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PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Ralph A. Wolff

June 26, 2009

Paul Zingg
President
California State University, Chico
400 West First Street
Chico, CA 95929

Dear President Zingg:

At its meeting on June 17-19, 2009, the Commission considered the report of the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) team that visited California State University, Chico (CSU Chico) on March 4-6, 2009. The Commission also had access to the Educational Effectiveness Review report prepared by CSU Chico prior to the visit, and to the documents relating to the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) visit conducted in spring 2007. It appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and found your comments to be most helpful.

CSU Chico's Educational Effectiveness Report was framed around a set of institutional themes related to the WASC Standards of Accreditation. These themes focused on the nature of student engagement at a residential campus, refining the process of academic program review, the innovative use of technology, and increasing institutional effectiveness and accountability. The report was clearly written and informed by a spirit of candor. Supporting documentation was easily located on the institution's website, and additional materials were made available in the team room during the visit.

The Educational Effectiveness Review completes the comprehensive review cycle begun with the acceptance of the University's revised Institutional Proposal, and continued with the Capacity and Preparatory Review visit in March 2007. In receiving the report of the Capacity and Preparatory Review team, the Commission asked the University to "demonstrate that it has put into place the infrastructure for ongoing, comprehensive and systematic assessment of student learning [and] that support is given for faculty and staff to develop the capacities to assess and use data effectively." It also asked the campus to better articulate and evaluate 'The Chico Experience' and demonstrate "continued attention to and success in the area of diversity."

The Educational Effectiveness Review team commended the institution for "embracing the challenge of defining and refining The Chico Experience," as well as for its "intentional progress on the Diversity Scorecard," its good work in developing a comprehensive First-Year Experience program, its substantial success in assessing student learning, its comprehensive program review design, its achievements in distance, online, and off-campus programs, and its efforts in developing performance indicators that support each of the campus's strategic goals. The team noted that "Chico has taken seriously the recommendations of the CPR review and has done significant and meaningful work to advance the overall educational effectiveness of the university."

The Commission endorsed the major findings and recommendations of the EER visiting team and urged CSU Chico to give them full consideration. Additionally, the Commission highlighted a number of items for continued institutional attention.

Engaging Students at a Residential Campus. Increasing student engagement was a major focus of CSU Chico's EER endeavors. The CPR team challenged the campus to better articulate and assess what it identifies as 'The Chico Experience.' The institution responded seriously to both dimensions of this challenge. At the end of its visit, the EER team further challenged the institution to continue to "find ways of extending the opportunities of a CSU Chico education to a broader diversity of students" and to "persist in a branding exercise grounded in a sharper understanding of the uniqueness" of that education. It called upon the University to "continue to challenge a culture still too grounded in alcohol abuse" and to "incorporate ways in which The First-year Experience connects integrally to The Chico Experience." [CFRs 1.2, 1.5, 2.11, 4.1, and 4.4 - 4.8] These are all extremely important endeavors and ones which the Commission endorses.

Refining the Assessment and Academic Program Review Process. A second area of institutional focus during the EER was that of enhancing assessment and program review endeavors. University activities have been quite successful on both fronts. The visiting team's major assessment recommendations were that the University continue to provide essential resources to support the significant work being undertaken, and that it focus more attention on assessing student learning at the graduate level. Regarding program review, the team recommended that the University's programs be asked to demonstrate how they are contributing to diversity and multicultural learning. In regard to General Education (GE), the team called upon the campus to "continue its 21st Century GE revisioning endeavor, including the refinement of GE mission and objectives, curriculum structure and pedagogy, GE assessment metrics, and program review and improvement." [CFRs 1.5, 2.3 - 2.7, 4.4 - 4.7] The Commission concurs with all of these recommendations.

Using Technology Innovatively. It was clear to both the CPR and the EER visiting teams that "instructional technology has a proud tradition at CSU Chico." Additionally, the University has "justifiably been celebrated as a pioneer" in extending access to students who might not otherwise be able to pursue postsecondary studies, through the use of various distance education modalities. Nevertheless, the EER team called upon the campus to revisit its distance, online, and off-campus programs to better determine the larger purposes to be served, the most appropriate students to be targeted, and the best practices for effectively reaching these students. According to the team, the complexities of varying funding bases and delivery modes, together with changing markets, intensifying competition, continuing innovations in the use of academic technology, and faculty workload issues "challenge the current model" that is dominant on campus. [CFRs 2.7, 3.6, 3.7, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7] The Commission agrees that a review of distance, online, and off-campus endeavors — including, but by no means limited to, its programs in Redding — should be a major institutional priority.

Increasing Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability. CSU Chico has made comprehensive strategic planning a major institutional priority and has had much success in doing so. [CFR 4.1] The EER visiting team found that "(e)ach of the four major divisions of the University has made a significant effort to develop a strategic plan that aligns the division's goals with the stated goals of the University's strategic plan [CFR 4.2]." Additionally, it is clear that the University is "committed to the concept that planning must be informed by analyzed data [4.3]," and that key performance indicators must be met in support of each of the strategic goals. However, while the establishment of an Enterprise Data Warehouse "has received applause from all areas of the University," the institution is "still not at the point where the big questions are being informed by data." The team viewed it as essential that the campus

focus on the most important performance indicators and establish targeted goals and measurable objectives to be reached over the next five years. The Commission concurs.

Finally, the Commission wishes to acknowledge the financial challenges that lie ahead for CSU Chico and the other CSU campuses. It appreciated the information that you provided.

Given the above, the Commission acted to:

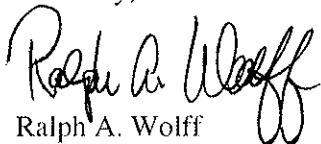
1. Receive the report of the Educational Effectiveness Review team and reaffirm the accreditation of California State University, Chico.
2. Schedule the Capacity and Preparatory Review for spring 2019 and the Educational Effectiveness Review for fall 2020. The Institutional Proposal will be due in spring 2017.

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that California State University, Chico has satisfactorily addressed the Core Commitments to Institutional Capacity and Educational Effectiveness, and has successfully completed the multistage review conducted under the Standards of Accreditation. Between this action and the time of the next review, the institution is expected to continue its progress and be prepared to respond as expectations of institutional performance, especially with respect to educational effectiveness and student learning, further develop under the application of the *2008 Handbook of Accreditation*.

In accordance with Commission policy, copies of this letter will be sent to Chancellor Charles Reed and the chair of the CSU Board of Trustees in one week. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be widely disseminated throughout the institution to promote further engagement and improvement, and to support the institution's response to the specific issues identified in them

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

Sincerely,



Ralph A. Wolff
President and Executive Director

Cc: Sherwood Lingenfelter, Commission Chair
Charles Reed, CSU Chancellor
Jeffrey L. Bleich, Board of Trustees Chair
Arno Rethans, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Members of the Team
Richard Giardina