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PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Ralph A. Wolff

July 8, 2010

Milton A. Gordon
President
California State University, Fullerton
PO Box 34080
Fullerton, CA 92834-9480

Dear President Gordon:

At its meeting on June 16-18, 2010, the Commission considered the report of the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) team that conducted the visit to California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), on March 10-12, 2010. The Commission also reviewed the Capacity and Preparatory Review report submitted by CSUF prior to the visit and your letter of May 20, 2010. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit report with you and your colleagues. Your observations were very helpful.

CSUF's institutional proposal outlined three themes for the Capacity and Preparatory Review: Campus-Wide Planning, Student Learning, and Promoting Student Success.

The institution demonstrated a concentrated effort in its inquiry by developing outcome statements for each of the three themes. The team reported a faculty and staff deeply committed to and engaged with efforts to improve many aspects of the university, from advances in teaching technology and significant physical improvements, to impressive diversity initiatives, to the development of "nimbleness in its responsiveness" to various challenges. Additionally, the Commission was pleased to learn that despite current economic recession "there is...a largely democratic budget process that promotes transparency and open debate."

The Commission endorsed the seven recommendations of the CPR team. They are: 1) an examination of formal and informal structures for decision making, especially as the university addresses competing needs; 2) clarification of goals for planning and the alignment of those goals with performance indicators and budget allocation (CFRs 3.5, 4.1-4.3); 3) the development of long-term strategies for strengthening and maintaining infrastructure, recruitment, and retention of qualified faculty and staff (CFRs 3.1-3.2); 4) the full implementation of assessment processes, including the review of outcomes metrics and resulting improvements (CFRs 2.3-2.7, 4.5-4.6); 5) closing of the loop in advising processes and support to demonstrate both implementation of proposed recommendations as well as their effect on student success rates (CFRs 2.6, 2.10); 6) the continuous monitoring of resources sufficient in support of the university's values and priorities (CFR 3.5); and 7) readiness for the Educational Effectiveness

Review (EER) that demonstrates conclusive, documented results of coordinated and university-wide quality assurance and assessment efforts. (CFRs 4.6-4.8)

In addition, the Commission asks the university to give special consideration to the following areas:

Institutional Planning and Resource Management. The Commission noted that CSUF's Institutional Proposal was written in the fall of 2007 when the effects of economic recession were not yet evident, whereas the Capacity and Preparatory Review report was submitted in the middle of the new economic realities of late 2009 and lamented "a fiscal reduction of incomparable proportions." In response to financial stress, CSUF has undertaken laudable work in its task-force studies and has identified valuable strategies and adjustments for improving and focusing more sharply on its mission in higher education. It is vital to CSUF's future that prudent steps be taken 1) to remain flexible in an era of fiscal restraints while resolute in aligning planning and budgeting to institutional mission, 2) to value agility while adhering to improvements based on well-informed decision making that is itself based on data, and 3) to move ahead with new understandings while honoring established processes, standards of quality, and steady commitments to support infrastructure. (CFRs 3.1, 3.5, 3.8, 3.11, 4.1-4.3)

Assessment of Student Learning and Success. Following the identification of student learning outcomes in the action letter of 2000 as an issue for further attention, the university included this topic as one of the major themes for the Institutional Proposal. The CPR visiting team noted impressive advances in this area and supports CSUF's "plans to significantly expand its efforts." CSUF has developed an impressive array of assessment artifacts and proven processes (student learning outcomes at all levels, rubrics for evaluation, faculty development programs in assessment). This ongoing assessment work should include aligning student learning outcomes with the university's mission, assuring the sustainability of these structures, and assessing the assessment processes themselves. Assessment findings are especially important as the institution monitors the effects of external and internal forces on planning informed by educational effectiveness data. Evidence of student learning can also be used to enhance the effectiveness of student success efforts in the EER phase. Such evidence will provide an important complement to statistical and survey data regarding graduation rates, retention, and student advising. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 2.12, 4.3)

The Commission acted to:

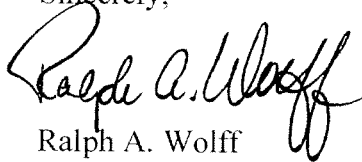
1. Receive the Capacity and Preparatory Review report and continue the accreditation of California State University, Fullerton.
2. Reschedule the Educational Effectiveness Review from fall 2011 to spring 2012. The Institutional Report is due 12 weeks prior to the scheduled visit.
3. Request that the 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. You may include this analysis in an appendix to your Educational Effectiveness Review report or incorporate it into the report.

In extending the time frame until the Educational Effectiveness Review, the Commission hopes to provide the institution with time to build upon its progress to date, so that by the time of the Educational Effectiveness Review, California State University, Fullerton, will be able to demonstrate it has moved on from well-founded processes and recommendations, prioritized its plans, dealt with the external and internal challenges to accomplishing those actions, and gathered concrete results of self-review traced directly to student and institutional learning.

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.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that the University undertook in preparing for and supporting this accreditation review. WASC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while assuring public accountability, and we are grateful for your continued support of our process. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Ralph A. Wolff
President and Executive Director

RW/bw

cc: Sherwood Lingenfelter, Commission Chair
Dorota Huizinga, ALO
Herbert L. Carter, Board Chair
Charles Reed, CSU Chancellor
Members of the CPR team
Barbara Wright and Keith Bell