

March 8, 2022

Mr. Brian Marcotte  
President  
Marymount California University  
30800 Palos Verdes Drive East  
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275-6299

Dear President Marcotte:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Marymount California University (MCU) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting February 25, 2021. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Accreditation Visit to Marymount California University September 21-24, 2021. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by Marymount California University prior to the Offsite Review (OSR), the supplemental materials requested by the team after the OSR, and the institution's November 9, 2021 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Ariane Schauer, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Richard Anderson, Chief Financial Officer. 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 six years
3. Issue a Formal Notice of Concern
4. Schedule the next reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in spring 2027 and the Accreditation Visit in fall 2027
5. Schedule a Special Visit in spring 2023 to address all requirements in this letter.
6. Schedule a Progress Report to be submitted by August 1, 2022 to address the status of the planned affiliation with Saint Leo University.

The Commission commends Marymount California University in particular for the following:

1. The institution's leadership which at all levels is characterized by a strong common belief in the institution's mission and the students' success, with the current senior leadership team showing high levels of integrity, collaboration, and accountability.

2. The belief, care, and passion of the leadership, faculty and staff and their commitment to the whole student experience through personalized engagement, often extending beyond their specific formal areas of organizational responsibility, especially during the recent COVID-19 pandemic.
3. The robust delineation and mapping of learning outcomes from the institution to the course level, including the integration of core competencies, and the thoughtful placement of key assignments for assessment throughout student progression in the major.
4. The integrated approach to assessment of learning outcomes using a common reporting methodology which facilitates easy comprehension of results and a common foundation for discussion and action on areas for improvement.
5. The diligence shown in seeking and identifying a strong strategic partner with a like-minded vision for the key purpose of strengthening the institution's future sustainability.

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

1. Aggressively focus on the stand-alone financial sustainability of the institution with particular focus on balancing annual revenue and expenses without the current and projected reliance on unrestricted investment funds. (CFR 3.4)
2. Diversify viable revenue sources through non-tuition channels such as fund-raising development/advancement and governmental resources, optimizing financial opportunities aligned with your mission. (CFR 3.4)
3. Revisit the strategic planning process with emphasis on increased review frequency, monitoring, and updating of the plan to promote responsiveness to changing circumstances. (CFRs 4.6, 4.7)
4. Expand the focus of the Strategic Enrollment Plan, with a stronger emphasis on intentional and equitable improvements in retention and graduation rates. (CFRs 2.10, 4.3, 4.6)
5. Build on the inventory created by the DEI committee to identify opportunities to more substantively integrate DEI topics and learning outcomes across the institution, with particular focus on all academic curricula. (CFRs 1.4, 2.2a)
6. Further develop the data architecture/infrastructure to support advanced analysis, interpretation, and utilization in all planning and decision-making throughout the institution. (CFRs 3.7, 4.1, 4.2)
7. Examine the role and responsibilities of the board in exemplifying current governance best practices including: 1) self-evaluation of committee effectiveness in assisting achievement of institutional goals such as fiscal resourcing beyond tuition; 2) strategic board composition (higher education industry expertise and diversity); 3) review of the committee structures to ensure the representation of all stakeholders; and 4) continual monitoring of trends and changes in the higher education environment. (CFRs 3.9, 4.6, 4.7)

A Formal Notice of Concern provides notice to the institution that, while it currently meets WSCUC Standards, it is in danger of being found in noncompliance with one or more Standards if current trends or findings continue. In the case of Marymount

California University, Standards 2 and 3 are in danger of being found out of compliance, in particular CFR 2.10 related to retention and graduation rates and CFR 3.4 related to financial sustainability. Institutions issued a Formal Notice of Concern are scheduled for a Special Visit within four years. If the issues are not addressed within four years, a sanction could be imposed as described in the 2013 Handbook of Accreditation. A Formal Notice of Concern is public information and will be posted on the WSCUC website.

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirmed that Marymount California University addressed the three Core Commitments and successfully completed the two-stage institutional review process conducted under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. In keeping with WSCUC values, Marymount California University 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 Marymount California University's governing board. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the Marymount California University'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 Marymount California 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,



Jamiene S. Studley  
President

JSS/so

Cc: Phillip Doolittle, Commission Chair  
Ariane Schauer, ALO  
Bret Johnsen, Board Chair  
Members of the Accreditation Visit team  
Susan Opp, Vice President