

March 17, 2023

Dr. David Fike  
President  
Golden Gate University  
536 Mission Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear President Fike:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Golden Gate University (GGU) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting February 24, 2023. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Special Visit to GGU November 7-11, 2022. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by GGU prior to the Special Visit and the institution's February 1, 2023, response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Brent White, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Rocco Lamanna, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Elaine Clark, CFO, and Barbara Mendelson, Chair of the Board of Trustees. Your comments were very helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations. The date of this action constitutes the effective date of the institution's status with WSCUC.

### **Actions**

1. Receive the Special Visit team report that focused on: (1) finances and enrollment; (2) retention and completion; (3) staffing levels and senior leadership team; (4) communication; and (5) shared governance
2. Continue the Formal Notice of Concern
3. Schedule an Interim Report to be submitted by November 1, 2023, to include the following information:
  - a. Fall 2023 enrollment data, along with an analysis of whether recruitment and retention targets have been achieved. Analysis should include an explanation of increasing or decreasing overall and program enrollment results compared to year-over-year fall trends for the past five years
  - b. Copy of FY 2021/22 audited financial statements and FY 2022/23 audited financial statements (if available)
  - c. Status of the Jessie Street and Mission Street properties, and if sold or sub-leased, provide supporting documentation (e.g., escrow documents and sub-lease agreement)

- d. Supporting documentation for debt transaction, estimated to net \$35M and to be completed by June 2023; describe how net proceeds are generated and provide supporting amortization schedules
- e. Summary of financial results of partnership with Upgrad
- f. Revised financial five year+ forecast that includes revised debt service and any revenue and expenses resulting from partnership with Upgrad
- g. A summary of the three analyses by the consultant (financial model for forecasting enrollment, net tuition, revenue and expenses; market analysis of current program portfolio; and academic portfolio analysis) and comments by GGU on the use of the consultants' recommendations

The Commission commends GGU in particular for the following:

1. Broad, extensive engagement from constituents across the university in responding to the areas identified for improvement, which reflects the success of the leadership team's efforts to communicate the university's financial, enrollment, and shared governance challenges.
2. Improvement in shared governance and communication practices, with more people feeling heard, more leaders willing to share information, and greater efforts to clarify decision-making processes.
3. A strong leadership team and well-qualified support staff brought together through a broadly participative process.
4. Willingness of the board and leadership to consider and communicate alternative approaches to funding growth that has generated enthusiasm and created opportunities for institutional recovery in a challenging, competitive economic climate.
5. Confidence about the future that permeates trustees, faculty, and staff and is rooted in new leadership, spending, and a vision of global and mission-driven growth.

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

1. Given the anticipated liquidity needs, continue to closely forecast cash balances to ensure that spending does not outpace the realization of new revenues. (CFR 3.4)
2. Standardize financial forecasting and update targets as annual forecasts vary from plans, to strengthen financial understanding and improve decision-making. (CFR 3.4)
3. Ensure that the administrative and pedagogical infrastructure is commensurate with expected growth. (CFRs 3.4, 3.5)
4. Continue prioritizing retention by developing detailed data-informed goals at the university, school, and program level, assessing proposed student support initiatives, and establishing a student support infrastructure for continuous data analysis and student feedback to keep pace with anticipated enrollment gains. (CFRs 2.10, 4.3)

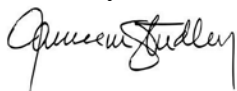
5. Codify shared governance and decision-making processes that are well understood (through, for example, the university's efforts to develop a decision-making matrix). (CFRs 3.7, 3.10)

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. If the issues are not addressed by spring 2025, 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 accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter is being sent to the chair of GGU's governing board. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the GGU 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 Golden Gate 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/bgd

Cc: Phillip Doolittle, Commission Chair  
Rocco Lamanna, ALO  
Barbara Mendelson, Board Chair  
Members of the Special Visit team  
Barbara Gross Davis, Vice President