



CHAIR
Linda K. Johnson
University of Hawaii

VICE CHAIR
Bernard Bosler
Public Member

Anna DiStefano
Felding Graduate University

James Donahue
Graduate Theological Union

Jackie Donath
California State University, Sacramento

D. Merrill Ewert
Fresno Pacific University

John Fitzpatrick
Schools Commission Representative

Harold Hewitt
Chapman University

Michael Jackson
University of Southern California

Roberts Jones
Public Member

Barbara Karlin
Golden Gate University

Margaret Kasimatis
Loyola Marymount University

Julia Lopez
Public Member

Thomas McFadden
*Community and Junior Colleges
Representative*

Horace Mitchell
California State University, Bakersfield

Leroy Morishita
San Francisco State University

William Plater
*Indiana University –
Purdue University, Indianapolis*

Stephen Privett, S.J.
University of San Francisco

Sharon Salinger
University of California, Irvine

Sheldon Schuster
Keck Graduate Institute

Carmen Sigler
San Jose State University

Ramon Torrecilha
Mills College

Timothy White
University of California, Riverside

Michael Whyte
Azusa Pacific University

Paul Zingg
California State University, Chico

PRESIDENT
Ralph A. Wolff

March 7, 2011

J. Michael Ortiz
President
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona
3801 Temple Avenue
Pomona, CA 91768

Dear President Ortiz:

At its meeting on February 16-18, 2011, the Commission considered the report of the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) team that conducted the visit to California State Polytechnic University, Pomona (Cal Poly Pomona) on October 20-22, 2010. The Commission also had access to the EER report and supporting documents prepared by the University prior to the visit, the institution's December 16, 2010 response to the visiting team report, and the documents relating to the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) visit conducted on October 8-10, 2008. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the review with you and Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Studies and Accreditation Liaison Officer Claudia Pinter-Lucke. Your comments were helpful.

Cal Poly Pomona's institutional proposal outlined three themes for this comprehensive review: 1) Institutional Excellence, 2) Evolution of the Teacher-Scholar, and 3) Student Success. The Commission noted that the University had worked diligently in all areas and had approached the review process with the full collaboration of the community.

The Commission's action letter of March 6, 2009, highlighted four major issues for special attention during the interval between the CPR and EER visits: 1) adoption and implementation of a strategic plan with clearly defined roles for faculty and administration, 2) utilization of results from an analysis of general education assessment, 3) increased completion of program reviews, and 4) demonstrated shared governance. In addition, the Commission requested an Interim Report addressing "implementation of the Academic Master Plan, a timeline and expected outcomes for completion of the Strategic Plan, and implementation of general education assessment." The report was received and reviewed by the Interim Report Committee (IRC) in June 2009. The IRC commended Cal Poly Pomona for progress made on these issues and recommended that the University clarify responsible persons and groups involved in strategic planning, the assessment of general education, data collection and analysis (especially in general education), and the further development of the general education assessment plan.

The Commission was pleased to see a number of positive developments in the relatively short period of time between the CPR and EER. Cal Poly Pomona has moved quickly to consolidate and align academic and university strategic planning across departments and colleges and has established clear mechanisms to inform the allocation of limited financial resources. The overwhelming majority of programs at Cal Poly Pomona have embraced and are now utilizing fully implemented program review processes that include the analysis of direct evidence of student learning assessments and data-based decisions related to curricular and co-curricular improvement.

Relative to shared governance, the EER visiting team confirmed that the University has “forged working relationships between campus administrators and faculty” and clarified shared governance “to a great extent,” and also noted that “mutual respect [between the faculty and administration] is evident.” In addition, Cal Poly Pomona has articulated and developed a unique model of faculty work and service that is now more commonly understood across all units of the University. The Commission acknowledged that this effort has the potential to enhance the already broad and deep polytechnic vision of the “learn by doing” philosophy.

Finally, in the area of general education assessment, the University has revised and simplified criteria and begun to develop rubrics with the goal of an imminent implementation of an improved plan. Although Cal Poly Pomona has made progress in designing an appropriate plan for the assessment of general education, work remains in this area, as noted below.

Cal Poly Pomona is to be commended for its energized responses to both the 2009 Commission action letter and the request for an Interim Report only months following the CPR visit and report to the Commission. Indeed, as the EER team report observed, the fact “that CPP strengthened the capacities identified in the 2008 review and initiated the implementation of its major planning and assessment systems is highly praiseworthy.” The Commission was particularly pleased by the visiting team’s finding that many areas of focus that were initially a “WASC exercise became institutionalized and are now part of the culture.”

The Commission endorsed the recommendations of the EER team and wished to emphasize the following areas for further attention and development:

Retention and Graduation Rates. The University has begun to plan efforts to address the CSU’s Graduation Initiative goals. The Commission recognizes the challenges of launching a coordinated effort to increase retention and graduation rates. With six-year graduation rates ranging from 49 to 53 percent, the CSU system goal to increase retention rates eight percentage points by 2016 will require concerted effort. Rates over the last reported three-year period are generally improving or stable in most categories at the University. The multiple programs and services that Cal Poly Pomona has created for enhancing student success need continuous monitoring over time in order to assess the efficacy of each program in meeting retention and graduation goals. The Commission appreciated your report of the actions that are already being taken to support this initiative. (CFRs 1.2, 2.6-2.7, 2.10, 2.13)

Assessment Plans and Program Review. Although steps have been taken to improve and sustain robust program review and assessment processes, some work in this area remains. The Commission noted the visiting team’s comment that “programs that are accredited by discipline-specific accreditation bodies must also meet the criteria of assessment of student learning established by those accrediting bodies. Many graduate programs, however, have not yet adopted plans for the assessment of student learning.” The Commission wished to convey that specialized accreditation should not replace established University program review processes unless those specialized accreditation reviews include extensive use of the results of student learning assessment as evidence of effectiveness and for purposes of improvement. The Commission also noted with some concern that the Cal Poly Pomona Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators shows that not all undergraduate and graduate programs have established assessment plans with demonstrated results. The Commission urges Cal Poly Pomona to move forward quickly with its work on student learning so that every program has adopted student learning outcomes and assessment plans. (CFRs 2.3-2.7, 4.4)

General Education Assessment. As highlighted in the team report, progress in the assessment of general education has lagged behind that of other academic programs and majors. The Commission agreed with the visiting team that “there is still much that needs to be done before the general education assessments can be administered and the results can be used to make decisions regarding the program.” More focus on the integration of assessment across the entire general education program is needed. While the Commission recognizes Cal Poly Pomona’s progress in revising, simplifying, and creating a more appropriate assessment plan for the general education program, the slow progress in creating rubrics for assessment remains a serious concern. The Commission expects that the University will commit substantial time and faculty involvement to finalizing all elements of the general education assessment plan, completing cycles of student learning and data collection, reflecting on the evidence being gathered, and taking concrete steps for general education program improvement and change. The Commission appreciated your endorsement of the team’s recommendations concerning assessment of general education and was pleased to see the University’s commitment to this undertaking. (CFRs 2.2, 2.3, 2.6, 2.7, 4.4)

Ongoing State Funding Challenges. Although not in any way a reflection on either the strong EER or Cal Poly Pomona’s leadership, the Commission noted the sharp decline in the financial resources provided by the State of California and the short- and long-term impact of the state budget on the California State University campuses. The Commission was especially concerned about the potential consequences of recently proposed education funding reductions on educational programs and student learning, and the ability of the campuses to sustain academic quality and effectiveness. Acknowledging that each campus will be affected differently and develop its own plan to address these changes, the Commission requested that Cal Poly Pomona share its plans for the changed level of state support and explain how the change has impacted its students, faculty and staff, and offerings. (CFRs 3.5, 4.1-4.3)

Given the above, the Commission acted to:

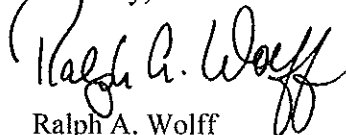
1. Receive the Educational Effectiveness Review report and reaffirm the accreditation of California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.
2. Schedule the Capacity and Preparatory Review for the fall of 2019 and the Educational Effectiveness Review for the spring of 2021.
3. Request an interim report to be due on March 1, 2013, addressing a) plans for improving retention and graduation, and results to date; b) progress in establishing student learning outcomes and assessment plans for all programs, and in implementing program review; c) steps taken to implement assessment plans for general education and any initial results; d) a summary of the University’s plans to address the effect of the decline in state funding, focusing particularly on academic programs, faculty resources and the impact on students, and a summary report on the consequences of the funding cuts to date.

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that California State Polytechnic University, Pomona has satisfactorily addressed the Core Commitments to Institutional Capacity and Educational Effectiveness, and has successfully completed the three-stage 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, particularly with respect to educational effectiveness and student 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

RW/DH/aa

cc: Linda Johnsrud, Commission chair
Claudia Pinter-Lucke, ALO
Charles Reed, CSU Chancellor
Herbert L. Carter, Chair, CSU Board of Trustees
Members of the EER team
Diane Harvey, WASC Vice President