July 15, 2015

Ms. Florence T. Dunn
President
California Health Sciences University
120 N. Clovis Avenue
Clovis, CA 93612

Dear President Dunn:

At its meeting June 17-19, 2015, the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) considered the report of the Seeking Accreditation Visit team that conducted an Onsite Review of California Health Sciences University (CHSU) March 17-19, 2015. Commission members also reviewed the Seeking Accreditation Visit report submitted by the institution prior to the visit and its May 29, 2015, response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues: David Hawkins, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of Pharmacy, and Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO); and, John Welty, Board Chair. Your comments were very helpful in informing the Commission’s deliberations.

This visit was scheduled to evaluate the institution’s status with regard to the Commission’s Standards of Accreditation; the team’s findings are addressed below. The team also inquired into the institution’s response to any issues identified for attention by a panel of the Eligibility Review Committee (ERC) on May 1, 2013. Of the 23 eligibility criteria, the ERC panel found that CHSU had not made the expected progress in only one area: institution evaluation and assessment of learning (Criteria 21). The team concluded that the institution was aware of what was needed in this area and was taking the appropriate and necessary steps to meet expectations. The team’s findings below include additional detail about CHSU’s engagement with institutional evaluation and the assessment of student learning.

Based on the team’s report and the other information sources as identified above, the Commission has determined the following with regard to the institution’s compliance with each of the WSCUC Standards of Accreditation.

**Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives**

The Commission has determined that California Health Sciences University has met this Standard at a minimal level.
The team concluded that CHSU’s statements of purpose, including the university’s mission statement, were formally approved and appropriate for an institution of higher education. CHSU clearly defined its essential values and character and demonstrated its contribution to the public good through its striving to address the shortage of health care professionals in California’s San Joaquin Valley. The university has student learning outcomes (SLOs) at the institutional, program, and course levels and has systems in place to assess student achievement of those outcomes. CHSU demonstrates its commitment to diversity in the profile of its students, faculty, and staff. The university is committed to academic freedom, making public its policies on academic freedom for faculty and students. The team found the institution to exhibit integrity and transparency in its operations, to be committed to honest and open communication with WSCUC, to abide by the Commission’s policies and procedures, and to undertake the seeking accreditation process with seriousness and candor. (CFR 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 1.8)

CHSU is expected in a subsequent review to give specific attention to the following issues:

1. Providing evidence of student learning outcomes assessment, measures of retention and completion, and time to degree. CHSU began admitting students in fall 2014 and needs additional time to gather and provide evidence of assessment results as well as information regarding student retention and completion, including time to degree. (CFR 1.2, 1.6)

2. Providing evidence of data-based decision-making and planning. The university needs time to operationalize its various policies and programs, evaluate the results of its various strategies, and use its findings to inform decision-making and planning. (CFR 1.2, 1.6)

Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions

The Commission has determined that California Health Sciences University has met this Standard at a minimal level.

CHSU’s Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) program is appropriate for the degree level awarded and is staffed by faculty sufficient in number and qualifications. Doctor of Pharmacy faculty use active learning strategies to engage and challenge their students, provide educational opportunities that build on students’ prior learning and allow students to practice what they have learned, and offer timely feedback to foster improvement. (CFR 2.1, 2.5)

CHSU has clearly defined expectations for its faculty and according to the team “appreciated the faculty performance review process that recognizes and promotes linkages among scholarship, teaching, assessment, student learning, and service.” CHSU serves transfer as well as first-time students, applying the university’s transfer of credit policy to ensure equitable treatment. (CFR 2.8, 2.9, 2.14)
CHSU is expected in a subsequent review to give specific attention to the following issues:

1. Development needed to accommodate additional programs and ensure appropriate core competencies. CHSU’s PharmD program is clearly defined in terms of admissions requirements and expectations for graduation, with program objectives appropriate for graduate study. However, CHSU will need to expand its quality assurance processes to accommodate additional programs in the health sciences and develop core competencies reflective of higher order learning appropriate for graduate education in multiple disciplines. The team expressed confidence that CHSU faculty will establish these competencies and assess student achievement in these areas. (CFR 2.2, 2.2a, 2.3, 2.4)

2. Further development of student learning outcomes assessment, program review, and student success. CHSU is a new university that will graduate its first class in 2018. CHSU should continue the development of processes that demonstrate achievement of stated learning outcomes by students and graduates, program review including the assessment of the co-curriculum, and measures of student retention and completion. (CFR 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 2.11)

3. Development of student support services. The team found evidence of effective professional and personal development efforts, advising, and other student support services: these will need to become more systematic and comprehensive to accommodate students enrolling in new programs. (CFR 2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14)

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

The Commission has determined that California Health Sciences University has met this Standard at a minimal level.

CHSU has a diverse and experienced Board of Trustees that independently exercises appropriate institutional oversight and a leadership team characterized by integrity and high performance. According to the team, the institution has also assembled “an accomplished and diverse founding faculty” and has recruitment, hiring, orientation, incentive, and evaluation practices in place that align with the institution’s purposes and objectives. Through shared governance, faculty exercise academic leadership. (CFR 3.1, 3.2, 3.6, 3.9, 3.10)

CHSU is expected in a subsequent review to give specific attention to the following issues:

1. Faculty and staff development. CHSU plans to provide additional faculty and staff development, but those development efforts will compete with curricular and co-curricular activities for time and support. The institution needs to ensure that time is made available for faculty and staff development and that it learns from these efforts as it improves development opportunities. (CFR 3.3)
2. Financial sustainability. CHSU is currently financially stable with resources sufficient to support the university’s one degree program. Stability will be tested as CHSU builds a new campus and includes additional degree programs. And while the resource sharing agreement with California State University, Fresno is innovative, the related need for information and technology resources will increase. While the primary source of operational funding is tuition and fees, financial viability depends on support from California Health Sciences University, LLC. The team concluded that a long-term, formal commitment from the university’s owners would strengthen CHSU’s assurance of sustainability. (CFR 3.4, 3.5)

3. Chief Financial Officer. The institution has a full-time chief executive officer and an administrative team sufficient in number and qualifications for a university granting a single degree. The chief financial officer (CFO) is employed by California Health Sciences University, LLC and works for the university on a part-time basis, reporting to the president. The team concluded that the CFO’s primary responsibilities are to the parent company and that working as well for the institution presents a conflict of interest. (CFR 3.7, 3.8)

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

The Commission has determined that California Health Sciences University has met this Standard at a minimal level.

CHSU faculty are responsible for and engage in an ongoing inquiry into the institution’s teaching and learning processes and the conditions and practices that ensure that students meet expected standards of performance. Faculty use the results of this inquiry to make needed improvements. (CFR 4.4)

CHSU is expected in a subsequent review to give specific attention to the following issues:

1. Quality assurance processes. Leadership at all levels is committed to decision-making that is based on inquiry, evidence, and evaluation, and CHSU has developed an ambitious set of quality assurance processes to be implemented over the coming years. The team has confidence that CHSU will use results of this work to focus and, where appropriate, simplify processes to ensure their sustainability. The university needs time to gather and make available evidence of using results from quality assurance processes to inform decisions. CHSU involves stakeholders including community practitioners, area healthcare professionals, and students in its continuous improvement efforts and will include alumni beginning in 2018. (CFR 4.1, 4.3, 4.5)

2. Achievements related to strategic plan. CHSU regularly engages in institutional reflection and planning to define the future direction of the university. Development and execution of the university’s strategic plan, including plans for
a new campus and four additional colleges in the health sciences, will be critical
to meeting the founding family’s belief in its responsibility for enhancing the
quality of life in Central California. (CFR 4.6, 4.7)

3. Institutional research. The team concluded that CHSU lacks the appropriate
capacity in institutional research and encourages a sense of urgency with CHSU’s
plans to hire a Director of Institutional Research. (CFR 4.2)

The Commission endorses the commendations and recommendations of the team, as
detailed on pages 36-37 of the team report, and as otherwise noted in the team report
narrative. The institution should respond to the recommendations in its next review.

In view of the above, the Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Seeking Accreditation Visit report and grant Candidacy for a period
   of up to five years and schedule a subsequent Seeking Accreditation Visit in
   spring 2017 to address the Criteria for Review identified under the above
   Standards as not having been met.

In taking this action to grant Candidacy, the Commission confirms that California Health
Sciences University has met the WSCUC Standards at least at a minimal level.

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

“California Health Sciences University 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, especially those that require prior approval according to the
Commission’s Substantive Change Policy. California Health Sciences
University is approved to offer only the following degree(s) at its current
locations:
Doctor of Pharmacy

Please consult the Substantive Change Manual and confer with your WSCUC liaison about any proposed new degree programs, off-campus locations, online offerings, and/or changes in governance or ownership, to determine if these matters should be approved in advance by WSCUC.

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 visit for Seeking Accreditation will focus only 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 the California Health Sciences University 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 California Health Sciences University 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.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that California Health Sciences 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 participation in this process. Please contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen Petrisko
President
MEP/mam

Cc: William A. Ladusaw, Commission Chair
    David Hawkins, ALO
    John Welty, Board Chair
    Members of the Seeking Accreditation team
    Maureen A. Maloney, Vice President, WSCUC