

July 20, 2018

Rabbi Mel Gottlieb
President
Academy for Jewish Religion, California
The Yitzhak Rabin Hillel Center for Jewish Life at UCLA
574 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90024

Dear President Gottlieb:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning the Academy for Jewish Religion California (AJRCA) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 27-29, 2018. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Accreditation Visit to AJRCA April 14-17, 2018. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by AJRCA prior to the Offsite Review (OSR), the supplemental materials requested by the team after the OSR, and the institution's May 24, 2018 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleague Cantor Jonathan Friedman, Accreditation Liaison Officer. 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 fall 2023 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2024
4. Schedule the Mid-Cycle Review to begin May 1, 2021
5. Schedule an Interim Report to be submitted by March 1, 2020 to address
 - a. Finances
 - i. Audited statements for FY '18 and FY '19
 - ii. Year to date income statement for '20
 - iii. Current balance sheet
 - iv. Enrollment goals and actual enrollments by degree program for admission cycles for 2018, 2019, and spring 2020
 - v. Multi-year financial plan for achieving financial stability and balanced budget (including advancement strategies, fundraising goals, and recruitment strategies)
 - vi. Contingency plan for operating deficits
 - b. Strategic planning: provide a copy of the plan that includes
 - i. Process for determining the best location and cost of a facility to house the institution
 - ii. Succession plans for strategic positions in the institution
 - iii. Process for monitoring the effectiveness of AJR's new educational modalities (e.g., hybrid degree program)

Commendations

The Commission commends AJRCA for its:

1. Transdenominational approach, nimble structure, diverse faculty models, and individualized attention to students it serves;
2. Institutional mission that provides a model for others at a time of significant change in religious higher education;
3. Clear mission that is widely understood and embraced by AJRCA's various stakeholders and that emphasizes contributions to the public good;
4. Demonstrated commitment to self-reflection, transparency, assessment and broad engagement of stakeholders; and
5. Dedication and devotion of the board, administrators, faculty, and staff to carry out the mission of AJRCA and to ensure a positive learning experience for students.

Recommendations

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

1. Ensure financial viability: (CFRs 3.4, 4.7)
 - a. Continue to proactively monitor cash flow, enrollment pipeline, fundraising efforts, and expenditure levels, and take immediate steps to adjust expenditure levels if enrollment or fundraising trends indicate an operating deficit is likely;
 - b. Develop a multi-year financial plan with assumptions that show AJRCA consistently achieving financial stability and a balanced budget. The plan should include specific, actionable advancement strategies, fundraising goals, and recruiting strategies;
 - c. Create a contingency plan to be implemented upon realization that an operating deficit is likely to occur.

The Commission appreciated hearing about the growth in donor contributions, the increase in student applications, and the projected decrease in expenditures over the next two years.

2. Develop a more comprehensive strategic plan that includes the following: (CFRs 3.7, 4.6, 4.7)
 - a. A process for determining the best location and cost of a facility to house the institution;
 - b. Succession plans for strategic positions in the institution;
 - c. A process for monitoring the effectiveness of the educational modalities in the fulfillment of its mission.

The Commission appreciated hearing about the status of the strategic plan and AJRCA's efforts to assess its new distance education program.

3. Implement an enrollment management model to integrate the reports that track student trends of admissions, enrollment, financial aid, and degree completion. (CFRs 2.10, 3.7)
4. To clarify the relationship between the different levels of learning outcomes (Institutional, Program and Course Learning Outcomes), evaluate and, if necessary, modify the student learning outcomes currently being assessed to ensure they

appropriately distinguish among the different degree programs. Additionally, set appropriate standards of performance for each learning outcome. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6)

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that the Academy for Jewish Religion California 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 the Academy for Jewish Religion California'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 AJRCA 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 Academy for Jewish Religion California 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,



Jamienne S. Studley
President

JSS/ bgd

Cc: Reed Dasenbrock, Commission Chair
Jonathan Friedman, ALO
Marlene Canter, Board Chair
Members of the Accreditation Visit team
Barbara Gross Davis, Vice President