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January 2, 2009

Ralph A. Wolff  
President and Executive Director  
Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges  
985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100  
Alameda, California 94501

Dear Ralph:

I am pleased to submit UCLA's response to the Report of the WASC Visiting Team Capacity and Preparatory Review, which was held at UCLA October 6-8, 2008. Please convey my appreciation to the team for their insights and constructive recommendations that will serve to guide us as we prepare for the Educational Effectiveness review.

I asked our WASC Steering Committee to author the response. The Committee, chaired by Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Judith Smith (WASC ALO), includes the leadership of UCLA's Academic Senate, faculty members who chaired each of the essay workgroups for the CFR Report, and representatives of my administrative cabinet. For the past two years, they have held the campus in our WASC reaccreditation process and are deeply engaged in all aspects.

I want to reiterate that UCLA is strongly committed to establishing and assessing learning outcomes for each degree program. This commitment will be reflected in our academic planning and reinforced directly with the deans by Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Scott Waugh. EVC Waugh and Vice Provost Smith will also be working with our academic senate to continue incorporating these elements into curricular planning and academic program review.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about this response or would like to discuss it further.

Warmest wishes for the New Year,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gene D. Block".

Gene D. Block  
Chancellor

Attachment

cc: Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Scott Waugh  
Vice Provost Judith Smith

**UCLA Steering Committee's Response to the WASC Visiting Team Report**  
**CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW**  
**October 6-8, 2008**

Members of the UCLA Steering Committee appreciate the opportunity to respond to the WASC Team Report based on the Capacity and Preparatory Review Site Visit of October 6-8, 2008. First, we commend members of the Visiting Team for their dedication to the process. All aspects of the Team Report, as well as their perceptive comments during the site visit, are apt testimony to their engagement. We enjoyed our interactions with them, and they shared perspectives that best come by viewing issues from the outside. We are grateful for their participation and look forward to continued and insightful discussions during the EER site visit.

Our response concentrates on three major issues raised in the Team Report: 1) the timing of the UCLA's Educational Effectiveness Review (EER), 2) the establishment of learning outcomes for all majors and the assessment of these outcomes, and 3) guidance provided by suggestions and recommendations in the Team Report and elements UCLA should include in the EER report.

1) Timing of the EER Report and Site Visit

Regarding the timing of the EER site visit, UCLA has now requested that the visit be rescheduled from March 2009 to March 2010. Our desire to reschedule grew out of the realization that we would not receive comments from the WASC Commission in time to adjust the essays for submission for a spring 2009 visit. We had hoped to receive the Commission's comments in December but understand that we will not receive them until after the Commission's February 2009 meeting. We look forward to receiving guidance from the panel, as well as the Visiting Team, during the official telephone call on February 18, 2009. Chancellor Gene Block, Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost Scott Waugh, and Vice Provost/ALO Judith Smith will be on hand to address questions posed by the panel.

2) Establishing Learning Outcomes and Assessment Plans

UCLA has established a comprehensive program focused on establishing learning outcomes for undergraduate majors. As noted in our essay on Academic Program Reviews (*Essay 2* of the Capacity Report), we started this process early in 2006 by asking departments scheduled for a Program Review to list learning outcomes for undergraduates in their self-reports. As noted in *Essay 2*, faculty required substantial assistance in articulating measurable learning outcomes, and Vice

Provost Smith began working with Academic Senate leaders and representatives from Undergraduate Council to establish a campuswide process. In that same year, the engineering faculty presented assessments of learning outcomes as part of the campus ABET accreditation visit. Some of their outcomes and assessments were related to their capstone courses. From the successful experiences of the engineering faculty, the capstone workgroup identified the need for all departments applying for capstone status to develop learning outcomes based on specific capstone experiences. During the past year, the Vice Provost's staff, along with experienced faculty and representative members of the capstone workgroup, assisted faculty in 38 departments (27% of UCLA undergraduate majors) to establish learning outcomes focused on capstone experiences.

UCLA's developing capstone program is only one of the ways of embedding student-learning outcomes in undergraduate programs. The Vice Provost, working with the College Deans, established a workgroup with faculty representatives from the College's ten largest majors; most of which are unlikely to have a capstone requirement. Representatives from these departments are working collaboratively as a group, and experienced faculty and staff are assisting them. Each representative also meets with a departmental committee or ad hoc group to refine the learning outcomes, making certain that they represent core experiences in the curriculum. This time-consuming process ends with the faculty in each department taking a formal vote to approve the learning outcomes specific to undergraduate students in their majors.

By the time of our EER site visit, the Steering Committee expects nearly 70% of our undergraduate students will be enrolled in programs that have published learning outcomes. In the EER report, we will present a strategic plan with a comprehensive timetable, demonstrating that all undergraduate majors will have learning outcomes published no later than 2011. Although we understand the concern expressed by the Visiting Team, we will demonstrate in our EER report that UCLA is well prepared to meet the expectations of the WASC Commission "with regard to formally approved and published learning outcomes for all academic programs."

In addition to *establishing* learning outcomes, we are *assessing* the extent to which such outcomes are being achieved. The visiting team noted that UCLA has substantially increased its capacity for institutional evaluation, as well as the assessment of innovative educational programs, such as the Freshman Cluster and General Education. In general, UCLA's assessment plans have been firmly aligned with the Academic Senate's Program Review, described by the Visiting Team as meaningful

and “characterized by a high degree of faculty ownership.” UCLA has decided to embed the assessment of learning outcomes in the program review process. In this way, the assessment of student outcomes will become integral to program quality, and faculty—with appropriate staff support—will carry responsibility for both assessment and application of findings.

While we agree with the Visiting Team’s assessment that “UCLA’s infrastructure for assessing student learning is still emerging,” we are fortunate that UCLA has two units devoted to the assessment of learning and teaching, the Center for Educational Assessment and the Office of Instructional Development. Both have had several years of experience in helping faculty assess learning and teaching effectiveness, and over the years, they have earned the trust and respect of the faculty. In the EER report, we will present new guidelines for the program review (now being considered by Undergraduate and Graduate Councils) and discuss how departments will be assisted by the Center for Educational Assessment and the Office of Instructional Development to develop assessment plans and reports that will inform curricular development and improvement, as well as self-review reports by departments beginning the program review process.

### 3) Recommendations for UCLA’s Educational Effectiveness Report

We are pleased that the Team found our faculty fully engaged in the development of each of the three themes that will form the basis of our EER Report. These themes helped us focus on issues that are fundamental to UCLA’s educational mission. We are also grateful for the Team’s engagement and their suggestions and recommendations for the upcoming EER report. Because these comments were woven throughout the text, with no comprehensive summary in Section III (Findings and Recommendations), we found it useful to make our own list of key recommendations.

From our reading of the Team Report, we see the following as essential for UCLA’s EER report:

1. a comprehensive plan and timetable for establishing learning outcomes for all majors, including those undergraduate majors with and without capstone requirements or programs (Team Report pages 19, 20, 30, 32);
2. specific guidelines for incorporating the assessment of learning outcomes as part of the campus Program Review and a discussion of how faculty will be assisted in the development of effective assessment programs (Team Report pages 10, 20);
3. three theme essays:

- a. shaping undergraduate education via capstone experiences offered through capstone majors and programs.
  - b. improving student learning and faculty teaching with educational technology: three projects, each with assessment;
  - c. establishing a roadmap (Team Report page 31) for the development of new policies and structures that will facilitate interdisciplinary education and research.
4. appending two reports specifically requested by the Visiting Team:
- a. UCLA's new (currently being developed) campuswide academic plan (Team Report page 32)
  - b. Academic Senate Program Review for the General Educational Foundation Area on "Society and Culture" (Team Report page 12)

With regard to the educational technology essay, the Team Report makes valuable suggestions for adding (or commenting on) several topics (see pages 28-30 of the Team Report). In response, our EER report will include UCLA's new Information Technology (IT) vision statement and plan, which is currently being developed by a Senate/Administrative Taskforce. This document will set out UCLA's approach to many areas mentioned in the Team Report. We look forward to a more in-depth discussion of these issues during the site visit.

We received an earlier draft of the Team Report from Assistant Chair William Ladusaw and responded by emailing the document with tracked changes that marked errors of fact in the text. We appreciate the team's responsiveness and ask that the following errors of fact be corrected as well.

- 1. page 22, paragraph 2, line 8: The interdepartmental graduate program for "Folklore and Mythology" was disestablished in June 2002.
- 2. page 23, last two lines: a grammatical error was introduced during the last corrections; it should read: "We consider the fact that UCLA has had five active IGERT....grants, two of which are active."
- 3. page 29, first bullet: student learning in the Communication Studies course was not based on CCLE, and as noted in UCLA's July update, this project (involving the Communication Studies course) has been dropped in favor of devoting more of the Educational Technology essay to CCLE and its organization and assessment.