

August 19, 2016

Rev. Timothy Lenchak  
President  
Divine Word College  
102 Jacoby Dr. SW  
Epworth, IA 52045-0380

Dear President Lenchak:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Divine Word College by the Institutional Actions Council of the Higher Learning Commission at its meeting on August 15, 2016. The date of this action constitutes the effective date of the institution's new status with HLC.

**Action with Interim Monitoring.** IAC continued the accreditation of Divine Word College with the next Reaffirmation of Accreditation in 2025-26. In conjunction with this action, IAC required the following interim monitoring.

**Interim Report.** An Interim Report due August 1, 2018 on governance and strategic planning. Focus of the report should be on:

- Efforts to improve communication on policy and procedure changes under consideration;
- Implementation of improvements in the atmosphere around shared governance;
- Evidence of deeper Board of Administration comprehension of critical compliance expectations;
- Broader institutional collaboration in development of strategic planning; and
- Improved strategies for use of data in college planning and efforts to improve persistence and completion statistics for student success.

Further, IAC voted to change the team's evaluation of Criterion 5B and 5C from "Met" to "Met with Concerns" with the following evidence and determined a monitoring report should be submitted.

**5B Met with Concerns:** The Board of Administration lacks understanding of compliance requirements such as CFI and federal compliance requirements. The institution recently responded to two consecutive years of CFI issues and three regarding persistence and completion. While the persistence and completion issues are a direct result of a small student enrollment pool, the institution has not worked through a way to report with disaggregation. Further, recent policy and procedure changes, including an explicit faculty performance review, have created an undercurrent of tension throughout the institution. While there is considerable effort by institutional leaders to respond to the tensions, these are strong indications that the faculty and staff feel they lacked involvement in creating these changes. There is significant tension surrounding shared governance as the institution attempts to move from a family environment to a more professional organization.

**5C Met with Concerns:** While planning to accomplish this, the institution does not link assessment of student learning, internal processes and resource allocation to the strategic plan. Further the current strategic plan was apparently designed by a member of the Board of Administration. While input was sought from some staff, the leadership and responsibility for the plan residing in one BOA member does not constitute collaboration across the institution for this significant document. Further the BOA must become more aware of the environment in which it functions, including compliance requirements, professional development opportunities for all members of the Divine Word College, including the board itself. Finally, the institution is not positioned to use the data it collects effectively. Use of data is still immature and is primarily a simple response to compliance rather than a mature organizational data design to drive wise decisions. This is

extremely important to an institution planning to decrease its financial dependency on the Order in the near future, an institution which has found itself responding to CFI concerns in the recent past.

**Rationale:** IAC determined that there were inconsistencies in the team's report, as identified above, to support the IAC recommendation.

In two weeks, this action will be added to the *Institutional Status and Requirements (ISR) Report*, a resource for Accreditation Liaison Officers to review and manage information regarding the institution's accreditation relationship. Accreditation Liaison Officers may request the ISR Report on HLC's website at <http://www.hlcommission.org/isr-request>.

Information on notifying the public of this action is available at <http://www.hlcommission.org/HLC-Institutions/institutional-reporting-of-actions.html>.

If you have any questions about these documents after viewing them, please contact the institution's staff liaison Barbara Johnson. Your cooperation in this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Gellman-Danley".

Barbara Gellman-Danley  
President

CC: ALO