



The Association of Theological Schools
The Commission on Accrediting

Monday, June 10, 2019

José Santiago
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Dear Director Santiago,

The Board of Commissioners met in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on June 3-4, 2019, and included on its agenda Dominican Study Center of the Caribbean's recent comprehensive visit and the resulting report by the evaluation committee.

After reviewing the information in light of the pertinent Commission Standards and *Procedures*, the Board voted:

1. To reaffirm the accreditation of Dominican Study Center of the Caribbean for a period of five years, with the next comprehensive evaluation visit in spring of 2024, one term before the period of accreditation expires on July 31, 2024. (See notification of institutional name change below.)
Rationale if less than maximum period: While the school has done tremendous work in the self-study process, especially commendable while recovering from the devastating hurricanes of 2017, the newness of the change in governance control, the current absence of a guiding institutional strategic plan, and the transition in senior university leadership combine to cause the evaluation committee to recommend less than the maximum period of reaffirmation.
NOTE: this comprehensive evaluation visit also served to confirm that the school continues to meet applicable Commission Standards, particularly Standards 1, 7, and 8, following its substantive change in governing control.
2. To approve the following degree programs:
 - Master of Divinity
 - Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology (Professional MA)
 - Master of Arts (Biblical Studies) (Academic MA)
3. To approve the following extension site(s): None
4. To grant approval to offer comprehensive distance education: None
5. To encourage that attention be given to maintaining and enhancing these distinctive strengths:
 - a. A clarity of mission and devotion to the Dominican charism which enhances the Dominican identity of the university
 - b. A dedication to diversity and inclusion, demonstrated by students from religious orders, diocesan settings, laity, and Protestant ministers studying together in the MDiv program and enriching the learning of the community
 - c. An entrepreneurial spirit seen in the addition of certificate programs designed for enrichment and personal growth and in thinking creatively about how to reach additional constituencies.
6. To encourage that attention be given to the following areas of needed growth during the next period of accreditation, with each area linked to a specific Standard:

- a. To include opportunities for human and spiritual formation and for capacity in the practice of ministry for laypersons in the professional degrees (M.Div. and M.A.P.T.; sections 2.4 and 2.5 of Degree Program Standards A and B)
 - b. To ensure the presence of an adequate number of library support staff and access to enhanced electronic library resources and databases (Standard 4, sections 4.5.2 and 4.5.5)
 - c. To further implement the enrollment strategy (Standard 6, Preamble)
 - d. To foster an institutional environment characterized by the effective exchange of information (Standard 8, section 8.5.2)
7. To require the following reports addressing areas of needed improvement, with each action below linked to one or more specific Standards:
- a. To require a report by November 1, 2019, regarding:
 - (i) The development of policies for the appropriate and ethical use of instructional technology, digital media, and the Internet (Standard 2, section 2.10);
 - (ii) Updated handbooks clarifying the rights and responsibilities for faculty, students, and staff (Standard 5, section 5.1.5; Standard 6, section 6.3.1; and Standard 8, section 8.1.3);
 - (iii) Clarification of the transfer of credit policy (Educational Standard, section ES.7.2.3);
 - (iv) The addition of a public statement of educational effectiveness to the school's website (Commission *Policy Manual*, section V.G.3.c).
 - b. To require a report by November 1, 2022, demonstrating that the distinctive institutional identity of the theological school is comprehensively ensured and embraced within the university (Commission *Policies and Procedures*, section III.B.4). The report should give particular attention to planning and evaluation (Standard 1), the coherence of the curriculum (Standard 3), the composition, workload, and evaluation of the faculty given the small size of the institution's regular faculty, its heavy reliance on adjunct faculty, and the need for the faculty who teach in a program on a continuing basis to exercise responsibility for the planning, design, and oversight of its curriculum and have workloads that permit adequate attention to students, to scholarly pursuits, and to other ecclesial and institutional concerns (Standard 5), governance (Standard 7), and institutional resources, including adequate number of personnel and adequate finances (Standard 8).
8. To acknowledge notification of an institutional name change, *from* Dominican Study Center of the Caribbean *to* Graduate School of Theology and Ministry in Puerto Rico, St. Albert the Great. (The letter of notification refers to the school's former name as Graduate School of Theology and Ministry (CEDOC), which is how the school was referred to verbally throughout the evaluation visit.)

Actions taken during the 2019 summer meeting of the Board of Commissioners are effective as of **June 4, 2019**. Please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Barbara Mutch
Director of Accreditation

/cmt

cc: calcaraz@ucb.edu.pr