

Conclusion of Faculty Complaint to NWCCU November 2023

Dear Faculty,

On or about September 25, 2022 a [Complaint](#) was sent to the Northwest Commission for Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) from the Faculty Council, by then Faculty Chair, Dr. Leland Saunders. In December 2022 a letter was sent to Interim President Menjares requesting responses to 4 or 5 questions related to the Complaint. The University's response was sent on December 22, 2022. There was no further communication from the Commission regarding the Complaint or SPU's response to it.

Those involved in the communication of the complaint believed the review of the complaint might be rolled into the NWCCU Accreditation visit in May 2023. They also believed there was a possibility of a separate evaluator being added to the site visit. Hearing nothing, in April 2023 SPU once again inquired of NWCCU regarding the Complaint and response. In reply the Commission notified SPU that the University's response (from December 2022) had been lost and requested a second copy. It was sent immediately.

After the May 2023 site visit, it was believed that NWCCU would return its attention to the complaint. It was communicated to the Academic Liaison Officer (ALO) Dr. Sheila Steiner that a faculty member shared a copy of the complaint letter with the visiting team.

In mid-July, following the June Commission meeting, NWCCU requested a third copy of the December response, indicating that they were meeting to address the complaint.

On August 2, 2023, NWCCU [responded](#) and notified Dr. Saunders that the complaint was wrapped into the accreditation visit. As noted in that August communication, the NWCCU addressed the concerns with the recommendation found in the [official visit response](#) and considered the complaint closed.

As the new Faculty Chair and President, we would like to share additional timeline details:

- Dr. Steiner repeatedly reached out to NWCCU to follow up on the complaint (December 1, 2022 – October 18, 2023), with little to no response.
- The complaint was mentioned in the confidential report from the Evaluation Team at the conclusion of their visit, but without clarity on how the complaint would be responded to.
- Though not dated, a response from President Ramaswamy arrived via email on August 2, 2023 directly to Dr. Saunders' email account. Given summer schedules, the letter was passed the same day to Dr. John Hossler, current Faculty Chair.
- Dr. Hossler then began working with Dr. Steele and Dr. Steiner to request a more official statement from NWCCU.
- Responding to Dr. Steiner, Dr. Ron Larsen emailed to say he had been following the wrong NWCCU Policy and apologized for not sending the letter, as required, to President Porterfield.
- On October 22, 2023 the original letter sent to Dr. Saunders (still not dated) was delivered to the President's Office via email from Dr. Ron Larsen, stating NWCCU included the complaint in its review of evidence for reaffirmation, and specifically cited SPU as out of compliance in Recommendation 4 in part based on this evidence. NWCCU considers the matter closed.
 - Recommendation 4: Spring 2023 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - The authority, roles, and responsibility of the Board of Trustees and all related entities (i.e.,

the Free Methodist Church) be clearly delineated, be described on its website and in its public documents, and provide SPU with sufficient autonomy to fulfill its mission. (2020 Standard(s) 2.A.1; Eligibility Requirement 9)

Since the filing of the Complaint, SPU administration and Dr. Steiner, our Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) have complied with all NWCCU requests for information in a timely manner. Though the Complaint is closed, we also recognize the frustration in the process.

We, as Faculty Chair, on behalf of the Faculty, and President are committed to working together to address the concerns cited in the Commission's Recommendation as a way of moving forward together.

Sincerely,

Dr. John Hossler

President Porterfield