



March 9, 1999

Marvalene Hughes
President
California State University, Stanislaus
801 W. Monte Vista Avenue
Turlock, CA 95382

Dear President Hughes:

At its meeting on February 24-25, 1999, the Commission considered the report of the evaluation team that visited your campus on October-16, 1998. The Commission also had available to it the self-study prepared by the University in preparation for this visit. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to meet with you; Richard Curry, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; and Diana Mayer Demetrulias, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. Your comments were very helpful.

The Commission understands that the campus community has determined that CSU, Stanislaus should become a learning-centered institution and that the University is in the beginning stages of implementing that goal across campus structures. It endorses the University's learning focus, noting that such a focus is appropriate to the role and mission of the University. The Commission commends CSU, Stanislaus for its use of the self study as an opportunity to define and explore its status in regard to being learning-centered and for its willingness to commit to an explicit central core value. It applauds the way in which the University examined itself in regard to the nine WASC standards and went beyond those standards to take a comprehensive look at itself in respect to its core values.

Given the centrality of the learning-centered theme to the University's planning for the future, the team used it as a lens with which to look at

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the total institution. The team sought to determine the extent to which the goal permeated all aspects of CSU, Stanislaus and was substantiated by data. The work of the team built upon the University's recognition that becoming learning-centered does not automatically result from saying that one is learning-centered.

In determining that Stanislaus should become a learning-centered university the institution has provided itself with a focus for all aspects of the institution. This is a substantial and important commitment. In realizing the goal, the University can expect to engage in sustained dialogue to move the campus to deeper levels of understanding of the commitment to be learning-centered. As the work done in the self study already suggests, definitions of being learning-centered need to be regularly revisited so that the campus moves forward on a shared path. This is exciting work that the Commission hopes the University will be willing to share with the region.

The Commission found that the evaluation team made a number of valuable recommendations. It urges the University to consider them. Additionally, the Commission wishes to highlight several areas.

Effectiveness Strategies: CSU, Stanislaus is at the early stages of developing strategies to enable it to assess its own effectiveness. As the team report notes, the University will be hindered in meeting its own goals around learning unless it develops modes of assessing progress and of integrating those data into the program review process. There are some exemplary assessment activities underway, but these are not yet universal. The University is urged to continue to develop and apply assessment strategies tied to the learning-centered goal. The Commission endorses the team's finding that the University does not now have the data and systems to meet its current needs, let alone those that will develop as it moves ahead in becoming learning-centered.

Faculty Roles: It is important that the University align the faculty review and reward systems with the needs of a learning-centered institution. The institutional focus makes it even more important that the University develop a clear definition of scholarship and reach some consensus about expectations for faculty research. It is a concern that little progress seems to have been made in this regard since the 1990 visit. In April 1991, the Commission noted that the "definition and role of research in promotion and tenure is unclear and the source of confusion or misunderstanding." Little progress also seems to have been made in improving the support for research needs. Faculty rank both support for teaching and support for research among the areas of their lowest satisfaction with the University.

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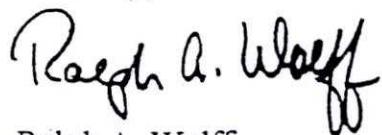
The Library: The Commission shares the concern voiced in the self study that only 20 percent of the faculty report that the library is adequate to meet their needs. It urges the University to develop a plan to address the dated nature of the collection in this vital learning resource for the campus.

The Commission acted to:

1. Reaffirm the accreditation of California State University, Stanislaus.
2. Schedule the next comprehensive visit to the University in the fall of 2008. The draft of the self-study in preparation for this visit will be due July 15, 2008, and the final self-study will be due two months before the visit.
3. Request ten (10) copies of a Fifth-Year report be submitted by November 1, 2003, providing an update on the efforts to be a learning-centered university as well as on the major recommendations in the team report and on the issues in this letter. Enclosed is a memorandum providing guidance on the format and content of a fifth-year report.
4. In accordance with Commission policy, we request that you send a copy of this letter to Chancellor Charles Reed.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments regarding this action. I hope we will continue to hear about your efforts to move the University toward the learning-centered goal.

Sincerely,



Ralph A. Wolff
Executive Director

cc: Marilyn Sutton
Diana Mayer Demetrulias
Judie G. Wexler
Members of the Team

Enclosure