

July 12, 2019

Dr. Gayle Hutchinson
President
California State University, Chico
400 West First Street
Chico, CA 95929-0110

Dear President Hutchinson:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning California State University, Chico (CSUChic) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 28, 2019. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Accreditation Visit to CSUChic March 5-7, 2019. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by CSUChic prior to the Offsite Review (OSR), the supplemental materials requested by the team after the OSR, and the institution's May 28, 2019 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with your colleagues Debra Larson, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Daniel Grassian, Vice Provost for Academic Programs and ALO; and Ann Sherman, Vice President for Business and Finance. 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 eight years
3. Schedule the next reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in fall 2026 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2027
4. Schedule the Mid-Cycle Review to begin May 1, 2023
5. Schedule an Interim Report to be submitted by March 1, 2023 to address all requirements contained in this letter

The Commission commends CSUChic in particular for the following:

1. The caring response exhibited by the university to the 2018 devastating local fires. The support and leadership demonstrated, as well as the extraordinary volunteer efforts of the university community and all its stakeholders, have been exceptional. In this university, the North State has a valued partner.
2. The university's faculty and staff for providing continuity and stability during a recent period of leadership turnover at many levels.

3. The university administration, faculty, and staff for a reinvigorated commitment to shared governance, effective communication, and an inclusive strategic planning process — all of which have contributed to rebuilding trust and morale.
4. The strong commitment to the success and well-being of Chico students by faculty, staff, and administration in all areas.
5. The university for its thoughtful, strategic, and collaborative approach to distance education which addresses the needs of students, employers, and community partners in the North State.
6. The recent assessment of its program of General Education and the associated process for continuous improvement.
7. The laudable overall improvements in retention and graduation rates, and in reducing the achievement gap while increasing diversity.

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

1. Although the university conducts annual assessments of academic programs and periodic program reviews, these processes could be connected in more substantial and meaningful ways with improving student learning outcomes and program effectiveness. They could also be better informed by institutional data, academic senate engagement, and external input, and would benefit from sustained commitment of resources. (CFRs 2.4, 2.5, 2.7)
2. The university is applauded for recent efforts to reorganize and to reinvigorate the institutional research (IR) function in advance of the Accreditation Visit. The Commission encourages further development of the role of IR at the university, including a reassessment of how institutional research fits into the university's overall structure, clear visioning of how IR will support future data-driven decision-making, and identification of additional resources and professional development opportunities that match this vision. (CFRs 4.3, 4.5)
3. Given its history, mission, location in the North State, and market position, CSUChic serves and will increasingly serve transfer students and non-traditional learners. The Commission recommends a review of the institution's approach to supporting this growing body of students and learners on campus, with an ensuing alignment of resources. (CFR 2.14)
4. The university should prioritize stabilizing the administration by making permanent appointments for positions currently held by interim appointees, and by increasing the transparency of regular reviews of senior administrators. (CFRs 3.7, 3.2)

5. CSUChi should consider implementing its own initiatives, and participating in system wide initiatives, to accelerate progress in diversifying the faculty, so that its demographics will more closely align with the students it serves. (CFR 1.4)

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that CSUChic has addressed the three Core Commitments and has successfully completed the two-stage institutional review process conducted under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. In keeping with WSCUC values, CSUChic 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 will be sent to the chair of CSUChic's governing board. A copy of this letter will also be sent to Chancellor White. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the CSUChic'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 CSUChic 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/ro

Cc: Reed Dasenbrock, Commission Chair
Daniel Grassian, ALO
Adam Day, Board Chair, California State University System
Timothy P. White, Chancellor, California State University System
Members of the Accreditation Visit team
Richard Osborn, Vice President