

March 9, 2018

Rev. Dr. James McDonald
President
San Francisco Theological Seminary
105 Seminary Road
San Anselmo, CA 94960-2925

Dear President McDonald:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting February 14-16, 2018. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Accreditation Visit to SFTS September 25-28, 2017. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by SFTS prior to the Offsite Review (OSR), the supplemental materials requested by the team after the OSR, and the institution's January 8, 2018 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues: Rev. Dr. Jana Childers, ALO/Dean of the Seminary, and Mr. Mike Cairns, CFO. 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. Schedule the next reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in spring 2023 and the Accreditation Visit in fall 2023
4. Schedule the Mid-Cycle Review for May 1, 2021
5. Schedule a Special Visit in spring 2020 to address:
 - a. Enrollment
 - i. Differences, if any, between enrollment goals and actual enrollments for degree and non degree programs since fall 2017
 - ii. Status of the 2017-2020 Enrollment Management Plan
 - iii. Steps the institution is taking to address declining enrollments
 - b. Finances
 - i. Differences, if any, between projected and actual budgets for FY 2017, 2018, and 2019
 - ii. Status of a comprehensive operating plan by program and department that demonstrates how SFTS will achieve financial stability and a balanced budget
 - iii. Status of an advancement plan that includes achievable fundraising goals and actionable strategies
 - iv. Steps SFTS is taking to address its financial challenges

Commendations

The Commission commends SFTS in particular for the following:

1. Reviewing and revising its institutional mission in light of developments and trends in ecclesial, social, and academic environments.

2. Pursuing new opportunities to serve wider constituencies (e.g., programming of the Center for Innovation in Ministry, Continuing Education Units (CEU) for medical personnel) without losing its traditional foundation.
3. Adding qualified leaders in key positions to address significant challenges in financial and enrollment areas.
4. Developing capacities to assess educational effectiveness and student learning (e.g., degree program assessment plans, processes, and instruments).
5. Valuing and integrating institutional research in decision making at all levels.
6. Cultivating an engaged, active, and diverse board.
7. Building a community that embodies SFTS's values and mission.

Recommendations

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

1. Take vigorous steps to address declining enrollments. The Commission appreciated learning that the 2017-2020 Enrollment Management Plan has been completed and enrollment goals have been set by degree and non-degree programs. Student enrollment will be reviewed as part of the spring 2020 Special Visit. (CFRs 3.4 and 4.7)
2. In light of very serious and long-standing concerns related to the financial sustainability of SFTS, take vigorous steps to address the institution's financial viability. The Commission appreciated learning about the multipronged approach that SFTS is pursuing and expects the institution to:
 - a. Develop a comprehensive operating plan by program and department that demonstrates how SFTS will achieve financial stability and a balanced budget;
 - b. Conduct an annual review process for course correction;
 - c. Implement a contingency plan based on the annual review;
 - d. Create a detailed advancement plan that includes specific actionable strategies and fundraising goals by category;
 - e. Reevaluate tuition, fees, and discount rate in comparison to peer institutions in order to increase the percentage of revenue from these items;
 - f. Continue to pursue options to achieve financial sustainability. Finances will be reviewed as part of the spring 2020 Special Visit. (CFRs 3.4 and 4.7)
3. In light of the revised mission statement and the role of the Center for Innovation in Ministry (CIM) in realizing that mission, establish a clearly defined role and objectives for the CIM that align with the mission, strategic

imperatives, and operational and functional aspects of SFTS. The role of CIM will be reviewed as part of the next comprehensive review for reaffirmation. (CFRs 1.1, 4.7)

4. Develop and implement an assessment plan for co-curricular and student services and use the results for data-informed improvements. Assessment of co-curricular and student services will be reviewed as part of the next comprehensive review for reaffirmation. (CFRs 2.11, 2.13)

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that San Francisco Theological Seminary 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 San Francisco Theological Seminary's 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 San Francisco Theological Seminary 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 the San Francisco Theological Seminary 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/ bgd

Cc: Reed Dasenbrock, Commission Chair
Jana Childers, ALO
Enitan Adesanya, Board Chair
Members of the Accreditation Visit team
Barbara Gross Davis, Vice President