



May 6, 2008

Larry N. Vanderhoef
Chancellor
University of California, Davis
567 Mrak Hall
One Shields Avenue
Davis, CA 95616

Dear Chancellor Vanderhoef:

At its meeting by conference call on May 2, 2008, a panel of the Interim Report Committee convened to consider the Interim Report submitted by the University of California at Davis on February 28, 2008. The panel reviewed the University's Interim Report, the Commission's action letter of June 27, 2003, and the Substantive Change Committee's letter of June 19, 2006 relating to the MBA program at San Ramon. The panel appreciated the opportunity to discuss the report with Patricia Turner, Vice Provost—Undergraduate Studies; Gail Martinez, Assistant Vice Provost—Undergraduate Studies; Professor Tom Famula, Animal Science and Academic Senate Officer; Professor Dan Potter, Plant Sciences and Academic Senate Officer; David Woodruff, Associate Dean, Graduate School of Management.

The panel found that UCD has made progress in all the areas cited in the 2003 Commission action letter and in the 2006 Substantive Change letter. The report was exceptionally thorough and the UCD representatives with whom the panel spoke indicated that the campus had been extensively engaged with accreditation-related issues since the last WASC visit.

The progress made in each area raised in the two relevant letters and the issues that remain are set forth below.

- 1. Planning and Improved Coordination.** The panel observed that UCD had adopted the 20/20 Vision Statement, which is a comprehensive and detailed strategic plan well organized around learning, engagement, discovery and success. The plan is regularly updated on the UCD website with reports of progress on various initiatives and appropriate personnel assigned to each component to promote accountability.

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2. **Student Learning and Assessment/Program Review.** UCD has adopted a new model of program review that integrates assessment of student learning, including setting forth learning objectives, analyzing data provided to each program in advance of the review, and evaluating its effectiveness in achieving stated objectives. This new process is a good step toward meeting WASC's expectations on assessment of student learning and program review. The panel expressed support for this step in the development of UCD's capacity to engage in meaningful assessment of student learning.

The panel also noted that UCD has started to engage each department and program in discussions about assessment and to provide support for the development of assessment plans across campus. Given that most programs do not yet have assessment plans, there is considerable work ahead in the developmental stage of building assessment infrastructure and in the later stage of providing evidence that students are achieving intended outcomes. (More specific details about expectations for assessment are provided below in the context of the MBA program.)

The panel saw that the 2003 Commission action letter recommended that trend and benchmark data be used in assessment. The program review process does call for the use of trend data and internal comparisons within the program's cluster and across the university. No external comparative data or external reviewers are required in program review. The panel appreciated that this issue was discussed as the new program review process was being developed and wants to encourage the use of external reviewers and external comparative data, as appropriate, in the program review process.

It was noted that the first academic "cluster" just recently submitted its program reviews; therefore the panel did not have concrete evidence of how effectively the program review process will be used to assess student learning, to determine whether students have achieved expected levels of attainment, and to address any needed changes that are identified in this process.

3. **Undergraduate Research.** The panel noted that considerable progress had been made in defining, mapping and integrating research into undergraduates' experiences and that undergraduate research was embedded into the strategic plan for the university. The increased participation of students in freshman seminars and alumni survey reports about their research experience support this finding. In addition, the panel was pleased to hear that space for the Center for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities had been allocated since the time that the Interim Report was submitted and that the Center would soon be officially launched.
4. **Education Technology.** The panel found that work in educational technology had advanced through ongoing discussions and activities on campus, including the Teaching Resource Center and the Chancellor's conference on "Information Technology as a Vehicle for Innovation at UC Davis."

5. **General Education.** In 2003, the Commission recommended that UCD address general education with the goal of being able to demonstrate that students achieve the university's intended outcomes for general education. During the past five years, revision of general education has been a major undertaking at UCD, as various groups and departments have studied, drafted, and developed a new model of general education for the campus. The plan, which calls for 52 units of "Topical Breadth" and 35 units of "Core Literacies," will come before the Senate in June 2008. If adopted, the plan will be implemented in fall 2010.

The panel found the general education plan to be excellent and applauds the work of the faculty and administration in tackling the challenging issues that surround revising GE. The panel observed, however, that the new general education model does not include an assessment plan, which is essential to the refinement and success of the new model and is needed to fully respond to the Commission's 2003 recommendation on general education.

6. **Student Learning and Assessment in the MBA Program.** Pursuant to the Substantive Change letter of June 2006, the School of Management was asked to submit "revised and expanded learning outcomes or program objectives for the Master of Business Administration program, and a plan for assessing the program learning outcomes." A very thorough report with this information was submitted with the University's Interim Report. The panel found that student learning outcomes had been developed and adopted by the faculty along with an assessment plan that includes review of the results of assessment by the school's Education Policy Committee at regular and frequent intervals. Assessment will be conducted by means of an analysis of grades, internship projects and individual faculty evaluation, using a rubric, of student knowledge and skills in advanced courses.

The panel recognizes the substantial progress of the management faculty in developing this plan and recommends that further refinements be made to enhance the value of this assessment work. Consideration should be given to refinements such as mapping of the outcomes to the courses, developing a rubric to evaluate the internship projects, and engaging the faculty collaboratively in applying the existing rubric to student work using a common culminating experience.

After extensive discussion of the progress that had been made by UCD in addressing these six areas, the panel decided to request that UCD submit another Interim Report in spring 2010. The purpose of this report is to encourage further progress in a few key areas, which the panel believes will help to position UCD well for its next comprehensive review. The report should address the following two areas, as discussed above:

1. **Assessment of Student Learning/Program Review:** The report should provide information on progress in implementing the new program review process, including information on the program reviews that have been fully completed by that time. Information about what was learned in the program reviews should be included, especially the results of assessment of student learning in terms of program objectives. Further, the report should describe and analyze progress that all programs and departments have made in establishing student

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learning outcomes and in developing effective assessment plans. Such plans are expected to include summative and formative assessment and multiple measures of assessment, both direct and indirect. The process for following through on the findings of assessment should also be addressed in the report.

2. **General Education:** The report should update the progress in adopting and implementing the new general education plan and in establishing an assessment plan for the general education component of the undergraduate curriculum.

The panel, again, reaffirms the hard work and important steps that UCD has taken to address these issues. I look forward to working with the University and wish you every success as you proceed toward the next stages of accreditation review.

Sincerely,



Therese A. Cannon
Executive Associate Director

Cc: Patricia A. Turner, Vice Provost-Undergraduate Studies, ALO
Members of the Interim Report Committee