



July 6, 2001

Ralph Cicerone
Chancellor
University of California at Irvine
501 Administration
Irvine, CA 92697

Dear Chancellor Cicerone:

At its meeting on June 20-22, 2001, the Commission considered the report submitted by the WASC evaluation team that visited the University on April 3-6, 2001. Available to the Commission was the self-study prepared by the University for the visit and the University's response to the team report, dated June 11, 2001. The members of Commission were grateful for the opportunity to meet with you during their deliberations. The Commission was also pleased by the personal attention that you gave to this process and your commitment to derive value for the University from it.

The University is commended for the quality of its academic standards and achievements, which have earned it membership in the American Association of Universities. The University has weathered the economic downturns of the 1990s and has made progress in planning how it will manage successfully projected growth of 1,600 students per year for the next ten years. The University undertook a thematic self study focused on issues identified as relevant to its priorities. These themes included the assessment of undergraduate education, improving communications skills (writing), undergraduate research opportunities at a research university, and challenges facing UCI. Three aspects of the University were found to be especially noteworthy: the program review system, which has a strong record of using its results to improve academic programs; the University's strong commitment to student writing, which has resulted in a culture of writing across the campus; and the processes for outreach, recruitment and enrollment, recognized by the team as an acknowledged national model.

The team made a number of commendations and recommendations. The Commission endorsed them and wishes to highlight the following topics: the UCI writing programs, undergraduate research opportunities, assessment of undergraduate education, and challenges facing the University.

CHAIR
Marilyn P. Sutton
*California State University,
Dominguez Hills*

VICE CHAIR
Stephen C. Morgan
University of La Verne

James R. Appleton
University of Redlands

Barbara A. Beno
*San Mateo Community
College District*

Lois J. Carson
Public Member

Kenyon S. Chan
Loyola Marymount University

Geoffrey M. Cox
Cardean University

Faith Gabelnick
Pacific University

Marvalene Hughes
*California State University,
Stanislaus*

Louanne Kennedy
*California State University,
Northridge*

Leah R. Laule
Irvine Unified School District

Sherwood G. Lingenfelter
Fuller Theological Seminary

Theodore R. Mitchell
Occidental College

Hugo Morales
Public Member

Deane E. Neubauer
University of Hawaii, Manoa

Theodore J. Saenger
Public Member

John B. Simpson
*University of California,
Santa Cruz*

Virginia B. Smith
Public Member

Larry N. Vanderhoef
University of California, Davis

John D. Welty
*California State University,
Fresno*

W. Atom Yee
Santa Clara University

STAFF
Ralph A. Wolff
Executive Director

Judie Gaffin Wexler
Associate Executive Director

Gregory M. Scott
Associate Director

Stephanie R. Bangert
Assistant Director

Elizabeth Griego
Assistant Director

Katherine Hinds
Assistant Director

Fred H. Dorer
Staff Associate

Lily S. Owyang
Staff Associate

The UCI Writing programs: The selection of writing as a theme was influenced by the University's strong commitment to improving the writing skills of all its students. Given that for 60 percent of its undergraduate students English is a second language, the University's commitment is significant. In addition to strong instructional and remedial support for its English as a Second Language program, the University has invested considerable resources in support of general writing skills for first and second year students, as well as in discipline-centered writing for upper division students. As the University's enrollment increases, it will need to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of well trained instructors assigned and supported to sustain the quality and breadth of these exemplary writing programs.

Undergraduate Research Opportunities: The University is commended for its well developed undergraduate research and honors programs. The team found that both programs are effective and give rich experiences to their participants. There is need, however, to develop plans for and provide resources to ensure the growth of both programs. With respect to undergraduate research, the team found a need to provide more useful definitions of specific types of student research that the University wishes to promote, and for more effective incentives to foster and sustain faculty participation as research mentors. More specific means of acknowledgment and reward for faculty participating in these programs may work to enhance the long-term success of the undergraduate research program.

The Assessment of Undergraduate Education: The University reported and the team found evidence of a variety of assessment activities at the institution. Exemplary programs were identified within the engineering and physics programs and the Humanities core. Additionally, the University has used assessment techniques effectively in its decision making around adopting new pedagogies. These accomplishments notwithstanding, the University does not yet have a comprehensive approach for determining the overall educational effectiveness of its academic programs. In this light, the University's intention to move ahead with its assessment initiative, as indicated in its June 11, 2001 response, was well received by the Commission. As a preliminary step, the University may find it useful to examine other research institutions, including those within the UC system, with strong emphases on educational effectiveness and the improvement of student learning. The use of UCI's own strong assessment programs might be celebrated as exemplars emulated by programs still needing to develop these capabilities.

University Challenges: The Commission recognizes the self-acknowledged challenges faced by UCI in managing its projected enrollment growth. Along with managing enrollment growth and continuing efforts to enhance research performance, sustaining attention to undergraduate academics and co-curricular programs will demand the full measure of UCI's skill and resources. Toward this end, it will be important to assess the effectiveness of academic and co-curricular programs to ensure that they continue to meet student needs.

The Commission acted to:

1. Reaffirm the Accreditation of the University of California, Irvine.

2. Schedule the Proposal for the two-stage review to be due October 15, 2008. Schedule the Preparatory Review in spring 2011 and the Educational Effectiveness Review in spring 2012.

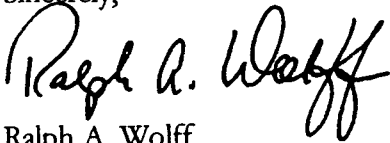
The Commission Panel appreciated that your personal review of the team report has led to the endorsement of several of the recommendations and the commitment of the administration to move ahead with their implementation. The Commission wishes to assure the University that it will extend its best efforts to work cooperatively with the University during the course of its response to the team report and this Commission Action letter, in anticipation of the next review.

The next scheduled review of the institution will occur under the *Handbook of Accreditation 2001*, which involves significant new Standards and substantially different expectations for Institutional Presentations under the new review cycle. The Commission urges the University to review the new *Handbook* and to assess how institutional evidence can be developed prior to the next accreditation review that will make the new process less burdensome and more useful.

In accordance with Commission policy, we request that you send a copy of this letter to President Richard C. Atkinson.

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

Sincerely,



Ralph A. Wolff
Executive Director

cc: Marilyn P. Sutton
Michael P. Clark
Members of the Team
Gregory M. Scott

RW/brn