



March 10, 2000

Rev. Paul J. Locatelli, S.J.
President
Santa Clara University
500 El Camino Real
Santa Clara, CA 95053-0460

Dear President Locatelli:

At its meeting on February 23-24, 2000, the Commission considered the report of the evaluation team that visited Santa Clara University on November 9-12, 1999. The Commission also had available to it the self study prepared by the University in preparation for the visit. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to meet with you and Don Dodson, Vice Provost of Academic Affairs and University Planning. Your comments were very helpful.

The Commission was pleased to note that the University undertook an experimental self study focused on assessing its own performance in regard to its strategic plan. In doing so, the University seriously considered its effectiveness in "educating men and women for competence, conscience, and compassion" and progress on its major planning initiatives. The Commission commends the University for undertaking this ambitious project, firmly believing in the importance of self-reflection and analysis in building institutional strength and enhancing quality. The Commission has been interested in developing new accreditation models that would align self studies more directly with institutional priorities, contribute to institutional improvement, and facilitate institutional reflection on educational effectiveness. Santa Clara's self study achieved these goals in an admirable way. The Commission was particularly interested in the "Questions for Further Study" the University articulated for the visiting team. These helped both the team and the Commission understand some of the ways in which Santa Clara hoped to find the visit useful as well as areas the University has identified for further substantive engagement.

Santa Clara, in its strategic plan, has committed itself to excellence and rigor in education and scholarship. To accomplish this the University designated three key initiatives: build a community of scholars, provide an integrated education, and focus resources for excellence. The Commission commends the University for the quality of its educational vision and for the way in which it has built upon its heritage and Jesuit tradition to create a new vision for itself. The Commission acknowledges, as did the University, the extent to which the self study and

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strategic plan mirror the values and principles the Commission has adopted to guide the development of new standards.

The University's strategic commitments served as the organizing principles for the self study and for both the institution's and the team's reflections and analyses. The Commission endorses and commends the way in which the University has challenged itself to move beyond the rhetoric of a planning document into the more challenging domain of developing indicators and examining evidence of what has been accomplished. The Commission was pleased that the work of the self study was able to contribute to a greater reliance on evidence and the creation of mechanisms that should prove helpful in ongoing reflection on strategic action. As the self study and the evaluation team affirm, the University has been successful in taking important steps consistent with its strategic plan but without developing a concomitant underlying base of inquiry and evidence; the Commission appreciates that the self study provides a foundation of inquiry and indicators on which the University can build. Important steps remain to be taken for the University to build the base of evidence it needs to determine that its educational objectives are being fulfilled.

The evaluation team found much to commend, particularly in the way the University has developed and articulated a vision that permeates the campus community's understanding of itself. The team also noted that the University has made progress in several areas since the last visit, especially in regard to planning and faculty procedures. In addition, the University has significantly advanced in: the development of a new University Core Curriculum; the extensive construction and renovation of facilities; the impressive growth of the endowment; and the development of its "centers of distinction."

The evaluation team identified a number of important recommendations for consideration throughout its report. The Commission endorses these recommendations and urges the University to give them full consideration. Additionally, the Commission wishes to highlight several areas.

Further engaging the faculty: The Commission commends the impressive work the University has done to translate its vision into learning goals and the initial work undertaken on the assessment of learning at the undergraduate level and, to a lesser extent, at the graduate and professional levels. Appropriately, Santa Clara has determined that formal assessment of its educational objectives would enable it to move toward achievement of those objectives; now the University needs to further engage the faculty at large. Evaluation strategies are needed throughout the University to determine how to utilize and make available the information that is gathered to improve programs, and to support faculty in developing their understanding of assessment. Moreover, administrative clarification is needed. If assessment is going to support academic review and effectiveness, the authority and responsibility for it must be clearly located.

Program Review: Santa Clara does not appear to have a consistent program review process. Yet the University's own goals require comprehensive and systematic ways to examine programs in light of learning goals and institutional objectives. A broad and sustainable infrastructure is needed for the assessment of quality and student learning at the program level. Such processes and structures are vital to assure program currency and quality, and can be an important way to engage faculty in determining how well program learning objectives are achieved.

Diversity: The Commission joins with the team in commending the University for the positive campus climate it has created and for its innovative programming to implement diversity goals. Significant external funds have been generated to promote and advance multicultural initiatives. At the same time, the Commission shares the team's concern about the need for women and minorities in senior positions and as a larger presence within the faculty. It encourages the University to continue to examine strategies for enhancing the recruitment and success of Latino, African-American, and Native American students. Given the mission and goals of the University, the Commission also encourages consideration of whether curriculum redesign is needed to ensure the engagement of all students with diversity issues while they are attending Santa Clara.

Library: The University's own data suggest the library is inadequate for campus needs, so it is surprising that the library was largely absent from the University's strategic plan. Moreover, library and information resources were of concern at the time of the last visit and they have not been substantively addressed in actions since the visit or in the plans articulated for the self study. If the University is to meet its scholarship and learning goals the library demands immediate attention. Further, there is need for a strategy for integrating information resources on campus.

Division of Counseling Psychology and Education: The lack of clarity of the role and placement of this Division, along with the paucity of full time faculty in this Division, is of concern to the Commission. It recommends that the University review the Division's alignment with the University's mission and whether current staffing enables programs within the Division to fulfill the University's mission, adequately mentor graduate students, and maintain a solid curriculum.

In sum the University is at an important juncture: it has established a vision and a strategic process and now needs to continue to make the plan a reality and take the steps needed to ensure that its educational goals are met.

The Commission acted to:

1. Reaffirm the accreditation of Santa Clara University.

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SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY
MARCH 10, 2000

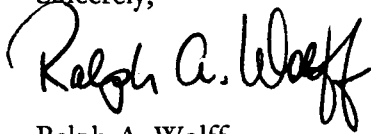
2. Request ten (10) copies of a Fifth-Year report be submitted by November 1, 2004, to focus on the issues raised in this letter and by the evaluation team. Enclosed is a memorandum providing guidance on the format and content of a Fifth-Year report.

3. Schedule the next comprehensive visit in the fall of 2009.

In June 1999 the Commission adopted a new framework for accreditation set forth in *Invitation to Dialogue II*, which establishes an accreditation cycle including: a formal institutional proposal followed by Institutional Capacity and Educational Effectiveness Reviews. The Commission is now well underway in developing revised accreditation standards and procedures to implement this new framework, which will be effective for all visits after July 1, 2003. In light of the action taken on your institution at this meeting, the next accreditation cycle will occur under this new framework. A Proposal for Review will be due July 1 2007, and the Capacity Review is scheduled for fall 2009.

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

Sincerely,



Ralph A. Wolff
Executive Director

cc: Marilyn P. Sutton
Don C. Dodson
Members of the Team
Judie Gaffin Wexler

Enclosure