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July 7, 2014

Dr. Linda Katehi
Chancellor
University of California at Davis
One Shields Avenue
Davis, CA 95616

Dear Chancellor Katehi:

At its meeting June 18-20, 2014, the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) considered the report of the Accreditation Visit (AV) team that conducted the visit to the University of California at Davis (UCD) April 9-11, 2014. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by the university prior to the Offsite Review (OSR) and supplemental materials requested by the team following the OSR. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues Ralph Hexter, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, and Carolyn de la Pena, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. Your comments were very helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations.

In the June 27, 2003, Commission letter after UCD's last comprehensive review, five areas were identified for further development: 1) planning; 2) student learning and assessment; 3) undergraduate research; 4) educational technology; and 5) general education. In subsequent interim reports, UCD reported on its progress in these areas.

Overall, the team concluded that UCD has made significant progress in satisfying the Commission's recommendations since the last comprehensive review and interim reports. UCD has: a visionary and widely embraced strategic plan ("2020 Initiative"); student learning outcomes for all of its undergraduate and graduate degree programs; educational objectives for undergraduate students at the institutional level and for general education; clear goals for graduate education with specific expectations regarding level of achievement; opportunities for undergraduate research; careful implementation of online and hybrid courses; a revamped general education program with an ambitious general education assessment plan; and a comprehensive program review process at the undergraduate and graduate levels. However, significant work is needed in assessment. According to the team, "One hundred percent of the programs have defined learning outcomes, but a smaller percentage of programs have specific indicators that these learning outcomes have been achieved."

UCD was part of Pilot 1 and was required to address the following four components in its institutional report, individually or in any combination: 1) meaning, quality and rigor of the degrees offered by UCD; 2) student proficiencies; 3) student success; 4) sustainability: how UCD will ensure its institutional capacity and educational effectiveness in the future and respond to the changing environment for higher education. UCD chose to combine components 1 and 2 into a single essay.

With regard to these components, the team made the following commendations:

Meaning, quality and rigor of degrees/graduation proficiencies. The team reported that UCD “clearly articulated the meaning of both its graduate and undergraduate degrees,” drawing on institution-wide educational objectives for undergraduates and on macro-level goals and expected levels of achievement for graduate students. In terms of monitoring the quality and rigor of its degrees, UCD has in place “robust procedures for the establishment of new programs,” an “excellent” graduate program review process, and a “significantly improved” undergraduate program review process that now includes, like the graduate program review process, external reviewers and close monitoring of the implementation of recommendations.

Student success. The team commended UCD for its “thoughtful and well-considered institutional definition of student success” and the widespread commitment to student success among faculty, staff and administrators. According to the team, UCD has given “special attention to improving the educational experiences of students.” One area of intense scrutiny, because of its relationship to student success, has been undergraduate advising. The team was impressed by the university’s “thoughtful and systematic work (in advising) and the development of new approaches, systems, and technological infrastructure that should have positive effects.” With regard to undergraduate retention and graduation, UCD has carefully analyzed aggregated and disaggregated data to understand why some categories of students appear to be more successful than others. The team supports the university’s own assessment that UCD’s overall 6-year graduation rate of 84% needs to be improved to become equal to or exceed the rate at comparable universities in the UC system.

Sustainability. UC Davis has engaged in a “robust, collaborative, institution-wide strategic planning process” for the past several years, to ensure that the institution not only remains a leading research university but that it continues to excel. The result has been the 2020 Initiative, which projects an enrollment growth of approximately 7500 new students (a large portion international) by 2020 with a concomitant increase in faculty, staff, instructional support and student services, and facilities. The team praised UC Davis for “reacting quickly to changing conditions” and for developing a plan “that advances its vision of excellence through strategic initiatives that generate new revenue from managed growth, research funding and philanthropy while enhancing campus diversity, student success, and graduation rates.” Growth brings new challenges and the team heard “concerns about staff workload to meet the needs of an expanding and increasingly diverse student body.”

The Commission endorses the team’s commendations and wishes to acknowledge the institution’s demonstrated commitment to student success; effective cross-departmental collaborations; well-defined trajectories for institutionalizing educationally effective practices and processes; faculty’s ownership of and active engagement with program review; and senate and administrative leadership that have worked collaboratively to pursue an evidence-based approach to organizational change.

The Commission endorses the recommendations of the AV team and wishes to emphasize the following areas for further attention and development:

Making consistent use of assessment data for improvement across all departments. The team expressed concern about the “small percentage of programs” that are able to determine whether

learning outcomes have been achieved. The team found that “most programs lack well-articulated plans of assessment.” While several departments were exemplary in the use of assessment data to improve student learning, other departments were not as advanced. UC Davis is expected to address this disparity and ensure that all departments consistently gather, analyze, interpret and use data for improvement. (CFRs 2.6, 4.4)

Continuing efforts to improve undergraduate education. The team noted that UCD has a “palpable” commitment to student success and has focused on important projects like improving advising, strengthening general education, engaging faculty in instructional improvement activities, ensuring that new international students have good educational and developmental experiences, increasing student mentoring, providing more undergraduate research opportunities, and expanding internships, career exploration and placement services for students. The Commission endorses UCD’s efforts in undergraduate education and its evaluation and assessment plans. The Commission also expects UCD to set a target 4-year graduation rate that is ambitious but attainable and that is the same for all student groups. (CFR 2.2, 2.10-2.13, 2.6, 2.7, 4.6)

Enhancing program review. Though UCD has “well-established” procedures for the review of its undergraduate and graduate programs, the team noted two areas for improvement: making greater use of direct assessment of student learning in the program review process and making greater use of the results of program reviews in the budgeting process. A student learning outcomes have been established for all programs, not all departments have assessment plans. As a result, assessment of student learning is not regularly part of the program review process. The Commission expects departments to assess student learning and expects the program review process to include the results of those assessments. UCD is moving towards an incentive-based budgeting process. The university anticipates tying the results of program reviews more closely to the allocation of resources. The Commission endorses this effort and expects UCD to use the findings from program reviews to help inform budget decisions. (CFRs 1.8, 2.5-2.7)

Continuing the implementation of the 2020 Initiative. UCD’s plans for enrollment growth, as the team reported, bring associated new costs: increased student support services, construction of new classroom and research facilities, additional student housing, and other costs associated with any process of change. The Commission urges UCD to be mindful of the morale of staff members as the 2020 Initiative is implemented. Their workloads in many areas have already increased significantly because of retrenchment and layoffs and could continue to grow to meet the needs of an expanding and diverse student body. Enrollment growth also brings new opportunities. Planned faculty hiring, to accommodate enrollment growth and faculty retirements, provides a window of opportunity to diversify the faculty to better represent the population the university already serves. The Commission expects UCD to take full advantage of this opportunity. (CFRs 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.6, 4.1- 4.3)

Given the above, the Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Accreditation Visit team report and reaffirm the accreditation of the University of California at Davis for ten years, through June 2024.
2. Schedule the Offsite Review for fall 2023 and the Accreditation Visit for spring 2024.

3. Schedule the Mid-Cycle Review for spring 2019.
4. Request a Special Visit in fall 2017 to review progress on the following issues cited in the AV report:
 - a. Assessment: how data gathered about student learning outcomes are used consistently across all departments to guide improvement.
 - b. Program review: how direct evidence of student learning has been incorporated into the program review process and how the results of program review are used in the allocation of resources.
 - c. 2020 Initiative: an update on the implementation of the 2020 Initiative with specific attention to the faculty/student ratio; ladder rank vs. non-ladder rank faculty; faculty diversity; level of course impact; changes in staffing; advising; academic support and student services; and facilities.

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that the University of California at Davis has addressed the two Core Commitments to Institutional Capacity and Educational Effectiveness, and has successfully completed the Pilot 1 review conducted under the 2008 Standards of Accreditation. Between this action and the time of the next review, the institution is encouraged to continue its progress, particularly with respect to student learning and success.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of the governing board 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 these documents. 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.

Please note that the Criteria for Review (CFR) cited in this letter refer to the *2008 Handbook of Accreditation*. The *2008 Handbook* continues to be available on the WSCUC website at www.wascsenior.org.

As the institution works on the issues cited in this letter, it should be mindful of the expectations that it will need to meet at the time of its next comprehensive review, which will take place under the revised Standards of Accreditation and institutional review process in the *2013 Handbook of Accreditation*. UC Davis is encouraged to familiarize itself with the *2013 Handbook*.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that UC Davis undertook in preparing for and supporting this accreditation review. WSCUC 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 contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Ellen Petrisko".

Mary Ellen Petrisko
President

MEP/bgd

Cc: Harold Hewitt Jr., Commission Chair
Carolyn de la Pena, ALO
Janet Napolitano, President, University of California
Bruce Varner, Board Chair
Barbara Gross Davis, WSCUC Staff Liaison