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PRESIDENT
Ralph A. Wolff

July 10, 2012

Paul Ague
President
San Diego Christian College
2100 Greenfield Drive
El Cajon CA 92019-1157

Dear President Ague:

At its meeting June 13-15, 2012, the Commission considered the report of the Special Visit team that conducted an on-site review of San Diego Christian College (SDCC) February 29-March 2, 2012. The Commission also reviewed the Special Visit report and exhibits submitted by the college prior to the visit and the institution's May 13, 2012 response to the visiting team report. It appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you, Vice President for Academic Affairs Jon Depriest, Accreditation Liaison Officer Lundie Carstensen, and Controller Steve Chaney. Your observations were very helpful in informing the commission's deliberations.

Following the spring 2008 Educational Effectiveness Review, the Commission reaffirmed SDCC's accreditation and issued a Notice of Concern, which led to the spring 2012 Special Visit "focused on financial sustainability, strategic planning, and continued progress on assessment of learning."

The team reported important progress in each of the areas of concern identified by the Commission in 2008. In particular, an improved financial picture resulted from increased revenues from enrollments, expanded donor support, and more decisive cost controls. Linked to improved resources, strategic planning has enjoyed the additional impetus of locating a new and distinct campus location. Under the guidance of the academic leadership team, SDCC has been effective in more consistently incorporating summative assessment activities in service of program review. As noted below, the progress was such that the Commission was able to remove the Notice of Concern with additional follow up monitoring.

The Commission endorsed the findings, commendations, and recommendations of the Special Visit team, and highlighted the following issues for further attention.

Achieving financial sustainability. As highlighted in the team report, SDCC has demonstrated a stronger financial position in its "quick and decisive action to address operating deficits by reducing costs, and increasing enrollment, tuition revenue, and fundraising." Of particular concern to the Commission, however, was the concomitant follow-up needed to maintain these positive developments while attending to the expectations for a quality liberal arts institution. Specifically, the Commission urged the college to formalize a budget planning

model that supports fundamental efforts in advancement activities, enrollment and marketing in both traditional and non-traditional programs and encompasses consideration of academic needs. Equally important is the need to create a clearer financial management and reporting structure so that “that the primary interest of those holding [administrative roles] is to protect the interests of the College.” (CFRs 3.1, 3.5, 3.10)

Revisioning strategic planning. As the college continues to demonstrate improvements in managing enrollment, rebuilding donor bases, and focusing on quality assurance processes, it is incumbent upon the institution also to renew its efforts in planning. This is especially important in light of the planned relocation of the college and establishment of an identity and structure that is increasing independent of the church. Noting the college’s sincere and impressive diligence in addressing recent, difficult transitions, the Commission now expects SDCC to create explicit strategies in a planning framework that is both comprehensive and coherent. Doing so will provide a clearer, more deliberate roadmap for establishing a new campus, with well-defined purposes and objectives and support for achieving educational outcomes. (CFRs 4.1-4.4)

Deepening and maturing program review and assessment. The Commission recognized SDCC’s continuing attention to the important role of program review and assessment of student learning, noting the visiting team’s observation that faculty members have “turned a corner in terms of their understanding of and commitment to a culture of assessment.” Of particular interest to the Commission was the strong commitment to the capstone review process. At the same time, concerns continue relative to assuring regular program review and assessment cycles, refining processes and guidelines, and establishing a robust implementation plan to include the college’s multi-faceted co-curricular programs and activities. The Commission urged continuing attention to these quality assurance processes in anticipation of the next comprehensive review. (CFRs 2.3-2.7, 2.11, 4.4, 4.6)

In view of the progress that SDCC has made in demonstrating compliance with the WASC Standards of Accreditation, the Commission acted to:

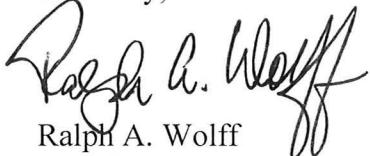
1. Receive the Special Visit Report.
2. Remove the Notice of Concern.
3. Continue with the scheduled comprehensive review with the off-site review scheduled for spring 2016 and the visit tentatively scheduled for fall 2016.
4. Request a Special Visit in spring 2014 on the issues cited in this letter and the 2012 Special Visit report: (1) financial sustainability, (2) strategic planning, and (3) program review and assessment. Progress should be demonstrated, as defined above.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of San Diego Christian College’s governing board in one week.

In keeping with WASC policy adopted in November 2011, this letter and the underlying team report also will be posted on the WASC website in approximately one week. If you wish to post a response to the letter and/or team report on your own website, WASC will also post a link to that response on its website. Any link that you wish to provide should be forwarded to the attention of Teri Cannon so that it may be included on the WASC website. As noted in the Commission policy, team reports and action letters are foundational for institutional accountability and improvement. Institutions are expected to disseminate these documents throughout the institution for the purposes of promoting ongoing engagement and improvement and encouraging internal communications about specific issues identified in team reports and action letters.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that the college undertook in preparing for and supporting this review. WASC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while assuring public accountability, and we are grateful for your continued support of our process. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Ralph A. Wolff
President

RW/kb

cc: Linda Johnsrud, Commission Chair
Lundie Carstensen, ALO
Rob Zinn, Board Chair
Members of the Special Visit team
Staff Liaisons: Richard Winn/Keith Bell