

July 8, 2020

Mr. Peter Hsieh
President
Northwestern Polytechnic University
47671 Westinghouse Drive
Fremont, CA 94539

Dear President Hsieh:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Northwestern Polytechnic University (NPU) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 26, 2020. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 to NPU April 29 to May 1, 2020. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by NPU prior to the Seeking Accreditation Visit 2 and the institution's May 4, 2020 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Dr. Jay Thompson, Chair of the Board of Directors, Paul Choi, Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer, Dr. Nelly Mangarova, Chief Academic Officer, Mark Schultz, Corporate Counsel/Director of Human Resources, and Monica Sinha, Director of Admissions. 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 fall 2025 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2026
4. Schedule the Mid-Cycle Review to begin on May 1, 2023
5. Schedule an Interim Report to be submitted by November 1, 2022 to address:
 - a. the governing board involvement in strategic planning, overall institutional governance, self-evaluation, and board member development.
 - b. the Faculty Assembly's committee structures.
 - c. a marketing and enrollment strategy that complements the institution's enrollment plans.
 - d. a plan to support and retain domestic students both academically and financially.

The Commission commends NPU in particular for the following:

1. A highly-developed, well-structured, and integrated planning processes, including a comprehensive strategic plan, and complementary subsidiary plans.
2. The intense involvement of faculty—both full-time and adjunct—in university governance, planning, and decision-making.
3. The high-quality academic support services provided to meet the university’s diverse student needs.
4. The infrastructure that has been put in place to ensure and oversee orderly and deliberate growth.
5. A well-functioning and integrated Institutional Research operation that provides relevant data and reports to academic and administrative departments and the Board of Directors. While increasing its capacity to advanced levels, Institutional Research has become a collaborative partner in the assessment of program and institutional learning outcomes and in academic program review. The Board is commended for regularly reviewing and monitoring key performance metrics related to the University’s Strategic Plan.
6. The academic preparation of students to meet evolving industry requirements and expectations.

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

1. Continue maturing its governing Board so that the Board may fulfill its designated role in guiding the institution. The Board should ensure that it is involved in reviewing and approving all of the university’s strategic and operational plans; that it determines an appropriate governance relationship between itself and the newly-established Faculty Assembly; that it brings to bear appropriate external resources to help in further Board development and enhancement; that it structures and implements a formal process of systematic self-evaluation; and that it institutes a process to refresh Board membership, such as establishing a provision for term limits [CFR 3.9].
2. Reform and reconfigure the Faculty Assembly committee structures to maximize efficiency and streamline committee participation [CFR 3.10].
3. Utilize the institution’s formal academic processes more intentionally to support the faculty’s demonstrated leadership in the development of flexible and innovative courses and programs that respond to the needs of a changing workforce and student population and that sustain and enhance a quality curriculum that is reflective of the character of NPU [CFR 3.10].
4. Vigorously pursue marketing and enrollment strategies that complement the institution’s ambitious enrollment projections and clearly reflect and implement a well-defined branding of the institution’s mission and vision. Achieving appropriate levels of course and program enrollments will support the institution’s educational model of project-based learning and student-to-student collaboration and interaction [CFR 4.6].
5. Put in place a faculty staffing plan that is well articulated with the university’s enrollment plan and brings a cadre of highly qualified, demographically and experientially diverse faculty with doctorates from a range of higher education institutions [CFR 4.6].

6. Develop and implement a comprehensive program of academic support and financial resources to attract and retain domestic students [CFR 4.6].

In taking this action to grant Initial Accreditation, the Commission confirms that NPU 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, NPU 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.

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

Northwestern Polytechnic University 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 offered by NPU 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 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.

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

Cc: Phillip Doolittle, Commission Chair
Paul Choi, ALO
Jerome Thompson, Board Chair
Members of the Seeking Accreditation Visit #2 team
Tamela Hawley, Vice President

Attachment: Consolidated List of Currently Offered Degrees

Northwestern Polytechnic University
Consolidated List of Currently Offered Degrees

Program	Level	Modality
Bachelor in Business Administration and Information Sciences	Bachelors	On-Site
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science	Bachelors	On-Site
Master in Business Administration	Masters	On-Site
Master of Science in Computer Science	Masters	On-Site
Master of Science in Electrical Engineering	Masters	On-Site