



July 17, 2007

Richard R. Rush  
President  
California State University, Channel Islands  
One University Drive  
Camarillo, CA 93012

Dear President Rush:

At its meeting on June 20-22, 2007, the Commission considered the report of the WASC Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) Team that visited California State University, Channel Islands (CSUCI) on March 14-16, 2007. The Commission panel also had available to it the report prepared by CSUCI for this visit, the team report from the 2006 Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR), and the Institutional Proposal. The Commission also appreciated the opportunity to discuss the review with you, Provost Theodore Lucas; and ALO Dennis Muraoka. Your comments were helpful.

The Commission notes with considerable appreciation that CSUCI has completed four self-study reports and site team visits in as many years - with the CPR and EER for Candidacy in spring 2003 and fall 2004, respectively, and the CPR and EER for Initial Accreditation in spring 2006 and spring 2007, respectively. It was clear to the Commission that, with each review happening on schedule and revealing significant institutional development, CSUCI both values and embraces the WASC process. CSUCI has been exemplary in the many ways in which it has engaged with and benefited from WASC accreditation. As expressed in the team report:

The university's faculty, staff, administrators, and students have embraced the WASC process fully as is evident by the dramatic changes that have taken place in policies, procedures, and practices throughout the review process. Clearly, this is a community committed to educational effectiveness and united by its student-centered mission. (EER Report, p. 37)

Both the CPR and EER institutional reports were deemed to be well written, aligned with the Institutional Proposal, and amply supported by data and relevant documentation. The portrayals of the institution in the reflective essays were validated by the site team as accurate and insightful. The

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Commission concurs with the team report by mentioning several additional areas deserving specific commendation. These include the broadly inclusive and collegial engagement of the entire campus community in each of its self-reviews. Supported by capable leadership, the campus vigorously tackled not only the creation of these reports but also the creation of the many structures, processes, and culture which the reports reflect.

As a new institution, CSUCI demonstrated educational foresight by organizing all its course syllabi around student learning outcomes, then proceeded to identify assessment strategies aligned with those outcomes. Assessment is becoming embedded within the culture of CSUCI, including in student services programs. This will serve the University well as it engages in systematic program review in coming years (CFR 2.1-2.3, and 2.7).

The mission-based Centers, which have served to operationalize the institution's learning goals, have been regarded by each team as innovative and promising. Their continued development will present another set of challenges, but the University appears to be committed to this endeavor.

The concept of "interdisciplinarity" has been refined and implemented at a noteworthy level by CSUCI, beginning with the faculty recruitment process and carried forward into curriculum design and assessment. Again, this boundary-blending approach will need to be further refined as the University continues to grow, and the Commission encourages the University to share the results within the region in coming years.

In another area of commendable practice, CSUCI has transformed historic buildings into a visually appealing learning environment in a very short time, built a new faculty and staff team essentially *ex nihilo*, designed and delivered innovative curricula, significantly engaged the community in the process, and has now produced its first cohort of four-year graduates. As expressed in the team report:

The team commends Channel Islands for its institution-wide commitment to and implementation of learning-centered practices that place it far ahead of many much older and better-established universities within the CSU, the state and nation (p. 4).

In accepting the team report, the Commission endorses the findings and recommendations of the team. In addition, as the institution now moves into the next phases of its rapid growth, the Commission recommends that it give continuing attention to several areas:

**Maturing the Centers.** The Channel Islands team should apply itself to bringing all four of its Centers up to equal levels of operational maturity as soon as possible, then strengthening their standing within the University. This task will include clarifying their relationship to the other University structures, including on issues such as faculty promotion and tenure considerations, assessment of Center-related learning, and the role of research and scholarship on the impact of the Centers.

**Faculty and Staff Workloads.** Each site team has reported a high degree of faculty and staff engagement, not only with the WASC self-study process, but also with the staggering number of tasks associated with building a new institution. While this has not led to reported indications of discouragement among the faculty or staff, the Commission shares the teams' apprehensions that such demanding workloads may, in time, lead to burnout or lessening of "reach" to cover all requisite tasks. Knowing that the University is seeking to hire new faculty and staff at a pace that matches enrollment growth, the University will also need to be vigilant in protecting faculty and staff from the exhaustion of such sustained engagement.

**Data-Supported Planning.** Given its highly visible commitment to continuous improvement, and the critical role that performance data have in pursuit of that goal, CSUCI's support for the work of the Office of Institutional Research needs to be accelerated. The benefits of the work of this team need to be deployed rapidly to all of the units of the institution as they collaborate toward performance excellence.

**Assessment of Learning.** The institution has made great strides in the development and use of learning outcomes, which under gird all efforts to assess learning aligned with those goals. As CSUCI continues its pursuit of exemplary practices in assessment, learning outcomes will need to be clearly specified for each program, for general education, and for each of the four Centers, together with indications of the expected levels of learning associated with each stated outcome. An enhanced focus on identifying more precisely the learning that defines a CSUCI graduate may also help the University preserve its distinctive identity and mission as it grows.

**Collaboration with System Office.** The University will need to continue its collaboration with the CSU System Office to secure the levels of support essential to preserve its identity as the "Campus of Innovation." Since the regional impact that Channel Islands will continue to have in the coming years will be framed by the consistent and focused support it receives in its formative years, the Commission urges that this synergy not be abated.

The Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Educational Effectiveness Review team report and grant Initial Accreditation to California State University, Channel Islands.
2. Schedule the Proposal to be due on October 15, 2012, the Capacity and Preparatory visit in spring 2014, and the Educational Effectiveness visit in fall 2015.
3. Pursuant to the policy on Initial Accreditation, set the effective date of accreditation as May 19, 2007.
4. Request that the institution incorporate its response to the issues raised in this action letter and the major recommendations of the Educational Effectiveness team report in its Proposal. This may be done by referencing where these responses are in the Table of Contents or in an addendum to the Report.

Initial Accreditation is granted for a maximum of seven years. Institutions granted the status of Accreditation must use the following statement if they wish to describe the status publicly:

California State University, Channel Islands is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, 985 Atlantic Avenue, #100, Alameda, CA 94501, 510.748.9001.

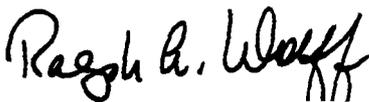
The phrase "fully accredited" is to be avoided, since no partial accreditation is possible. The accredited status of a program should not be misrepresented. The accreditation granted by WASC refers to the quality of the institution as a whole. Since institutional accreditation does not imply specific accreditation of any particular program in the institution, statements like "this program is accredited" or "this degree is accredited" are incorrect and misleading.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the Chancellor's Office in 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 further engagement and improvement, and to support the institution's response to the specific issues identified in them.

The Commission extends its congratulations to the University - its leadership, faculty, and staff - for completing this process so quickly and effectively. The Commission welcomes California State University, Channel Islands as an accredited institution and encourages the University community to continue to participate fully in WASC activities.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the Commission's action or the contents of this letter.

Sincerely,



Ralph A. Wolff  
President and Executive Director

RW/aa

cc: John Welty  
Charles Reed  
Dennis Muraoka  
Members of the team  
Richard Winn