

March 17, 2023

Ms. Sean Scott
Dean and President
California Western School of Law
225 Cedar Street
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Dean Scott:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning California Western School of Law (CWSL) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting February 24, 2023. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 to CWSL October 12-14, 2022. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by CWSL prior to the Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 and the institution's December 15, 2022 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Lisa Ferreira, Dean of Students and ALO, Susan Bisom-Rapp, Vice Dean for Academic Affairs, Cindy Bertrand, Chief Financial Officer, William Aceves, Associate Dean of Teaching, Learning and Assessment, and Christopher Baidoo, former Director of Institutional Research. 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. Schedule the next reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in spring 2028 and the Accreditation Visit in fall 2028
4. Schedule an Interim Report to be submitted by March 1, 2026 to address all the requirements in this letter

The Commission commends CWSL in particular for the following:

1. Meaningful and significant progress since the SAV 1 in the areas of planning, assessment, and modernization under the challenging circumstances of a dean transition and pandemic.
2. Strong administrative leadership and direction that has engaged and empowered faculty and staff to continuously improve the institution.
3. Deeply committed board, leadership, faculty, and staff to supporting the success of a diverse student body—one that is reflective of the region and California.
4. The current strategic plan, developed with broad engagement by the board, leadership, faculty, and staff relying on data and evidence, that identifies clear priorities and actions along with measurable outcomes.

5. The development of a culture that values and uses evidence to guide decision-making from the boardroom to the classroom to support operations.
6. Implementation of difficult decisions to wind down academic programs that didn't support the school's mission or its financial health while responsibly attending to the needs of enrolled students during the transition.
7. Reduction of administrative costs by reviewing vacant positions, compensation, and other cost containment options.

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

1. Make progress revising the JD curriculum, with faculty paying special attention to student learning expectations, standards of performance, and methods of assessing student learning. (CFRs 2.4, 2.6)
2. Complete the assessment of the current 12 JD program learning outcomes and then refine the learning outcomes to accommodate measurement and assessment and make other modifications the faculty consider appropriate. (CFRs 2.3, 2.6)
3. Continue efforts to enhance the governing board's membership with diversity in expertise (especially finance and real estate), age, gender, and racial-ethnic background. (CFR 3.9)
4. Continue careful management and oversight of reserves, using reserves only for projects and activities that support high priority strategic plan objectives. (CFR 3.4)
5. Ensure that the Institutional Research Steering Committee has resources and support to meet the school's data needs and to foster an evidence-informed culture. (CFR 4.2)

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

California Western School of Law must use the following statement if it wishes to describe its accreditation status publicly:

California Western School of Law is accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), 1080 Marina Village Parkway, Suite 500, 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 stipulated that this action encompassed the degrees offered by CWSL at the time of this action, as listed at the end of this letter as the Consolidated List of Currently Offered

Degrees. 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 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.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter is being sent to the chair of California Western School of Law's governing board. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the CWSL 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 California Western School of Law 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/bgd

Cc: Phillip Doolittle, Commission Chair
Lisa Ferreira, ALO
Michael Whitton, Board Chair
Members of the Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 team
Barbara Gross Davis, Vice President

Consolidated List of Currently Offered Degrees

Juris Doctorate

Juris Doctorate/Master of Business Administration (with San Diego State University)

Juris Doctorate/Master of Social Work (with San Diego State University)