an earnest commitment to institutional improvement. Each CFR identified in the last report was addressed, yielding tangible results. Meanwhile, the school added new team members who bring distinct experiences and fresh perspectives to LLS’ culture.
2. LLS has significantly elevated its capacity for governance, providing evidence of a board practicing effective oversight of the school, including adjustments to how the CEO is evaluated, trustees practicing self-evaluation, and the Board demonstrating greater engagement in the strategic planning process.
3. LLS appreciates and embraces the assessment process and the value of data-driven continuous improvement. The faculty, comprised largely of adjunct professors, are to be commended for embracing the use of SLOs to improve their teaching. Other examples include the creation of the Friday Night Review sessions, the outcome of learnings from the Student Satisfaction Survey, and curriculum adjustments emerging from Program Review.

4. LLS sees value in and is committed to an effective function of institutional research, expanding its IR capacity in data collection and analysis and deploying new surveys to collect data toward continuous improvement.

5. Faculty, students, and trustees are engaged, committed, and appreciative of LLS’ efforts to improve. Their comments during the SAV2 visit illustrated their appreciation of how LLS has used the accreditation process to improve the institution.

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

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

The Commission finds that LLS has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 1 at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation.

Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions

The Commission finds that LLS has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 2 at a level sufficient for Candidacy.

CFR 2.6 requires further work, as described in the following:

- CFR 2.6 – Graduates achieve stated levels of attainment; SLOs embedded in faculty standards for assessing student work: LLS must provide evidence that its graduates are achieving stated levels of attainment through increased Bar Exam pass rates.

Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability

The Commission finds that LLS has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 3 at a level sufficient for Initial Accreditation.

Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement

The Commission finds that LLS has demonstrated evidence of compliance with Standard 4 at a level sufficient for Candidacy.

CFRs 4.7 requires further work, as described in the following:
• CFR 4.7 – **Anticipating and responding to a changing higher educational environment**: In support of LLS’s mission to prepare graduates for employment as practicing lawyers, the institution must show evidence of the impact of changes to student support services on bar pass rates of its graduates, taking into account changes in student demographic characteristics and anticipated gaps in achievement among student groups.

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

1. Embrace professional development for the board, CEO, and management. Meanwhile, explore developing a competency model, identifying key skills and attributes to advance its strategic goals and a plan to link these to senior leadership development. (CFR 3.3)
2. Further align enrollment, financial, and strategic planning, identifying resources needed in key areas such as academics, operations, facilities, and others, as well as developing long-range financial plans that go beyond stretch goals. (3.4).
3. Continue incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion into the institution’s programs and practices, including more training and professional development for staff and faculty centered on equity and inclusion, and further integration of these values into the strategic plan. (CFR 1.4).
4. Continue focus on evolving data collection and analysis in assessment efforts. Consider providing professional development and training for the Assessment Committee of the faculty. (CFR 2.4)
5. Further align co-curricular programs and non-credit bearing activities to academic goals and SLOs. Include these programs in the assessment plan. (CFR 2.11)

In taking this action, the Commission confirms that LLS has met all of the WSCUC Standards at a level sufficient to grant Candidacy. The Commission has required that a Progress Report be submitted when requested and until such time as the Commission is satisfied the outstanding issues have been appropriately addressed.

Institutions granted the status of Candidate for Accreditation must use the following statement if they wish to describe that status publicly:

*LLS has been recognized as a Candidate for Accreditation by WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), 985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100, Alameda, CA 94501, 510.748.9001. This status is a preliminary affiliation with the Commission awarded for a maximum period of five years. Candidacy is an indication that the institution is progressing toward Accreditation. Candidacy is not Accreditation and does not ensure eventual Accreditation.*

Federal law requires that the WSCUC address and phone number appear in your catalog. Institutions granted Candidacy are required to:
1. Submit an Annual Report in the format required by the Commission

2. Keep the Commission informed of any significant changes or developments. Any proposed new degree programs, off-campus sites, online offerings, and/or changes in governance or ownership require review and approval through the Substantive Change process.

3. Pay Annual Membership Dues prorated from the date of this action. An Annual Dues statement will be sent under separate cover.

In keeping with WSCUC review protocols, the required subsequent review and Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 will focus primarily on those issues identified under each Standard (above) deemed to require additional development. (Please also reference the team report for additional context for the Commission’s findings.)

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of LLS’s governing board. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be 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.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that LLS 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/thh

Cc: Reed Dasenbrock, Commission Chair
    Brittany Adkins-Neumann, ALO
    Christopher Wood, Board Chair
    Members of the Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 team
    Tamela Hawley, Vice President

Attachment: Consolidated List of Currently Offered Degrees
Consolidated List of Currently Offered Degrees
Lincoln Law School of Sacramento

1. Juris Doctor