



June 25, 2008

Ruben Arminana
President
Sonoma State University
1801 East Cotati Avenue
Rohnert Park, CA 94928

Dear President Arminana:

At its meeting on June 19-20, 2008, the Commission considered the report of the team that conducted the Capacity and Preparatory (CPR) visit to Sonoma State University (SSU) on March 12-14, 2008. The Commission also reviewed the University's Capacity and Preparatory report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Eduardo Ochoa, ALO Elaine Sundberg, and Co-Chair of the Accreditation Review Committee Andy Merrifield. The updates and information you provided along with your observations about the review were helpful.

The Commission noted that this review was framed both by the University's Proposal and the issues raised by the Commission in its June 28, 2004 action letter. The Institutional Proposal identified several key priorities for the University, including diversity, general education unique to the Sonoma State experience, assessment and program review, and faculty development. In addition, in its previous action letter, the Commission identified concerns regarding the institution's lack of progress in addressing Commission Standards and previous team findings regarding planning and the assessment of student learning. The evaluation team found that the University has begun to engage these issues, though as reflected in the team report, there is further progress to be made. The Commission urges the University to use the WASC comprehensive review process to organize productive, forward-looking conversations about SSU's future to address these issues.

The Commission endorsed the findings, commendations, and recommendations of the team, and emphasizes the importance of the recommendations cited in the six distilled areas in the team report. Recognizing Sonoma State University's initial efforts to rebuild a sense of community, the Commission expects that those efforts will lead to a much-needed conversation about the University's bifurcated mission. The Commission noted that a commonly-understood sense of purpose is essential to the University's educational effectiveness.

By the time of its Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) visit, the University should:

- 1) address systematically the elements articulated in recent expressions of concern so that it can strengthen the sense of community and enable the accomplishment of other critical aspirations;
- 2) reach consensus on a clear definition of the University's complex mission so that planning efforts are informed by this understanding;
- 3) yoke disparate planning efforts into a single, respected process;
- 4) assure that educational outcomes directly drive appropriate assessments that yield information used in course and programmatic improvement;
- 5) in the context of a clear mission and coherent planning, reach agreement on the long-proposed general education reform with a

985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100
Alameda, CA 94501
PHONE: 510.748.9001
FAX: 510.748.9797
E-MAIL: wascstr@wascsenior.org
INTERNET: www.wascweb.org

CHAIR
Sherwood Lingenfelter
Fuller Theological Seminary

VICE CHAIR
Florence Mitchell
California State University, Bakersfield

Mark Bookman
American Jewish University

W. Bernard Bowler
Public Member

Jerry Dean Campbell
Claremont School of Theology

Anna DiStefano
Fielding Graduate University

James Donahue
Graduate Theological Union

Jackie Donath
California State University, Sacramento

Aimée Dorr
University of California, Los Angeles

John Eshelman
Seattle University

John Fitzpatrick
Schools Commission Representative

Laurence Gould
Public Member

Brice Harris
Community and Junior Colleges
Commission Representative

Linda Johnsrud
University of Hawaii

Roberts Jones
Public Member

Christina Maslach
University of California, Berkeley

Leroy Morishita
San Francisco State University

William Plater
Indiana University -
Purdue University, Indianapolis

Sheldon Schuster
Kock Graduate Institute

Eleanor Dantzier Siebert
Mount St. Mary's College

Carmen Sigler
San Jose State University

Larry Vanderhoef
University of California, Davis

Mary (Sue) Wesselkamper
Chaminade University of Honolulu

Michael Whyte
Azusa Pacific University

Paul Zingg
California State University, Chico

STAFF
Ralph A. Wolff
President and Executive Director

Therese A. Cannon
Executive Associate Director

Richard A. Winn
Associate Director

Barbara Wright
Associate Director

Michelle Behr
Assistant Director

Ingrid Walker
Assistant Director

Shana Antoine
Finance & Operations Manager

timeline and demonstrable progress; and 6) extend its diversity efforts through pragmatic strategies to reach its goals. SSU will be expected to demonstrate significant progress in all of these areas.

In addition, the University's proposal establishes an expectation of several key outcomes, including: developing and utilizing indicators of performance; conducting a complete set of program reviews for academic, co-curricular, and non-academic programs; and using assessment data and evidence as a basis for reflection and improvement. The University will need to demonstrate in its Educational Effectiveness Review significant progress in meeting these goals, specifically with regard to program review and an emphasis on using student learning outcomes and direct assessment of student work to guide improvement and decision making. Further, the University will need to document that it is using evidence of student learning results, within and across programs, by analyzing, sharing, and using data in many facets of its curricular improvement, budgeting, and planning. (CFRs 1.3, 1.5, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 3.8, 4.2, 4.4)

The Commission acted to:

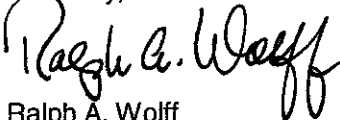
1. Receive the Capacity and Preparatory Review report.
2. Continue the accreditation of Sonoma State University.
3. Proceed with the scheduled Educational Effectiveness Review visit on October 7-9, 2009.
4. Request that the institution incorporate its response to the issues raised in this action letter and to the major recommendations of the CPR team report into its Educational Effectiveness Review report.

In addition, you are expected to prepare a brief analysis of how Sonoma State University meets the expectations established in the recent changes to the Standards and Criteria for Review, which are effective July 1, 2008. These changes can be found on the WASC website at www.wasc senior.org. You may include this analysis in an appendix to your EER report.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the Office of the President of the California State University System and the Chair of the California State University System Board of Trustees within one week. It is the Commission's expectation that the team report and this action letter will be widely disseminated throughout the institution to promote engagement and improvement, and to support the institution's response to the specific issues identified in the team report.

Please contact me if you have any questions or comment about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Ralph A. Wolff
President and Executive Director

RW/iw/aa

cc: Sherwood Lingenfelter, Commission Chair
Board Chair
Elaine Sundberg, ALO
Members of the Team
Ingrid Walker