

July 11, 2025

Dr. Bruce Magid
Acting President
Golden Gate University
536 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear President Magid:

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 June 27, 2025. At that meeting the Commission acted to continue Golden Gate University on Notice of Concern. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Accreditation Visit to GGU April 9 – 11, 2025 using the 2023 Standards of Accreditation. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by GGU prior to the Offsite Review (OSR), the supplemental materials requested by the team after the OSR, and the institution's June 10, 2025, response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Melinda Dunn, Board Chair; Rocco Lamana, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and ALO; and Elaine Clark, 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.

The Commission has acted to extend the Notice of Concern. While GGU has been on Notice of Concern since July 2021, which typically extends beyond the general practice of four years for such notices, the Commission has determined this extension is warranted. The university has demonstrated compliance with all four Standards; however, further progress toward financial sustainability remains necessary. The Commission recognizes the significant improvements made while acknowledging that continued monitoring through a Notice of Concern is appropriate to ensure long-term institutional stability.

Actions

1. Receive the Accreditation Visit team report
2. Reaffirm accreditation for a period of six years
3. Continue the Notice of Concern
4. Schedule the next reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in fall 2030 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2031
5. Schedule a Special Visit in spring 2027 to provide an update on financial sustainability, as outlined in the five requirements requiring a response

Commendations

The Commission commends the institution for:

1. Forging strategic partnerships to extend educational reach through regional collaborations and cohort-based initiatives.
2. A culture of belonging that authentically embodies the university's core mission and values, inspiring meaningful engagement and shared purpose across the campus community.
3. Championing student success through responsive, timely support services that effectively address diverse learner needs, enhancing both satisfaction and sense of community.
4. Drawing upon collegial faculty who care deeply about students, demonstrate a steadfast commitment to the mission, and prioritize student academic success.

Notice of Concern

A Notice of Concern provides notice to the institution that, while it currently meets WSCUC Standards, it is in danger of being found out of compliance with one or more Standards if current trends or findings continue. Institutions issued a Notice of Concern are scheduled for a Special Visit. If the issues are not addressed, a sanction could be imposed as described in the 2023 Handbook of Accreditation. A Notice of Concern is public information and will be posted on the WSCUC website.

Standard at Risk of Non-Compliance and Requiring a Response

GGU is at risk of non-compliance with Standard 3 (CFRs 3.4, 3.5). The university faces concerning financial challenges: limited cash flow affecting operational flexibility, recurring operating deficits impacting financial stability, and revenue uncertainty creating vulnerability. While a comprehensive financial recovery plan has been developed, these interconnected issues present challenges to the university's fiscal health. The Commission requires GGU to:

1. Continue to move forward with the real estate transactions to reduce the institution's facility costs and eliminate long-term debt. (CFRs 3.4, 3.5)
2. Strengthen fiscal monitoring and expense controls, pursue enrollment revenue diversification strategies, track projected enrollment targets and budget projections against actual performance, address the multi-year deficit, and employ financial discipline for long-term sustainability. (CFRs 3.4, 3.5)
3. Given the anticipated liquidity needs, continue to closely forecast cash balances to ensure that spending does not outpace the realization of new revenues. (CFRs 3.4, 3.5)
4. Enhance the advancement function to develop a comprehensive donor engagement strategy spanning all constituent groups to maximize philanthropic support. (CFRs 3.4, 3.5)
5. Enhance financial reporting systems for the Board of Trustees to provide comprehensive, timely, and easily interpretable fiscal data, enabling Trustees to exercise more informed oversight. (CFRs 3.4, 3.10)

Areas for Development

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

1. Clarify the presidential selection process (e.g., search firms, stakeholder involvement, timelines, milestones and progress) to all campus constituents. (CFRs 1.7, 3.1, 3.9)
2. Continue to build a culture of trust, respect, and transparent communication with all stakeholders and constituents, creating secure channels that allow for the safe expression of concerns. (CFRs 1.3, 1.8, 3.7, 4.5)
3. Recruit trustees in sufficient numbers, with diverse backgrounds, expertise, and competencies, thereby distributing governance responsibilities while strengthening oversight and strategic decision-making capacity. (CFRs 1.8, 3.8)
4. Uphold accreditation standards for all distance education offerings, including GGU Worldwide, by ensuring compliance with the credit hour policy, maintaining substantive faculty-initiated student interaction, and adhering to WSCUC Agreements with Unaccredited Entities policy. (CFRs 1.4, 1.8, 3.11)

Next Steps

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,



A. Maria Toyoda
President

AMT/bgd

Cc: Tracy Poon Tambascia, Commission Chair
Rocco Lamanna, ALO
Melinda Dunn, Board Chair
Members of the Accreditation Visit Team
Barbara Gross Davis, Vice President