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PRESIDENT
Ralph A. Wolff

March 3, 2011

Richard H. Hart
President
Loma Linda University
11060 Anderson Street
Loma Linda, CA 92350

Dear President Hart:

At its meeting on February 16-18, 2011, the Commission considered the report of the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) team that conducted the visit to Loma Linda University (LLU) on October 27-29, 2010. The Commission also reviewed the EER report and exhibits submitted by the University prior to the visit and the institution's response to the team report. The Commission also had access to the materials related to the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) conducted in fall 2008. The Commission panel appreciated the opportunity to discuss the review with you and Ron Carter, Provost. The updates and additional information you provided and your observations were helpful.

Loma Linda University's institutional proposal outlined three themes and related outcomes for this comprehensive review: (1) faith and normative culture; (2) mission-focused learning; and (3) strengthening a culture of evidence. The team report verifies that the selected themes resulted in serious and beneficial engagement across the institution during all three phases of the review and produced significant structural enhancements, especially in the interval between the two visits.

In addition, the Commission's action letter of March 12, 2009, highlighted three issues for special attention during the interval between the CPR and EER visits: (1) more centralized strategic planning with enhanced use of data; (2) an augmented institutional research function; and (3) support for the office of assessment. While the institution's responses to each of these concerns will be addressed in greater detail below, the team report documents noteworthy structural and operational enhancements, appropriate allocation of resources, and broad-ranging changes in the institutional culture of evidence in the interval between the visits.

The team found much to commend about the institution's engagement with each aspect of the WASC review process. The team report noted in particular the significant progress between the time of the fall 2008 CPR and the EER in more fully deploying a culture of evidence related to student learning across all schools of the University. The inclusion of university-level student learning outcomes in assessment strategies, the increased centralization and relevance of institutional research, and a more inclusive strategic planning process also were documented in the report. As the team noted, the "alignment of the institution's mission with the planning process is ideal. There exists abundant evidence of the 'transformative learning' prioritized by the University Strategic Plan, by way of such learning being assessed in both academic and co-curricular programs (CFR 4.3)."

The report also made frequent reference to the wide-ranging impact of the Office of Educational Effectiveness (OEE), as evidenced by extensive generation and use of assessment data and a school-specific appreciation of the importance of assessment data in improving educational quality. When inquiring about the enormous amount of work accomplished in the area of educational effectiveness, the team reported, “It became apparent immediately that the excitement of intra-School collaboration fueled generous commitments of time and energy from the faculty called into service on these committees.” The extensive enthusiasm for the influence of the OEE provided confidence that the University’s educational effectiveness efforts would be sustained.

The team took special note of Table 8.1. “Inventory of Concurrent Accreditation,” commenting:

This appendix in LLU’s report ranks as an exceptionally thorough treatment of critical elements of the University’s educational effectiveness presentation and warrants special mention; it served as a foundational document for the team’s orientation to LLU’s in-depth self-study effort at the academic program level. The educational outcomes that are reported as performance indicators in this appendix are impressive and stand out among ample comparative and benchmarked data. (CFRs 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 4.8)

The data from these tables indicate that LLU graduates regularly perform at or above national norms in almost all professional programs in terms of pass rates and mean scores on standardized examinations. These tables also reveal cohort retention rates in the Associate and Bachelor’s programs above 85%, and for Master’s and First Professional Degree programs, above 96%. The Commission commends the institution for the attention given to these key trend indicators over time and to the noteworthy outcomes they report. The Commission encourages the institution to give the same level of attention to student success at the undergraduate level.

The Commission endorsed the findings, commendations, and recommendations of the team and wishes to emphasize the importance of continued attention to the following areas, as cited in the team report:

Developing Institutional Research and Utilizing Data in Strategic Planning. While the Commission found evidence of solid foundational work in the newly configured strategic planning process, it is also evident that it is still finding its position as an integrating function central to the university, supported by and responsive to the various schools. Similarly, the closely linked institutional research function, which provides data-supported decision making for strategic planning and operations, is developing common terminology and data definitions. Institutional research will become even more critical as the student achievement data being generated at the school level from multiple program reviews are incorporated into the strategic planning process. (CFRs 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 4.3-4.5)

Advancing Scholarly Research Activity. The Commission encourages the University to vigorously pursue its goal of becoming a recognized academic research center, as stated in its Loma Linda University Adventist Health Sciences Center (LLUAHSC) Research Strategic Plan. This initiative promises to enhance the learning experiences of students, attract qualified faculty, and help the faculty remain current in their disciplines. It will also, however, require the allocation of financial and technological resources, the advancement of related policies, and the exercise of focused leadership, including at the board level. (CFRs 2.8, 2.9, 3.3, 3.4, 3.9-10)

Assessment, Program Review, and Student Achievement. The Commission desires that the remarkable recent achievements in building a culture of assessment become even more systematically deployed across each of the schools. The University should continue to support its goals for enhancing the use of

achievement data in budgeting and planning, for achieving uniformly high implementation of assessment in all schools through continuing faculty development efforts, and for including undergraduate general education within these initiatives. LLU also is urged to give serious attention to the role of the undergraduate programs and their place within the overall institution and to work to close achievement gaps among subpopulations. (CFRs 2.2a, 2.6, 2.7, 2.1-2.13, 3.4, 4.4, 4.7)

The Commission acted to:

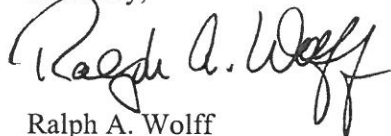
1. Receive the Educational Effectiveness Review report and reaffirm the accreditation of Loma Linda University.
2. Schedule the next Capacity and Preparatory Review for fall 2020 and the Educational Effectiveness Review for spring 2022.
3. Request an Interim Report to be submitted on March 1, 2015 related to continuing progress in strategic planning, institutional research, scholarly activity, assessment and program review, and student achievement, as identified in this letter.

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that Loma Linda University has satisfactorily addressed the Core Commitments to Institutional Capacity and Educational Effectiveness, and has successfully completed the three-stage review conducted under the Standards of Accreditation. Between this action and the time of the next review, the institution is expected to continue its progress, particularly with respect to educational effectiveness and student learning.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of LLU's governing board in one week. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be widely disseminated throughout the institution to promote further engagement and improvement, and to support the institution's response to the specific issues identified in them.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that the University undertook in preparing for and supporting this accreditation review. WASC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while assuring public accountability, and we are grateful for your continued support of our process. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Ralph A. Wolff
President

RAW/RW/cf

cc: Linda Johnsrud, Commission Chair
Ronald L. Carter, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Lowell Cooper, Board Chair
Members of the EER team
Richard Winn, WASC Vice President