

March 6, 2024

Dr. Bruce Boghosian
President
American University of Armenia
40 Baghramyan Avenue
Yerevan, 0019
Armenia

Dear President Boghosian:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning the American University of Armenia (AUA) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting February 16, 2024. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation (TPR) Accreditation Visit to AUA October 22-26, 2023, using the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by AUA prior to the Accreditation Visit, and the institution's January 16, 2024, response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Sharistan Melkonian, Dean of General Education; Armen Der Kiureghian, Past Interim President; and Lawrence Pitts, 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 new status with WSCUC.

Actions

1. Receive the Accreditation Visit team report
2. Reaffirm accreditation for a period of ten years
3. Schedule the next reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in spring 2033 and the Accreditation Visit in fall 2033
4. Schedule a Progress Report to be submitted by March 1, 2025, to address contingency plans for academic and business continuity in times of crisis
5. Schedule an Interim Report to be submitted by November 1, 2028, to address these issues:
 - a. Based on AUA's stated commitment to diversity, provide an update on efforts to a) finalize and adopt formal DEI definitions encompassing diverse perspectives and cultural sensitivities in curriculum and research; b) specify a designated DEI officer; and c) develop learning module(s) covering harassment, discrimination, disrespectful behavior, and reporting procedures for faculty, staff, and students.
 - b. Outline progress in managing recent and anticipated enrollment growth by identifying the necessary infrastructure to achieve AUA's goals without

exceeding capacity, and effectively balancing short-term and long-term strategies for faculty, staff, space, and facilities.

- c. Provide examples of communications to stakeholders about growth objectives, challenges, and mitigation strategies for the next five years.
- d. Describe efforts to strengthen consistency and transparency in faculty workload, including service roles, to align with the university's growth and research aspirations.

Commendations

The Commission commends the institution for the following:

1. An inclusive, reflective, forward-looking institutional report.
2. Successful expansion into undergraduate education marked by eight in-demand bachelor's degrees, a General Education program, and an array of student support services.
3. Broad consensus among stakeholders on strong morale, collegiality, and active community engagement, highlighted by resilience during challenging times of COVID and wars.
4. Exceptional commitment from faculty, administrators, and staff to both the institution and its societal role, with special emphasis on support for students.
5. A culture committed to regular review and ongoing improvement in program assessment to ensure rigor and coherence.
6. Strong ethical guidelines and policies which serve as models for other local universities.
7. Unwavering support from the Boards of Trustees, demonstrated by deep insights into AUA's challenges and opportunities as well as strategic planning for its future.
8. A focus on financial sustainability over the last decade with multiple years of balanced budgets through monitoring expenses, accounting for currency fluctuations and increasing revenue diversity, as well as growing the endowment fivefold.

Areas for Development

The Commission requires the institution to respond to the following areas for development:

1. Based on AUA's stated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), continue university-identified efforts to: a) finalize and adopt formal DEI definitions encompassing diverse perspectives and cultural sensitivities in curriculum and research; b) specify a designated DEI officer; and c) develop learning module(s) covering harassment, discrimination, disrespectful behavior, and reporting procedures for faculty, staff, and students. (CFR1.4)
2. Accommodate recent and anticipated enrollment growth by identifying and communicating essential infrastructure to meet AUA's goals without exceeding capacity, while balancing both short-term and long-term strategies for faculty, staff, space, and facilities. (CFRs 3.5, 4.7)

3. Ensure clear and unified communication to stakeholders about growth objectives, challenges, and mitigation strategies for the next five years. (CFRs 3.7, 4.6)
4. Strengthen consistency and transparency in faculty workload, including service roles, to align with the university's growth and research aspirations. (CFR 3.2)
5. Further strengthen institutional resilience by creating and widely disseminating contingency plans for academic and business continuity during crises. (CFRs 1.7, 2.1, 3.1, 3.6, 3.7)

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirmed that the American University of Armenia completed the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation institutional review process conducted under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. In keeping with WSCUC values, AUA 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 AUA's governing board. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the AUA'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 the American University of Armenia undertook in preparing for the 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,



Jamienne S. Studley
President

JSS/bgd

Cc: Tracy Poon Tambascia, Commission Chair
Sharistan Melkonian, ALO
Lawrence Pitts, Board Chair
Members of the TPR Accreditation Visit Team
Barbara Gross Davis, Vice President