



June 25, 2008

Rollin C. Richmond
President
Humboldt State University
One Harpst Street
Arcata, CA 95521-8999

Dear President Richmond:

At its meeting on June 18-20, 2008, the Commission considered the report of the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) team that visited Humboldt State University (HSU) on February 6-8, 2008. The Commission also reviewed the Capacity and Preparatory Review report submitted by the University prior to the visit, and the institution's response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and Professor Greg Crawford, Chair of HSU's WASC Steering Committee. The updates that you provided and your observations about the review were very helpful.

The Commission was pleased by the engagement of the HSU community in the Capacity and Preparatory Review process. They were particularly impressed by the candor, self-awareness and apparent new spirit of collaboration that the team noted, both in the institution's report and on campus. It is clear that a great deal has already been accomplished.

The Commission endorsed the findings and commendations in the team report. In particular, the Commission would emphasize the importance of continued progress in the following areas cited at the end of the team report: 1) assessment of the seven outcomes of an HSU education, the majors, and general education; 2) use of data to create a culture of evidence and improve decision making across the institution, particularly in support of the strategic plan; 3) progress in the "Making Excellence Inclusive" initiative; and 4) establishment of priorities, as well as alignment of resources, and creation of decision-making processes to support those priorities. The Commission expects these four areas to be addressed in the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) report and hopes to see substantial progress in all of them.

The Standards of Accreditation place special emphasis on student learning and on the obligation of institutions to assess student learning and identify ways to improve it (CFRs 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7). HSU has a history of beginning such efforts but failing to sustain them. At the time of the EER, the team should find that the infrastructure for educational effectiveness is more fully developed, assessment is underway across the university, assessment findings are available for the team's review, and faculty and administration alike are using findings to improve the educational experience at HSU (CFRs 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7). Assessment should also be used to support the success of students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, thus complementing the Making Excellence Inclusive initiative (CFRs 1.5, 2.10, 2.13).

985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100
Alameda, CA 94501
PHONE: 510.748.9001
FAX: 510.748.9797
E-MAIL: wascsr@wascsenior.org
INTERNET: www.wascweb.org

Humboldt State
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The focus of the Capacity and Preparatory Review visit is on infrastructure for educational effectiveness: that is, what the institution *has* in the way of learning outcomes, assessment policies and processes, committees and personnel, institutional research, and the like. The focus of the effectiveness visit, in contrast, will be on how *effectively* this infrastructure is working: that is, how *well* students are achieving the desired educational outcomes, and how well the institution is using such findings for improvement. Beyond that, HSU's most immediate challenge will be to align its resources with educational objectives and institutional purposes (CFRs 3.5, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3). This challenge, which is not a new one for HSU, is all the more acute in the current environment of economic recession and budget cuts.

Given the significant amount of work to be accomplished, the Commission believes that it is prudent to extend the interval between the CPR and EER visits from 18 to 24 months.

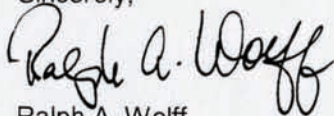
The Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Capacity and Preparatory Review report and continue the accreditation of Humboldt State University.
2. Proceed with the Educational Effectiveness Review in spring 2010.
3. Request that the institution incorporate its response to the issues raised in this action letter and to the major recommendations of the CPR team report into its Educational Effectiveness Review Report.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the Office of the Chancellor of the California State University System and the Chair of the California State University System Board of Trustees within 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 engagement and improvement, and to support the institution's response to the specific issues identified in the team report.

Please contact me if you have any questions or comment about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Ralph A. Wolff
President and Executive Director

RW/bw/aa

cc: Sherwood Lingenfelter, Commission Chair
Board Chair
Jena Burges, ALO
Members of the Team
Barbara Wright