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Mary Ellen Petrisco

July 8, 2016

Dr. Karen Haynes
President
California State University, San Marcos
333 S Twin Oaks Valley Road
San Marcos, CA 92096-0001

Dear President Haynes:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 22-24, 2016. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Accreditation Visit to CSUSM March 16-18, 2016. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by CSUSM prior to the Offsite Review (OSR), the supplemental materials requested by the team after the OSR, and the institution's May 9, 2016 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and your colleagues: Dr. Graham Oberem, Provost and Vice President and Dr. Regina Eisenbach, Dean and ALO. Your comments were very helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations. The date of this action constitutes the effective date of the institution's new status with WSCUC.

Actions

1. Receive the Accreditation Visit team report
2. Reaffirm accreditation for a period of ten years
3. Schedule the next reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in fall 2025 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2026
4. Schedule the Mid-Cycle Review in spring 2021
5. Schedule a Progress Report to be submitted by March 1, 2021 to address the five recommendations contained in the team report:
 - a. The balance between resource needs of established programs and the resource needs of planned/implemented new academic programs
 - b. The use of evidence gathered in the assessment of student learning to improve decision-making and program review
 - c. The institution's creation of a unified definition of student success and its use to evaluate program effectiveness

- d. The contributions of the Diversity Mapping Project
- e. The development/implementation of a new, university-wide strategic plan.

Commendations

The Commission commends CSUSM in particular for the following:

1. The development and early implementation of a robust and sophisticated program review process that integrates assessment of student learning with an effective approach to decision making at various levels
2. The well-crafted University Learning Outcomes, which define the distinctiveness of the baccalaureate degree. The team also commends CSUSM for the initial work on University Learning Outcomes in defining the graduate degree and for the meaningful processes that are emerging for measuring the quality and integrity of the baccalaureate and graduate degrees
3. Student affairs assessment practices of scaffolding student learning outcomes upward through university level outcomes
4. Professional development programs that are both inclusive and intentional. Examples include the Campus Connect program, development of professional competencies in Student Affairs, and programming in the Faculty Center.
5. Successfully addressing the challenges of the last decade with a creative entrepreneurial spirit and institutional pride.

Recommendations

The Commission identifies the following issues for further development:

1. Given extensive budget cuts of the past decade, coupled with substantial enrollment growth and plans for new academic programs, CSUSM should give strong consideration to personnel and other needs of established programs that have been affected by state budget constraints (CFRs 2.1, 3.1, and 3.3)
2. CSUSM should build on its promising work of assessing student learning and enhance its use of evidence for program improvement and decision-making (CFRs 2.6, 2.7, and 4.2)
3. CSUSM should develop a unified definition of student success and use it as the basis for analysis of program effectiveness (CFRs 2.7 and 2.11)
4. CSUSM should build on the Diversity Mapping Project to promote richer and more nuanced campus-wide conversations that culminate in appropriate action to realize the institution's long-standing commitment to diversity, educational equity, and inclusion (CFR 1.4)
5. CSUSM should formulate a new, university-wide, integrated strategic plan that employs as much of the former planning as valuable to address future challenges and opportunities. (CFR 4.6 and 4.7)

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that CSUSM has addressed the three Core Commitments and has successfully completed the two-stage institutional review process conducted under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. Between this action and the time of the next review for reaffirmation, the institution is encouraged to continue its progress, particularly with respect to student learning and success.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of CSUSM's governing board in one week. A copy of this letter will also be sent to Chancellor White. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the CSUSM website and widely distributed 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 on the WSCUC website.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that CSUSM 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 support of 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/cno

Cc: William Ladusaw Commission Chair
Regina Eisenbach, ALO
Rebecca Eisen, Board Chair
Timothy White, Chancellor, CSU System
Members of the Accreditation Visit team
Christopher Oberg, Vice President
Geoff Chase, Vice President