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Mary Ellen Petrisko

March 6, 2015

Dr. Tomas Morales  
President  
California State University, San Bernardino  
5500 University Parkway  
San Bernardino CA 92407-2318

Dear Dr. Morales:

At its meeting February 18-20, 2015, the Commission considered the report of the review team that conducted the Accreditation Visit (AV) to California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) September 29 - October 2, 2014. Commission members reviewed the institutional report prepared by California State University, San Bernardino prior to the Offsite Review (OSR); supplemental materials requested by the team following the OSR; and the institution's December 17, 2014 response to the visiting team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the review with you and your colleagues Provost and Vice President Andrew Bodman, Associate Vice President and ALO Rong Chen, Professor/Faculty Senate Chair Treadwell Ruml, and Director Jodie Ullman. Your comments were helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations.

This reaffirmation review was conducted in keeping with the *2013 Handbook of Accreditation*, which requires institutions to address several components in their institutional reports. CSUSB participated in the reaffirmation process as a pilot institution, with a modified institutional report process. With regard to each of these components, the team found the following:

- 1. Meaning, quality, and integrity of the degree*  
The institution currently lacks a definitive understanding of what it means for a graduate to hold a CSUSB degree. The essential elements of the degree are in place, but an explanation of how they fit together as a coherent whole remains elusive. Measurements of quality require these definitions and the maturation of assessment capacity.
- 2. Core competencies, addressed in terms of number expected in this review cycle*  
Because the Visit was a modified Reaffirmation Review, the institution did not specifically assess the Core Competencies.
- 3. Educational quality: Student learning and standards of performance at graduation*  
Student learning outcomes, and the assessment process by which to evaluate the collection of these data, are still in their infancy. General Education learning outcomes are in transition, as the institution aligns a revised set of GE SLOs with the recently adopted institutional learning outcomes.

Identification of the artifacts which will be used to measure SLOs awaits their redefinition. The foundation for assessment is in place through the institution's significant investment in the institutional research function. Work remains to be done to identify the effectiveness of the multiple High Impact Practices currently being used.

4. *Student success*

The institution's retention and graduation rates are superior. Viewed through the lens of the students being served (a high rate of first generation, Pell-eligible, low- income and underrepresented minority - CSUSB is designated as an Hispanic Serving Institution) the numbers are even more notable. The number of bachelor degrees awarded to Latino students is among the highest in the nation, reflecting the significant diversity of the student population. The Four-Year Degree Pledge Program is a novel effort to help ensure a student's degree completion.

5. *Quality assurance and program review*

Program review is in a transitional stage. Reviews done under the previous system appear to be more assessment reports than reflective reviews of a program's totality. Reviews done under the newly-adopted system currently lack templates and/or guides for developing action plans based on the review, although the post-review process is establishing links between resource allocation and review recommendations. The new review process requires all programs to participate. It needs to be integrated with other efforts to assure that the process contributes to the attainment of institutional educational effectiveness.

6. *Sustainability and response to the changing ecology of higher education*

CSUSB has key structures in place to manage its organizational well-being. Notable in this structure is the inclusion of student representations on all major committees, reflecting the tangible sense of community and commitment to student success expressed consistently by all stakeholders during the visit. Faculty governance is mature. The institution is fiscally sound and deftly managed its resources during the recent recession, carefully minimizing the impact on academic and co-curricular units. There are plans in place for the addition of key human resources, including faculty. Library expansion is a priority for facilities, and general information resources are robust. As a state institution, most planning for the future follows central guidelines; an exception is the development of the Palm Desert Campus, which has rich facilities, a supportive community, and a growing student body.

California State University, San Bernardino is to be commended for:

**A Committed and Caring Community.** Faculty, staff, and administration separately and jointly expressed a passion for "improving the lives of [CSUSB] students and ensuring that students are retained and persist through graduation." That passion was expressed through innovative programs and individual attention, resulting in appreciable gains in retention and graduation rates. The sense of community has persisted and grown despite difficult economic

times, in a richly diverse environment. The institution enjoys a culture of mutual respect and support among its stakeholders.

**Outstanding Contributions of Faculty and Staff.** The passion for student success is realized in the individual contributions of faculty and staff, many of whom go beyond their normal job duties to ensure continued student development. The planned expansion of human resources is a systematic approach to assuring continuity of these contributions. A commitment to increase compensation, notwithstanding the constraints of collective bargaining, is evidence of the institution's appreciation of its workforce.

**Executive Leadership.** The senior administration is both visionary and effective. There is a well-voiced and clearly understood path for the discussion and creation of a strategic plan. Senior leaders are devoted to harnessing the energy that comes from the commitment to student success, and to furthering early efforts for institutional renewal.

**Development of the Palm Desert Campus.** The expansion of the Palm Desert Campus to a four-year curriculum, housed in superior facilities with exceptionally strong community support, is a realization of the institution's broader mission in greater San Bernardino County.

The Commission endorses the findings, commendations, and recommendations of the team and wishes to emphasize the following areas for continuing attention and development:

**Strategic Planning.** The issue of strategic planning has been reviewed by visiting teams and the Commission repeatedly during the years since the last reaffirmation. There is clear momentum towards the creation of an institution-wide plan. However, "the team is concerned that the momentum surrounding issues of strategic planning and assessment of student learning be maintained after the Accreditation Visit is concluded." The institution is encouraged to parlay the recent reaffirmation efforts into the codification of a comprehensive plan that both strengthens its current programs and plans for its future in a rapidly changing higher education landscape. The institution should also assure that planning is tied to resource allocation in order to heighten the probability of long-term institutional improvement. (CFRs 1.1, 3.1, 4.6 and 4.7)

**Building a Culture of Evidence.** CSUSB has established an effective institutional research function, drafted institutional learning outcomes, and revised its program review process. However, considerable work needs to be done, including: finalizing institutional learning outcomes; refining General Education outcomes; aligning GE and institutional outcomes; developing assessments for GE and ILOs; assessing which High Impact Practices contribute to student success; and fully implementing a program review process that is outcomes-focused, including closing the loop with respect to review recommendations. As the team notes: "What remains unclear is how the new model of program review will support institutional efforts to attain educational effectiveness throughout the university." The institution should also identify the assessment artifacts it will use to measure student progress. These may be expressed as the tactical manifestations of the final strategic plan, or developed in parallel to that plan. In addition, the institution is encouraged to craft specific plans for assessing the five core competencies, which will be a component in its next Reaffirmation Review. (CFRs 1.2, 2.2a, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, and 2.7)

**Meaning of the Degree.** While students are being retained and graduate in increasingly large numbers, the institution needs to bring the disparate achievements of its many programs (academic, co-curricular, and in the community) into a singular coherent explanation of the CSUSB experience. "The question remains: *What makes a CSUSB graduate a CSUSB graduate?*" There are many strong, exciting, and compelling activities occurring across the campus, but they occur relatively independent of one another. This makes "reviewing the use of assessment techniques, learning and student success data, continuous improvement efforts, resource alignment, and planning processes considerably more difficult." The institution should develop an explanation of the CSUSB degree that unites the varied experiences into a reasoned whole. (CFR 2.2, Standard 4)

Given the above, the Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Accreditation Visit team report and reaffirm the accreditation of California State University, San Bernardino for a period of seven years.
2. Schedule the next comprehensive review with the Offsite Review in spring 2021 and the Accreditation Visit in fall 2021.
3. Schedule a Mid-Cycle Review in spring 2019.
4. Request a Progress Report by October 1, 2015 to include:
  - a. A completed strategic plan and an accompanying implementation plan for that strategic plan.
  - b. A final list of approved Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and the set of refined General Education Learning Outcomes, showing the alignment of the ILOs with the GE learning outcomes.
5. Request an Interim Report by October 1, 2017 to include:
  - a. A completed Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI) that provides a list of the learning outcomes in column (1) (as opposed to a "yes" or "no" answer) and gives attention to the non-GPA data used in assessing each learning outcome (column (3)) and the use of evidence for making programmatic improvements based on assessment data (column (5)). Learning outcomes information should be provided for the Institutional Learning Outcomes, the General Education Learning Outcomes, Program Learning Outcomes, and the applicable Co-Curricular Learning Outcomes. Since the IEEI will be required for the Mid-Cycle Review two years after this Interim Report, this provides an opportunity for the institution to receive feedback on this description of educational effectiveness processes in advance of the Mid-Cycle Review.
  - b. Two specific examples that describe in detail the process of "closing the loop" on assessment in areas that do not fall under external professional accreditation. These examples should describe the learning outcomes, the data gathered, an analysis of the data, and the actions taken on the findings.
  - c. A description of the progress made in implementing the strategic plan.

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that California State University, San Bernardino has satisfactorily addressed the Core Commitments to Student Learning and Success; Quality and Improvement; and Institutional Integrity, Sustainability, and Accountability. California State University, San Bernardino has successfully completed the multi-stage review conducted under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. Between this action and the time of the next review, the institution is encouraged to maintain its compliance with WSCUC standards and uphold its commitment to continuous quality improvement.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of California State University's governing board in one week. A copy of this letter will also be sent to Chancellor White. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the California State University, San Bernardino website and widely disseminated throughout the institution to promote further engagement and improvement and to support the institution's response to the specific issues identified in this letter. The team report and the Commission's action letter will also be posted on the WSCUC website. If the institution wishes to respond to the Commission action on its own website, WSCUC will post a link to that response.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that California State University, San Bernardino undertook in preparing for and supporting this accreditation review. WSCUC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while contributing to public accountability, and we thank you for your continued participation in this process. Please contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Mary Ellen Petrisko  
President

MEP/cno

Cc: William Ladusaw, Commission Chair  
Rong Chen, ALO  
Mr. George Petrulakis, CSUS Board Corporation President  
Timothy P. White, CSU Chancellor  
Members of the reaffirmation team  
Christopher Oberg, Vice President