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PRESIDENT
Mary Ellen Petrisko

March 6, 2015

Dr. Joseph F. Sheley
President
CSU Stanislaus
One Turlock Circle
Turlock, CA 95382

Dear President Sheley,

At its meeting February 18-20, 2015, the Commission considered the report of the Special Visit team that conducted an Onsite Review of CSU Stanislaus (CSUS) on October 1-3, 2014. Commission members also reviewed the Special Visit report submitted by CSUS prior to the visit, and the institution's December 9, 2014 response to the visiting team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you, Provost James Strong, Vice President Dennis Shimek, and Interim Associate Vice President / ALO Marjorie Jaasma. Your comments were helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations.

The Special Visit was scheduled to evaluate CSUS's progress on four issues identified in the Commission's March 7, 2012 action letter. Specifically, CSUS was asked to address:

- 1) Shared governance
- 2) Campus climate
- 3) Progress on shared roles in strategic planning, and
- 4) Formulation of retention, promotion, and tenure policies.

The team found that there has been a substantial improvement in the campus climate and trust, and that shared governance is operating consistently at the level expected from a public university. The team also found substantial faculty involvement in strategic planning discussions, though as noted below, the team recommended greater attention to developing a new or updated strategic plan. Finally, the team found that real progress is being made with respect to retention, promotion, and tenure, but that CSUS would benefit from a continued diligent effort to develop greater consistency in these processes.

The team commended CSUS for 1) improving shared governance and trust; 2) modeling collaborative processes and adhering to agreed-upon shared governance processes; and 3) the University's commitment to student success, specifically increasing the participation, retention, and graduation rates of students in its service region.

The team also noted that the assessment of student learning and program review, which are scheduled to be addressed in the fall 2015 Interim Report, were successfully addressed in the November 2011 Special Visit, and the institution was specifically commended for its progress in both of these areas in the March 7, 2012 Commission Action Letter.

The Commission endorses the findings, commendations, and recommendations of the Special Visit team and wishes to emphasize the following areas for further attention and development:

Shared Governance and Institutional Climate. In light of progress in reestablishing a climate of trust and collegiality, it is time for the University to begin shifting the focus from its special, ad hoc committees to the standing committees charged with shared decision making and governance. [CFR 3.7]

Strategic Planning. As indicated in the team report, “During the 2014 Special Visit, the team found that faculty and administration were slowly returning to the work of strategic planning. This work needs to be accelerated. It needs to grow out of a candid assessment of the fiscal, political, and demographic realities confronting the university.” The university needs to collaborate in a systematic analysis of the changing economic, demographic, and political environment and to update its existing strategic plan or create a new one to respond to these realities. [CFR 4.6 and 4.7]

Scholarship and Creative Activity. As stated in the team report, faculty need to “continue to develop clear department expectations for research, scholarship, and creative activity that reflect disciplinary practices, are aligned with the university’s institutional purposes and educational objectives, and provide clear guidance for promotion and tenure.” 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. [CFR 2.8, 2.9, 3.2, and 3.7]

The Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Special Visit Report.
2. Confirm the scheduled Mid-Cycle Review in spring 2015.
3. Continue with the scheduled Offsite Review in fall 2018.
4. Remove the Interim Report scheduled for fall 2015.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of CSU Stanislaus’ governing board in one week. A copy of this letter will also be sent to CSU Chancellor White. 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 this letter. 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.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that CSU Stanislaus undertook in preparing for and supporting this Special Visit. WSCUC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while contributing to public accountability, and we thank you for your continued participation in 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/ mb

Cc: William A. Ladusaw, Commission Chair
Marjorie A. Jaasma, ALO
Mr. George Petrulakis, CSUS Board Corporation President
Timothy P. White, CSU Chancellor
Terry MacTaggart, Team Chair
Laurel McCabe, Team Member
Robert Stein, Team Member
Melanie Booth, WSCUC Vice President