



July 6, 2018

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Jennie Russell, Interim President
Urshan College and Urshan Graduate School of Theology
700 Howdershell
Florissant, MO 63031

Dear President Russell:

This letter is formal notification of action taken by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Board of Trustees (“the Board”) concerning Urshan College and Urshan Graduate School of Theology (“the System”). This action is effective as of the date the Board acted, June 28, 2018. In taking this action, the Board considered materials from the most recent comprehensive evaluation, including, but not limited to: the Assurance Filing the System submitted, the report from the comprehensive evaluation team, the report of the Institutional Actions Council (IAC) Hearing Committee, and the institutional responses to these reports.

Summary of the Action: The System has been granted the status of Candidate for Accreditation. The term of candidacy is four years. The System must host an evaluation, known as a biennial evaluation, two years after Candidacy is granted to determine whether it is making reasonable progress toward meeting accreditation requirements by the end of the Candidacy period and whether it continues to meet the Eligibility Requirements and Assumed Practices. The Board action scheduled the System’s biennial evaluation for 2019-20. The date of the next comprehensive evaluation for initial accreditation will be identified in official HLC records as 2021-22, with the expectation that such visit will occur in Fall 2021 to allow for Board action by June 2022.

The System is approved to offer Associate’s degrees, Bachelor’s degrees and undergraduate-level certificates through Urshan College, and Master’s degrees and graduate-level certificates through Urshan Graduate School of Theology consistent with its mission and subject to HLC review under applicable substantive change policy.

Institutional Disclosure: The institution must accurately disclose its status as a Candidate for Accreditation.¹ While Candidacy represents a form of affiliation with the Higher Learning Commission, it is not accredited status. If the institution chooses to reference its Candidacy status in advertising and recruiting materials or other document or location, that disclosure must accurately describe the institution’s status as a Candidate for Accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission. The institution will accompany that reference with information on how to contact

¹ CRRT.A.10.010 Eligibility Requirements

HLC. HLC reserves the right to issue a public statement or Public Disclosure Notice (PDN) correcting any incorrect or misleading information the Commission determines that an institution has publicized about its status.²

Board Rationale

The Board based its action on the following findings made with regard to the System:

- The System has demonstrated that it meets all the Eligibility Requirements, Assumed Practices, and Federal Compliance Requirements required of a system seeking Candidate for Accreditation status.
- The System has demonstrated that it has the capacity to meet the Criteria for Accreditation, including all Core Components, within the period of Candidacy.

Supplemental Information about Early Initial Accreditation: As a general matter, Candidates for Accreditation also have the opportunity to file an application for early initial accreditation – before the completion of the four-year candidacy term – and host an on-site evaluation to determine whether they meet the requirements to become accredited. The System may seek early initial accreditation in 2019-20 provided that it has graduated or will graduate its first graduating class within thirty days of any Board action in June 2020 to award early initial accreditation. This evaluation may be in addition to, or instead of, the biennial evaluation. Regardless, the System is limited to one evaluation for early initial accreditation during the System’s four-year Candidacy. The Board has the discretion to continue the System in Candidacy, instead of granting early initial accreditation, if a determination is made that one or more Core Components are Not Met or Met with Concerns, or if a recommendation to grant early initial accreditation is conditioned upon interim monitoring, or if the Board otherwise determines that continuation of Candidacy is warranted.³ If the System applies for early initial accreditation and is not successful in gaining accreditation, the System will be scheduled for an evaluation for initial accreditation toward the end of the four-year Candidacy period, or no later than Fall 2021 to allow for Board action by June 2022.

Next Steps in the HLC Review Process

Updated Assurance Filing: The System must provide information to update the Assurance Filing assembled at the time the System was evaluated for candidacy. The updated Assurance Filing will address specific areas of concern identified by the Candidacy visit team and provide information relevant to the System’s continued progress toward meeting the Criteria for Accreditation. While the System need not write to them specifically, the System must also continue to meet the Eligibility Requirements and Assumed Practices. (Federal compliance is not a component of the Biennial Evaluation.)

² FDCRA.10.070, Public Information

³ INST.B.20.030, Accreditation

Biennial Evaluation: The System will host a biennial evaluation in 2019-2020 that will include on-site evaluations of both Urshan College and Urshan Graduate School of Theology to determine whether the System is making sufficient progress toward meeting the Criteria for Accreditation and continues to meet all the Eligibility Requirements and Assumed Practices, and whether a recommendation to continue the schedule of Candidacy may be made.

Institutional Actions Council Review: The Institutional Actions Council (IAC) will review the documents associated with the evaluation to determine whether the schedule of Candidacy may be continued because the System is making sufficient progress toward meeting the Criteria for Accreditation and continues to meet all the Eligibility Requirements and Assumed Practices. Alternatively, if the System fails to continue to meet all the Eligibility Requirements and Assumed Practices, or is not making sufficient progress toward meeting the Criteria for Accreditation, the IAC may recommend that the Board withdraw Candidacy.

HLC Disclosure Obligations

The Board action resulted in changes that will be reflected in a Statement of Accreditation Status as well as an Institutional Status and Requirements Report. The Statement of Accreditation Status, including the dates of the last and next comprehensive evaluation visits, will be posted to the HLC website.

HLC policy⁴ requires that a summary of Board actions be sent to appropriate state and federal agencies and accrediting associations. It also will be published on HLC's website. The summary will include this HLC action regarding the System.

At this time, HLC will reassign the institution from its current HLC Staff Liaison, Dr. Anthea Sweeney, to Dr. Gigi Fansler. Please be assured that Dr. Sweeney will work with Dr. Fansler to create a smooth transition.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you have questions about any of the information in this letter, please contact Dr. Fansler.

Sincerely,



Barbara Gellman-Danley
President

⁴ COMM.A.10.010, Commission Public Notices and Statements

Cc: Chair of the Board of Trustees, Urshan College and Urshan Graduate School of Theology
Evaluation Team Chair
IAC Hearing Committee Chair
Rusty Monhollon, Assistant Commissioner for Academic Affairs, Missouri Department of
Higher Education
Gigi Fansler, Vice President for Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission
Anthea Sweeney, Vice President for Legal and Governmental Affairs, Higher Learning
Commission