



May 10, 2010

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

Dear Chancellor Katehi:

At its meeting by conference call on April 30, 2010, a panel of the Interim Report Committee convened to consider the Interim Report submitted by UC Davis on April 30, 2010. The panel reviewed this Interim Report and the correspondence related to the previous Interim Report, which was submitted and reviewed in spring 2008.

The panel appreciated the opportunity to discuss the report with Patricia Turner, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and WASC ALO; Gary Ford, Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies; Gail Martinez, Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies; Robert Powell, Chair for the Academic Senate; Christopher Thaiss, Director of the University Writing Program; Daniel Potter, Professor of Plant Sciences; and Winder McConnell, Director for the Teaching Resource Center. The conversation was informative and helped the panelists to understand more clearly UCD's progress in addressing the issues raised in the last comprehensive review and the last Interim Report.

The Interim Report was thorough and well written and provided an explanation and many good examples of the progress that has been made. The panel found that substantial progress has been made toward the implementation of UCD's new general education requirements and in building the capacity to assess student learning. Your revised program review process holds great promise as a method for focusing on educational effectiveness.

The Interim Report covered two major topics that carried over from the 2008 report, which are set forth below with an analysis of the panel's findings.

1. Assessment of Student Learning and Program Review

The panel found that UCD had established and implemented a well-designed cyclical program review process that holds great potential for enhancing educational effectiveness. It appears that the campus is learning from the program reviews and acting on them even before the final stages of the process are complete. The panel applauds the responsiveness and quick action of the faculty and administration in addressing issues that arise in the reviews.

The panel encourages UCD to establish a process for ensuring that the final recommendations of program reviews will be addressed at all levels so that there is a connection to planning and budgeting and to institutional improvement. The next comprehensive review team will expect to examine several completed program reviews at the time of the Educational Effectiveness Review and will want to ascertain what was learned from the reviews and what actions were taken to address recommendations coming out of the reviews. (CFRs 2.7, 4.4)

The panel applauds the work of the Center for Research and Teaching in promoting good assessment practices on campus and in leading the campus in building faculty support for and skills in assessment. The Interim Report and the conversation on the conference call highlighted several excellent examples of this good assessment work, e.g., the pilot project on assessing writing. It will continue to be very important for leadership at the highest levels to emphasize and prioritize the importance of assessing and improving student learning in order to engender faculty support and create a culture that focuses on student learning. (CFRs 4.4, 4.7)

The panel noted that about a quarter of UCD's programs have adopted student learning outcomes. Many but not all of these have assessment plans. The strategy of working systematically with each college within the university to develop outcomes and plans seems appropriate and effective. The panel recommends that this process be accelerated so that most or all of the programs have student learning outcomes and assessment plans in place by the time of the Capacity and Preparatory Review, which is scheduled for spring 2013. WASC generally expects institutions to have program learning outcomes and assessment plans in place by the time of the CPR, as these constitute the "capacity" or infrastructure needed to assess student learning. By the time of the EER, WASC expects to see the findings from assessment, i.e., what students learning, whether student learning and achievement meet institutional goals, and what is being done to address gaps. Without the outcomes and assessment methods in place at the CPR, the institution would not be in a position to provide concrete evidence of learning at the EER. (For reference see "Expectations for Two Reviews.") (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 4.6)

2. Implementation and Assessment of General Education

The previous Interim Report panel asked that UCD provide an update on implementation of the new general education requirements and on the assessment plan for general education.

This panel learned that implementation had been moved from fall 2010 to fall 2011 and that substantial progress had been made in approving courses that will fulfill the requirements. The final stages of implementation will include the training of faculty and advisors and publication of the catalog reflecting the changes.

General education learning outcomes have been adopted and a joint senate/administrative task force will be constituted in summer or fall 2010 to develop the assessment plans for general education. Some good pilots for assessing general education are under way and should yield useful guidance for the assessment plan, which is expected to be in place by the time the new general education requirements are implemented in fall 2011. The panel supports this process

and ambitious timeline, as it is critically important to have the assessment plan in place by the time the new general education program begins. (CFRs 2.2a, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 4.6)

The panel urges the assessment task force to consider placing important summative assessment in a culminating experience, such as a capstone, senior thesis or portfolio. Using culminating activities such as these, which may already be in place for most programs, is a natural place to do both program-level and general education assessment and is considered good practice.

In sum, the panel found that UCD had made good progress in addressing these two areas and has embarked on activities that will lead to additional progress. In this regard, the panel asks that progress be reported in the Proposal for UCD's next comprehensive review and during both stages of the review.

The panel acted to:

1. Receive the Interim Report with recommendations and commendations noted in this letter.
2. Request that UCD report progress on these two areas in the Proposal for the next comprehensive review, which is due in spring 2011, and in the reports for the CPR and EER reviews to be conducted in spring 2013 and fall 2014, respectively. In particular, the panel asks that the assessment plan for general education be appended to the Proposal and a narrative explanation of progress on assessment, program review and general education be included in the appropriate section of the Proposal.

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

Sincerely,



Teri Cannon
Executive Associate Director

cc: Patricia Turner, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies and ALO
Members of the Interim Report Committee