



## CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, STANISLAUS

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

December 9, 2014

WASC Senior College and University Commission  
985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100  
Alameda, CA 94501

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO THE WSCUC SPECIAL VISIT TEAM REPORT

Dear WASC Senior College and University Commission,

I would like to thank Special Visit Team members Terry MacTaggart (Chair), Laurel McCabe, and Robert Stein and WSCUC liaison Melanie Booth for an impactful visit. It was well organized and focused, and the team facilitated meaningful conversations that were helpful to the University's further growth and development. I very much appreciate that Chair MacTaggart and Team Member Stein were willing to return to the campus after the visit on November 7-8, 2011. This was important in understanding the context and the progress that has been made. I also value team member Laurel McCabe's willingness to serve and the fresh perspective she brought to the visit. The Special Visit Team was well prepared for evaluating the University's progress on the issues of the charge. Members had carefully read the Self-Study Report and asked insightful and probing questions during their visit.

I fully support the Special Visit Team's three recommendations. Regarding campus climate and trust, the report's finding was particularly gratifying. I have indeed made shared governance with the faculty and consultation with the campus community more broadly a priority of this administration. We have made excellent progress in this area because so many people on campus believed that it could and should happen. The report appropriately recognized that individual faculty members, such as the Speaker of the Faculty, and administration personnel, such as the Provost, contributed mightily to the new spirit of collaboration. In the sense of a larger community commitment to change, the valuable contributions to the development of trust from a variety of committees such as the Senate Executive Committee, Committee on Committees, University RPT Committee, University Budget Advisory Committee, Ad Hoc Trust Restoration Committee, RPT Survey Group, Strategic Plan Working Group, and the Holistic Academic Program Review Committee were noted and appreciated.

Regarding strategic planning, we are much in agreement that our effort should be accelerated. The level of trust and spirit of consultation now on campus permit and encourage such work. Indeed, strategic planning has been significantly increased during the past twelve months. Progress this semester will effectively position the University for strategically informed decisions for the coming few years and a new or revised strategic plan by 2019, when the next comprehensive WASC visit will occur.

Last spring, I accepted the recommendation of the Strategic Plan Working Group to create the Committee to Implement and Prioritize the Strategic Plan. This fall, the Committee of fourteen has been meeting weekly to

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carry out the charge of identifying five strategic actions/goals for focus over the next two years. Additionally, the Committee is charged with developing and integrating existing action plans to implement the strategic actions/goals that are selected. The Committee has been reaching out to many stakeholder groups through meetings and is conducting a short survey to gain broad stakeholder feedback on priorities and the integration of planning. The evidence gathered will be processed by the Committee and draft recommendations vetted, and I hope to have a final recommendation in February, 2015. I believe this process will serve as the foundation for the response to the recommendation to enhance strategic planning.

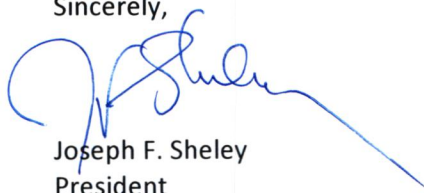
Regarding faculty retention, promotion, and tenure policies, I was pleased to read the many positive comments concerning progress manifested since the Team's last visit – the relationship of this element of shared governance to increased trust is readily apparent. With the Team, I too appreciate the campus's RPT Survey Group Report for its clarity, transparency, and thoughtfulness in interpreting the data informing it.

I agree with the recommendation that “more work needs to be done in developing retention, promotion, and tenure standards that are fair and transparent, and that encourage faculty to aspire to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative activity, and service.” Work in this vein is moving forward on campus in the same spirit in which increased trust and shared governance have been pursued. Faculty primacy in RPT decisions is stressed, and accountability and thorough, clearly articulated analysis and reasoning are expected at all levels of review. This requires both processes with demonstrated integrity and standards that truly can inform decisions by individual faculty members as they seek retention, promotion, and tenure. Our goal always is to chart the clearest path possible for our faculty members whose progress is being reviewed and for those conducting the reviews.

Finally, I am especially appreciative of the Special Visit Team's recognition of the excellent work of the campus community in the area of student success: “The university community remains exceptional not only in its dedication to student success, but to actually improving student retention rates. National publications recognize these remarkable achievements in comparison with peer institutions.” We want to make a significant difference in our individual students' lives and in the future of our region. We are proud of our work in this vein and seek to connect all that we do to this objective, including the very subjects of the Special Visit Team's recommendations.

Thank you for your attention and, again, our gratitude is offered to the Special Visit Team for their thorough and insightful work.

Sincerely,



Joseph F. Sheley  
President

cc: James T. Strong, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Marjorie Jaasma, AVP for Academic Planning and Analysis and Accreditation Liaison Officer