

February 26, 2020

Dr. David Matsumoto
President/CEO
Institute of Buddhist Studies
2140 Durant Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94707

Dear President Matsumoto:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting February 14, 2020. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 to IBS October 2-4, 2019. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by IBS prior to the Seeking Accreditation Visit 2. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and Scott Mitchell, Dean/ALO, and Leroy Morishita, Member, 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 Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 team report
2. Grant Initial Accreditation for a period of six years
3. Allow the date of Initial Accreditation to be applied retroactively to May 1, 2019
4. Schedule the reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in spring 2025 and the Accreditation Visit in fall 2025
5. Schedule the Mid-Cycle Review to begin on May 1, 2023
6. Schedule an Interim Report to be submitted by March 1, 2021 to address all recommendations contained in this letter

The Commission commends IBS in particular for the following:

1. The entire IBS community for taking seriously the recommendations from the Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 (SAV1) visit and the significant progress that has been collectively made since that visit.
2. IBS leadership for formalizing the executive staff team which has effectively improved communication at all levels, organized and transformed organizational workflows to productively accomplish an impressive volume of work over the past two years, and facilitating the delineation of a clear plan and path forward for the institution.
3. IBS leadership for the detailed articulation of the strategic plan with the related operations plan and the individual work plans for each operation that contain outcome goals, timelines, and accountability for attainment.

4. The institution for recognizing the need to provide additional support to various areas either through the hiring of support staff or through outside consulting expertise.
5. The Board of Trustees for their diligent work in clarifying the governance responsibilities for IBS through their own reorganization and structuring and clearly articulating the relationship between IBS and the Buddhist Church of America to ensure an independent Board.

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

1. The institution continue to pursue increased sophistication in governance and business practices, including ensuring annual financial audits are completed in a timely manner, and that the newly formed board committees have chairpersons assigned and operating according to their respective charters. (CFR 1.7)
2. Student Learning Outcome 2 for the M.Div. program indicates that the student should develop “ministerial skills appropriate to their professional goal.” However, the program does not require field education. Appropriate practical experience should be formally programmed into the requirements of the M.Div. program and attainment of this program outcome should be assessed. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4)
3. The assessment plan, instruments, and practices should continue to be developed consistently and that this development include restatement of student learning outcomes in measurable achievement language (e.g. articulate or demonstrate) rather than as an educational process (e.g. develop or understand). Additionally, the team recommends that IBS continue to partner with the Graduate Theological Union assessment process to gain disaggregated learning outcomes data on IBS students that can be used in the assessment of shared programs from the IBS perspective. (CFRs 2.6, 2.7, 4.1)
4. IBS consistently gather data that will be useful in identifying patterns of student satisfaction, success, persistence, and graduation rates, including qualitative data that will help to identify areas of need and ways of addressing that need. (CFR 2.10)
5. The institution continue to pursue financial stability through further refinement of tuition projection methods, more focused attention on recruitment through a realistic plan to meet the enrollment growth goals, and the investigation of sources of revenue beyond traditional fundraising. (CFR 3.4)
6. The board continue to refine the Bylaws to clarify the distinctions between the board and corporate officers with particular attention to any potential conflicts of interest. (CFRs 3.6, 3.7)
7. The board ensure that the board manual be reviewed for consistency compared to the Bylaws and that the Bylaws explicitly describe the responsibility of the board to hire and evaluate the president. (CFR 3.9)
8. IBS continue to develop its commitment, capacity, and culture to be a data informed learning community that ensures quality assurance in its strategic

planning, academic programs, sustainable business practices, and student experiences in alignment with its stated purposes. (CFRs 4.3, 4.4)

In taking this action to grant Initial Accreditation, the Commission confirms that IBS has addressed the three Core Commitments and has successfully completed the institutional review process for Initial Accreditation conducted under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. In keeping with WSCUC values, IBS 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.

IBS must use the following statement if it wishes to describe its accreditation status publicly:

Institute of Buddhist Studies is accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), 985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100, Alameda, CA 94501, 510.748.9001.

Federal law requires that the WSCUC address and phone number appear in your catalog.

The accredited status of a program should not be misrepresented. The accreditation granted by WSCUC refers to the quality of the institution as a whole. Because institutional accreditation does not imply specific accreditation of any particular program at the institution, statements such as “this program is accredited” or “this degree is accredited” are incorrect and misleading. The phrase “fully accredited” is also to be avoided, since no partial accreditation is possible.

The Commission stipulates that this action encompasses the degrees and certificates offered by IBS at the time of this action:

Master of Buddhist Studies
Master of Divinity
Certificate in Shin Buddhist Studies
Certificate in Soto Zen Buddhist Studies
Certificate in Theravada Buddhist Studies
Certificate in Buddhist Studies (online)
Certificate in Buddhist Chaplaincy
Certificate in Buddhism and Contemporary Psychology

Any proposed new degree programs, off-campus sites, online offerings, and/or changes in governance or ownership require review and approval through the Substantive Change process. Degree programs that have been reviewed and included under this action may be extended to other currently approved campuses of the institution without prior Substantive Change action. Offerings at new locations may need to go through

Substantive Change approval, in accordance with the requirements stated in the Substantive Change manual.

Institutions granted Initial Accreditation are required to:

1. Submit an Annual Report in the format required by the Commission.
2. Keep the Commission informed of any significant changes or developments. Any proposed new degree programs, off-campus sites, online offerings, and/or changes in governance or ownership require review and approval through the Substantive Change process.
3. Pay Annual Membership Dues prorated from the date of this action. An Annual Dues statement will be sent under separate cover.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of IBS's governing board. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the IBS'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 IBS 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/rco

Cc: Reed Dasenbrock, Commission Chair
Scott Mitchell, ALO
Richard Endo, Board Chair
Members of the Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 team
Richard Osborn, Retired Vice President, Staff Liaison at time of visit
Susan Opp, Vice President