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Mary Ellen Petrisko

July 15, 2015

Dr. Leroy Morishita
President
California State University East Bay
25800 Carlos Bee Blvd.
Hayward, CA 94542-3011

Dear President Morishita:

At its meeting June 17-19, 2015, the Commission considered the report of the review team that conducted the Accreditation Visit (AV) to California State University, East Bay (CSUEB) April 8-10, 2015. Commission members reviewed the institutional report prepared by CSUEB prior to the Offsite Review (OSR), any supplemental materials requested by the team following the OSR and the institution's May 28, 2015, response to the visiting team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the review with you and your colleagues, James Houpis, Provost/Vice President, and Susan Opp, former Accreditation Liaison Officer now Provost, CSU Maritime. 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. The team described the institutional report as one prepared with "thoroughness and candor," reflecting institutional self-study focused on an examination of mission after a time of serious budget cuts and the leadership of a new president. Because CSUEB's review took place very soon after the 2013 Handbook was approved, the university was a pioneer in addressing new report components including the meaning, quality, and integrity of the degrees and the assessment of core competencies. In all of the components, the Commission found evidence of the seriousness with which CSUEB took on this work, which will not only help the institution ensure that students receive an excellent education, but also provides examples of best practice for the region.

While the reaffirmation process provided impetus for some new directions, it was also a natural part of the university's ongoing focus on improvement. More importantly for long range sustainability, this work was accomplished by existing committees that continue beyond the time of the Accreditation Visit. This represents a best practice on how accreditation should work: as part of the ongoing efforts of an institution focused on continuous improvement.

The Commission supports all of the commendations found in the team report and wishes to place special attention on the following:

Collaboration and Shared Governance. The Commission commends CSUEB for demonstrating the power of collaboration and shared governance as noted throughout the team’s findings. The president deserves credit for establishing the tone that made this possible. As the team noted, “CSU East Bay uses a broadly collaborative process in the development and implementation of major initiatives, and it was evident that such process were also used in developing its current self-study for the reaffirmation process.” As an example of collaboration regarding a major initiative the team noted that institutional learning outcomes were developed through “an inclusive, participatory process . . . derived collectively by faculty, staff, administrators, and students.”

Diversity. CSUEB is the most diverse public university in mainland United States. The Commission commends the university, not only for making “inclusiveness and diversity” one of its eight core values, but for supporting that diversity both on campus and in the broader community. The U. S. Department of Education has recognized CSUEB with a \$25 million grant for the institution’s Hayward Promise Neighborhood initiative, which creates support systems focused on increasing educational and economic opportunities for families. Numerous other on-campus initiatives could be cited as well. The Commission supports the team’s commendation for the university’s “well-grounded commitment to diversity as stated in its documents of mission, vision, data collection, and resolve for diversity parity among students, faculty, staff, and administrators.” The Commission encourages the institution to continue its efforts to close the equity gap for African American and Latino students in graduation rates.

Core Competencies. CSUEB was one of the first universities to address the new requirement to assess core competencies and selected critical thinking as the competency to be addressed during this self-study. The Commission commends CSUEB for using a collaborative process to decide on this focus and for the development of an assessment plan, rubrics, and the collection and analysis of data that led to the identification of needed improvements in this core competency’s development. The Commission also commends the university for organizing two CSU-wide symposia to help develop a broader learning community focus on core competencies.

Finances. The financial challenges for CSUEB have been enormous as the contribution of state appropriations declined over a five-year period from 61% to 41% of the total operating budget. The Commission commends the university for working carefully to adjust to this reduction while maintaining the quality of its educational offerings. As the team found, “the realignment in funding sources has made CSU East Bay less dependent on state appropriations and will reduce the volatility that would be caused by any possible reductions in the future.”

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

Planning for Distinction. The campus-wide, comprehensive Planning for Distinction review process is described by the team as focused on the “prioritization of all academic and support programs to determine an appropriate balance of programs that contribute to the hallmarks of quality at CSU East Bay and [help it to] pursue initiatives believed to be most essential to its mission, strategic commitments, and institutional learning outcomes.” The Commission supports the president’s use of this process to help define programs that should be elevated to distinction,

thereby giving the university a higher profile both in the CSU system and the state, and believes that the role of this process should be clarified in institutional decision-making and budgetary allocations. The Progress Report requested below should provide an update both on how this role has been clarified and on how the process has helped define the future of the university in helping lift the institution to a higher level of recognition. (CFRs 3.4, 4.6)

Conversion from Quarter to Semester. CSUEB is one of the last CSU campuses to convert from a semester to quarter system, with the conversion scheduled to be completed in fall 2018. The Commission endorses the institution’s desire to use this as “an opportunity to re-envision the curriculum, revitalize the pedagogy, and support the learning and success of its students,” as noted in the team report. It is pleased to hear that progress toward this goal has been embraced by most of the campus and will appreciate an update on the conversion’s impact and the challenges and successes associated with accomplishing this process at the time of the Progress Report. (CFRs 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, and 4.7)

Institutional Research and Data Management. As reported by the team, “ In the absence of a director of institutional research, CSU East Bay has faced challenges in data gathering and analysis, which affected its ability to make evidence-based decisions regarding student learning and success.” The Commission appreciated learning that a director has been appointed. The team also found progress being made on determining “what data needs to be collected, how the data should be coded, getting the data, analyzing the data, and making the data and their analyses accessible in a timely fashion.” Because of the importance WSCUC places on evidence based decision-making, the Commission urges further progress in developing a stronger institutional research function and data management. The Progress Report will need to provide evidence of needed progress in both areas. (CFRs 4.2, 4.3)

Concord Campus. The Concord satellite campus has offered upper-division completion programs and several Master’s degrees since 1992. Ambitious plans for further development were put on hold during the recession, when the campus was experiencing a loss of resources and programs and broader questions about the future. New leadership has now been appointed to oversee the campus. The Commission supports the team’s recommendation that “cost effective and creative strategies for offering or expanding online and other programs responsive to student and community needs on the Concord campus” be pursued. (CFRs 3.5, 4.6, 4.7)

Given the above, the Commission acted to:

1. Receive the team report and reaffirm accreditation for ten years
2. Schedule the Offsite Review for fall 2024
3. Schedule the Accreditation Visit for spring 2025
4. Schedule the Mid-Cycle Review in spring 2020.
5. Require a Progress Report in spring 2019 as defined earlier in the Commission letter on:
 - 1) the impact of the semester conversion on the institution and the challenges and

successes associated with accomplishing this process; 2) progress on data collection, analysis, and accessibility as evidenced by the use of appropriate data received in a timely manner in academic and institutional assessment processes; 3) results of the Planning for Distinction model for prioritizing academic programs; and 4) graduation rates focused on the equity gap for African American and Latino students.

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that CSUEB has satisfactorily addressed the Core Commitments to Student Learning and Success; Quality and Improvement; and Institutional Integrity, Sustainability, and Accountability. CSUEB 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 expected 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 Chancellor Timothy White. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the CSUEB 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 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.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that CSUEB 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/ro

Cc: William Ladusaw, Commission Chair
Donna Wiley, ALO
Timothy White, Chancellor, CSU System
Members of the reaffirmation team
Richard Osborn, Vice President, Staff Liaison