

La Sierra University is accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) and is currently Accredited on Warning by WSCUC.

La Sierra University remains fully accredited while under WASC warning. Student credits and financial aid remain secure, and credits will continue to transfer normally.

A warning letter is not a loss of accreditation. It is the lowest level of sanction administered by WASC. The action is part of WASC's compliance protocol in keeping with its continuous review process.

The university is actively addressing the documentation requests and fully anticipates reaffirmation of ongoing accreditation.

Financial standing: La Sierra University holds a perfect 3.0 Financial Responsibility Composite Score (FRCS) from the U.S. Department of Education and a 'B+' grade for its strong finances from the 2026 Forbes College Financial Grades which analyzed the financial health of more than 900 private nonprofit colleges and universities around the nation. In California, La Sierra ranked in the top third, and among the 11 Seventh-day Adventist colleges included in the report, it received the highest grade.

Our students have ranked us among the top universities in the West and the nation in 2026 best colleges guides from U.S. News & World Report and The Wall Street Journal.

Please view a statement below from La Sierra University President Christon Arthur which is also [published in Spectrum Magazine](#):

A Perfect Federal Score, a Top-Tier Forbes Grade, and a WASC Warning

Forbes rates La Sierra University a B+ for its financial health. The U.S. Department of Education gives it a perfect financial-responsibility score. U.S. News & World Report, The Wall Street Journal, and our own students rank it among the strongest universities in the West. So why, on July 9, did our accreditor place La Sierra on Warning?

What the Warning Means

At its June 26, 2026, meeting, the WASC Senior College and University Commission placed La Sierra University on Warning. While on Warning, La Sierra remains fully accredited. We are required to submit reports to the Commission in the fall of 2026 and again in the fall of 2027.

To address the question, let us place the Warning from WASC in a broader context: the U.S. higher education sector, arguably more scrutinized than most. La Sierra University, which is a part of this system, is not exempt from this scrutiny.

Forbes Findings

In 2026, Forbes reported its annual College Financial Grades based on the financial health of more than 900 private nonprofit colleges with enrollments of 500 or more students, after reworking its analysis to focus on colleges' true liquidity.

Nearly 50% of the colleges Forbes graded scored C or lower, with 27% receiving the lowest grade, D. In contrast, La Sierra University scored a B+, earning recognition as financially strong. Of the 53 colleges and universities reviewed in California, La Sierra ranked in the top third, and among the 11 Seventh-day Adventist colleges nationwide, it received the highest grade.

The Federal Numbers

The Composite Financial Index (CFI) is a holistic metric used to assess a higher education institution's long-term financial health. It combines four core financial ratios, Primary Reserve, Viability, Return on Net Assets, and Net Income, into a single weighted score, where 3.0 indicates the threshold for financial stability. According to this metric, La Sierra University is also doing well. Its CFI is 5.7, with a three-year average of 6.8, well above the established stability threshold.

At the federal level, the U.S. Department of Education uses a modified version of the CFI, the Financial Responsibility Composite Score (FRCS), to gauge an institution's ability to participate in financial aid programs. The federal FRCS ranges from -1.0 to 3.0. Schools scoring 1.5 or greater are considered financially passing, while those scoring below 1.0 are categorized as failing. La Sierra University has a perfect FRCS of 3.0, indicating exceptional financial health and stability.

U.S. News & World Report Findings

La Sierra University is a regional university located in the West. For over a decade, U.S. News & World Report has ranked La Sierra University highly because of its impact on students.

In 2026, U.S. News & World Report ranked La Sierra:

- #41 Best Regional University in the West
- #18 Best Value for Money in the West

- #3 for Social Mobility in the West

Clearly, U.S. News & World Report, using its comparative methodology, ranks La Sierra University highly when compared to our peers.

It is worth noting that public perceptions of U.S. universities are becoming less positive. The public questions the value and return on investment, and some wonder whether a university education is worth it. These are important questions, and the U.S. News & World Report methodology incorporates these elements. Their findings indicate that La Sierra University is a good value for the money, has a strong ROI, and provides social mobility to its graduates.

The Wall Street Journal Findings

In 2026, The Wall Street Journal ranked La Sierra University among the top national universities. La Sierra University is ranked:

- #169 of 584 national universities. This is the first time La Sierra University has ranked in the top 200, it is the only Adventist University in the top 200 and is ranked ahead of most private universities in California.
- #56 out of 584 for Student Experience
- #35 out of 584 for Social Mobility

Niche Findings

Niche is a platform that rates universities to help families find the right fit for their children by combining hard public data with reviews from students, parents, and alumni. In 2026, Niche ranked our academics and the university overall as strong and provided narratives from currently enrolled students. Here is a sample of our students' narratives, in their own words:

- La Sierra University's reputation is its supportive and engaging faculty, with professors offering personal attention due to the small class sizes.
- The community atmosphere is welcoming, where students feel like part of a family rather than just numbers.
- There are resources for academic support, such as writing and tutoring centers.
- There is a strong focus on academics.
- La Sierra is a beautiful campus committed to a faith-based education.
- La Sierra provides a distinctive, close-knit educational experience.

- A great place to have in-depth conversations with peers or professors because this is a small community that allows one to be close to peers.
- A good Christian school that is based on Christian values.
- The campus is peaceful and welcoming, which makes it a nice place to study and stay focused. I've also met some great friends here who are supportive and make college more enjoyable.
- A great experience. I would recommend it. I like all my classes and enjoy my professors.
- I love La Sierra. I had a good experience. There are also many opportunities for research with professors.
- One thing that really stood out to me was how supportive the professors are. They genuinely care about their students and want to see us succeed, not just academically but personally too. I never felt like just another number in that class, which made a big difference in my confidence and motivation.
- I've met some amazing people here. It's easy to make connections, and the environment encourages us to grow not just academically, but personally, too. There are so many opportunities to get involved, try new things, and figure out what we are passionate about.
- La Sierra University has been a great place to study. The campus is beautiful, the professors really care about students, and there are lots of opportunities to get involved. It's a supportive environment that makes it easier to balance school and life.

Our students know us best. This brief sampling of their testimonials aligns with the quantitative findings from U.S. News & World Report, The Wall Street Journal, and Niche.

Making Sense of the Warning

So, how do I make sense of the WASC Warning letter? I am not sure.

Forbes and the U.S. Department of Education look at our finances and see strength. Our students, Niche, The Wall Street Journal, and U.S. News & World Report recognize our strong academics, our impact on students, our graduates' social mobility, and the value of a La Sierra education and its solid ROI.

Like every U.S. university, La Sierra University is operating in a higher education landscape currently defined by decreasing public trust, enrollment cliffs, intense political scrutiny, shifting technology, and constant financial pressures, and we feel that reality too. But

feeling those pressures is not the same as being defined by them. Though La Sierra University has weathered past difficulties and change, the most recent year's enrollment increases highlight that this is not a university that is weakening. It is a university responding to today's challenges with clarity and purpose.

Contrary to the implications of WASC's Warning, La Sierra University is a thriving, growing institution that will continue its upward trajectory, functioning as a vehicle of empowerment and transformation for our students.

We are actively gathering the evidence WASC has requested, and we are confident in what it will show. This academic community remains forward-focused. La Sierra University's best days are ahead.

Dr. Christon Arthur, Ph.D., MBA
President
La Sierra University