



**CHAIR**  
Linda K. Johnsrud  
*University of Hawaii*

**VICE CHAIR**  
James Donahue  
*Graduate Theological Union*

Christopher T. Cross  
*Public Member*

Anna DiStefano  
*Fielding Graduate University*

Jackie Donath  
*California State University, Sacramento*

D. Merrill Ewert  
*Fresno Pacific University*

John Fitzpatrick  
*Schools Commission Representative*

Harold Hewitt  
*Chapman University*

Michael Jackson  
*University of Southern California*

Roberts Jones  
*Public Member*

Barbara Karlin  
*Golden Gate University*

Margaret Kasimatis  
*Loyola Marymount University*

Julia Lopez  
*Public Member*

Thomas McFadden  
*Community and Junior Colleges  
Representative*

Horace Mitchell  
*California State University, Bakersfield*

Leroy Morishita  
*San Francisco State University*

William Plater  
*Indiana University –  
Purdue University, Indianapolis*

Stephen Privett, S.J.  
*University of San Francisco*

Sharon Salinger  
*University of California, Irvine*

Sheldon Schuster  
*Keck Graduate Institute*

Carmen Sigler  
*San Jose State University*

Ramon Torrecilha  
*Mills College*

Timothy White  
*University of California, Riverside*

Michael Whyte  
*Azusa Pacific University*

Paul Zingg  
*California State University, Chico*

**PRESIDENT**  
Ralph A. Wolff

July 10, 2012

Devorah Lieberman  
President  
University of La Verne  
1950 Third Street  
La Verne, CA 91750

Dear President Lieberman:

At its meeting June 13-15, 2012, the Commission considered the report of the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) team that conducted the visit to the University of La Verne (La Verne) March 26-29, 2012. The Commission also had access to the Educational Effectiveness Review report and exhibits submitted by La Verne prior to the visit, the institution's May 21, 2012 response to the visiting team report, and the documents relating to the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) visit conducted in spring 2010. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the review with you. Your comments were helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations.

As noted below, the Commission found that the University had demonstrated compliance with Commission Standards, leading to action to reaffirm the University of La Verne's accreditation with several areas identified for further attention and Commission review.

La Verne's institutional proposal outlined three themes for the EER: Improving Student Achievement, Building on Quality in Campus Climate, and Building on Excellence through Planning. The team found that La Verne had used the review process effectively to address each theme, producing a thorough analysis with identification of strengths, challenges and recommendations, and that the review was the "product of significant community engagement." La Verne demonstrated great progress in the areas addressed in its first theme, assessment and program review. The university's work on campus climate reflects its core values of diversity and inclusivity, an area of both great accomplishment and continued challenges. Finally, La Verne is well underway in the development of a new strategic plan, which holds great promise to unify the entire institution, with its four colleges and ten campuses, under the banner of the "La Verne Experience."

The Commission's action letter of July 8, 2010 highlighted five major areas for special attention during the interval between the CPR and EER visits: creating a shared mission, vision and future; promoting faculty diversity; strengthening organizational structures and decision-making processes; enhancing assessment and program review; and clarifying faculty workload and scholarship expectations. La Verne has taken important steps to address all of these areas. As noted above, the "La Verne Experience" initiative that is at the heart of the

strategic plan is designed to foster a shared sense of La Verne's distinctive mission and model of education. As noted by the team, La Verne has successfully reorganized its administrative structure and changed reporting relationships, with the goal of "creat[ing] a greater balance and alignment of academic functions, particularly with respect to the regional campuses." La Verne has made great strides in assessment and program review, providing support and resources for these activities, improving the use of learning data, and extending the use of appropriate assessment methods throughout three of its four colleges. Faculty workload issues have been resolved and an increased emphasis on, and support for, faculty scholarship was found by the team. La Verne also has made efforts to increase faculty diversity, but has not yet achieved positive, measurable results.

La Verne is especially commended for achieving an "increased sense of unity and shared mission;" for building a culture of evidence that makes extensive use of all kinds of data for planning and decision making; and for being guided by its deep commitments to diversity, inclusivity and student-centeredness.

The Commission endorses the commendations and the recommendations of the EER team and wishes to emphasize the following areas for further attention and development:

**Developing a sound integrated strategic plan.** La Verne is commended for the extensive work that has already been done to create a strategic plan that "reinforces its core values of community and civic engagement, lifelong learning, values orientation, and diversity and inclusivity." As the team noted in its report, the planning process has engaged many constituents in a collaborative exercise and has brought "focus and energy" to the institution. In keeping with the team's recommendations, the Commission urges careful attention to the many internal and external factors that have potential to affect La Verne rather dramatically in the next five to ten years, and to consider the financial impact of each initiative that has been proposed. Special attention is needed to the role of the off-campus sites and La Verne's model of distributed learning. (CFRs 3.5, 4.1-4.3)

**Refining systems for assessment of student learning, assessing the new general education program, and extending assessment to the law school.** The team noted improvements in assessment since the time of the CPR. La Verne demonstrated that it has a "much better developed system" of assessment, with learning outcomes and assessment plans in nearly all programs and good alignment of outcomes with the curriculum. The Commission expects La Verne to continue to refine assessment practices in keeping with the recommendations in the team report, including use of "comparative data from external sources, consistent use of direct assessment [across programs], and documented follow through..." In addition, it is critical that the law school take immediate steps to address the WASC expectations about assessment of student learning by developing and publishing program and course learning outcomes, mapping them to the curriculum, and establishing sound plans for assessing learning in ways that will be meaningful for both accountability and improvement purposes. Finally, the Commission expects to see the results of revisions to general education in the undergraduate program, currently in process, and related assessment plans by the time of the next interaction with WASC. (CFRs 2.2-2.4, 2.6, 4.6-4.8)

**Strengthening program review.** The Commission acknowledges the progress that La Verne has made in developing a sound system of program review. Improvements noted since the last visit include more extensive use of external reviewers, oversight of program review by the Educational Effectiveness Committee, and the deployment of program review in co-curricular units. Further refinements are needed to promote the quality of reviews across the institution, including consistent use of assessment findings, “thoughtful analysis of valid data,” and clear and effective methods to follow up on reviews and connect them to planning and budgeting. (CFRs 2.7, 4.1-4.8)

**Setting and achieving faculty diversity goals.** As noted above, La Verne is commended for its deep commitment to diversity and inclusivity. Its highly diverse student body and the success of all subpopulations in completing degrees are sound evidence of La Verne’s effectiveness. As noted above, La Verne has been less successful in recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty. The Commission supports the team’s recommendation that more deliberate initiatives to achieve a diverse faculty be undertaken, including aligning faculty diversity goals with the new “La Verne Experience” model, establishing “college-based efforts that include accountability,” and building on good practices that have been successful at other institutions. (CFRs 1.5, 3.2, 4.1-4.3)

Given the above, the Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Educational Effectiveness Review report.
2. Reaffirm the accreditation of University of La Verne.
3. Schedule the next comprehensive review with the off-site review in spring 2020 and the visit tentatively scheduled for fall 2020.
4. Request an Interim Report in fall 2014 on the areas cited above and in the EER team report: (1) completion and implementation of the strategic plan; (2) refinements to assessment processes and extension of assessment to the law school; (3) improvements to the program review processes; and (4) achieving greater faculty diversity. Progress should be demonstrated, as defined above.

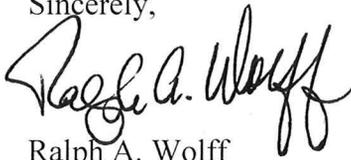
In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that the University of La Verne has satisfactorily addressed the Core Commitments to Institutional Capacity and Educational Effectiveness, and has successfully completed the three-stage review conducted under the Standards of Accreditation. Between this action and the time of the next review, the institution is expected to continue its progress, particularly with respect to educational effectiveness and student learning.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of La Verne’s governing board in one week. 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 them.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that the University of La Verne undertook in preparing for and supporting this accreditation 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ralph A. Wolff". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "R".

Ralph A. Wolff  
President

RW/tc

cc: Linda Johnsrud, Commission Chair  
Alfred Clark, ALO  
Luis Faura, Board Chair  
Members of the EER team  
Therese A. Cannon, Executive Vice President