

March 4, 2019

Dr. John MacArthur  
President  
The Masters University and Seminary  
21726 Placerita Canyon Road  
Santa Clarita, CA 91321

Dear President MacArthur:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning The Masters University and Seminary (TMUS) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting February 22, 2019 to continue the sanction of Probation. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Special Visit to TMUS November 1-2, 2019. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by TMUS prior to the Special Visit. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you, John Stead, Provost and ALO, Dr. Nathan Busenitz, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Rich Gregory, Senior Vice President for Administration. Your comments were very helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations.

The Commission found that The Master's University and Seminary is not in compliance with WSCUC Standards 1 and 3 and acted to continue the sanction of Probation. Under U.S. Department of Education regulations, when the Commission finds that an institution fails to meet one or more of the Standards of Accreditation, it is required to notify the institution of these findings and give the institution no longer than two years from the date of this action to correct the deficiencies. If an institution has not remedied the deficiencies at the conclusion of this sanction period, the Commission is required, under U.S. Department of Education regulations, to take an "adverse action," which in this case would take the form of withdrawal of accreditation. An institution under sanction must address the areas cited by the Commission expeditiously, with seriousness and the full attention of the institution's leadership. It is the responsibility of the Commission to determine, at the end of the sanction period, whether the institution has made the necessary corrections and has come into compliance with Commission Standards.

The Commission decision to continue Probation is subject to Commission Review. A request for Commission Review must be based on one or more of four limited bases as outlined in the 2013 Handbook of Accreditation, Revised (see pp. 40-42). A request for review of this decision must be received in the WSCUC office by certified mail within 28 calendar days of the date of this letter.

The accreditation status of The Masters University and Seminary continues during Probation. However, while an institution is on Probation, any new sites or degree programs must be approved through the substantive change process.

### **Actions**

1. Receive the Special Visit team report that focused on:
  - a. Personnel and management practices
  - b. Board independence
  - c. Operational integrity
  - d. Leadership
2. Continue Probation

3. Schedule a Special Visit to be conducted in Fall 2020, addressing the two concerns noted in this letter as the basis for Probation. The institution will be expected to prepare an institutional report due ten weeks before the date of the visit demonstrating that it has addressed the two areas of noncompliance noted below.

### Issues to be Addressed

1. Board Independence: According to the WSCUC Governing Board Policy, a governing board must minimally demonstrate “sufficient independence to ensure that all board actions are taken in accordance with the institution’s best interests and those of the students it serves. Decisions reflect a balancing of interests and priorities consistent with the institution’s mission and related fiduciary responsibilities (such as asset protection, employee concerns, concerns of students and families, and interests of the community), giving appropriate attention to both short-term and long-term needs. The governing board must not be effectively controlled by a minority of board members or by related entities...” The Commission observes that the Board continues to take direction from the President rather than fulfilling its role of overseeing the President and maintaining priorities that are consistent with advancing the institutional mission. (*CFR 3.9 and Independent Governing Board Policy*)
2. Operational Integrity: The visiting team found that TMUS has made progress in the area of campus climate. However, staff and faculty reported fears that the climate may regress after WSCUC stepped away. In addition, the institution made a commitment to transition its chief executive officer from the position of president to Chancellor of the Seminary within 18 months of the date of the visit. Yet, at the panel interview, the president mentioned that the Board has extended that date and had still not taken steps to define the requirements and job description for the institution’s next president. The Commission is concerned that TMUS still struggles in the area of operational integrity and transparency. (*CFR 1.7*)

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

1. The Board should ensure the successful succession and transition of the Presidential role including conducting a national search by 12/31/2019. (CFRs 3.8, 3.9)
2. The Board and Administration should continue to communicate with their constituents in the TMUS community regarding personnel actions and leadership succession. (CFRs 1.7, 3.2, 3.6)
3. TMUS should establish systematic two-way communication practices to promote consistent and sustainable flow of information among administrators, faculty, staff and students. (CFRs 1.6, 3.7, 3.10)
4. TMUS should establish and implement a formal procedure that allows for a safe environment for staff and faculty to express grievances and ethical concerns. (CFRs 1.7, 3.2)

The Commission requires a meeting between the WSCUC staff and representatives of The Masters University and Seminary, including the Chief Executive Officer, representatives of the governing board, and senior faculty leadership, within 90 days from the date of this letter. The purposes of the meeting are to further clarify the reasons for the Commission’s findings and bases for decision, to review the actions taken as of the date of the meeting with particular attention to the WSCUC

Independent Governing Board Policy, and to discuss the institution's plans for responding to this Commission action.

This decision is subject to further review in accordance with the Commission's Review Process for Institutions on Sanction: <https://www.wscuc.org/resources/handbook-accreditation-2013/part-iv-commission-decisions-institutions/commission-review-process-institutions-sanction>. Accordingly, the decision will not be reported to the Department of Education or disclosed to the public until the review process has concluded or TMUS determines that it will not seek review. If TMUS intends to seek review, the request, co-signed by the CEO and Chair of the governing board, must be submitted to the President of the Commission within 28 days of the date of this letter together with the required fee.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of TMUS' governing board.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for The Master's University and Seminary's cooperation during this accreditation review. Please contact me to arrange the required institutional meeting with WSCUC, and if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the commission.

Sincerely,



Jamiene S. Studley  
President

JSS/thh

Cc: Reed Dasenbrock, Commission Chair  
John Stead, ALO  
Randy Kirkland, Board Chair  
Members of the Special Visit team  
Tamela H. Hawley, Vice President