December 9, 2011

Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities
Western Association of Schools and Colleges
985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100
Alameda, CA 94501

To the Commission:

The University of California, Santa Barbara is pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) Report prepared by the WASC Visiting Team. As I wrote to President Skorton, the team has provided UCSB with a thorough and forward-thinking evaluation and we are already benefiting from the report’s insights and thoughtful advice.

Indeed, I am happy to describe a few of the activities we have undertaken since submitting our CPR report last July. Some of these are described in an update provided to the review team during its October visit, others are recent projects, all intended to move us toward our goals for the EER. Specifically,

- Twenty-six academic units in the Sciences, Humanities, Fine Arts, and the College of Creative Studies will have completed Student Learning Outcomes Introductory Meetings and Workshops, and are expected to submit departmentally approved SLOs and assessment plans to the Academic Senate’s Ad Hoc Committee on Learning Outcomes and Assessment (CLOA) by the end of the academic year. In addition, ten Social Sciences departments will have completed the Meeting and Workshop cycle by the end of the year. Their SLOs and assessment plans should be ready for review by CLOA in the fall quarter.
- The newly-formed WASC General Education Work Group will submit faculty reviewed GE SLOs by the end of the year. Additionally, a GE assessment project will be completed by spring quarter. The project focuses on how students’ pre-matriculation preparation in writing relates to their success in writing intensive courses at UC Santa Barbara.
- Assessment projects for the four pilot departments are in progress and on track to be completed by the end of this academic year.
- The Excellence in Graduate Education Committee (EGEC) is collecting information on strategies for gathering career outcomes data and approaches to supporting meta-professional skill development that are already in use at the department level. Eighty percent of departments have shared information with the committee to date. The committee will also review feedback from faculty
graduate advisors representing 75% of graduate departments, who met recently to discuss these topics.

- By the end of this academic year, EGEC, with the assistance of a newly-hired Graduate Division institutional research analyst will have used this information to develop and launch a Job Outcomes survey. EGEC will also distribute best practices findings for job outcomes data collection. As well, information about existing resources and best practices for helping graduate students develop meta-professional skills will be distributed.
- The newly hired institutional research analyst mentioned above has enhanced data collection and data analysis processes in the Graduate Division. In addition to helping to create the Job Outcomes and Meta-Professional Skills Survey, this staff member has initiated a new exit survey in collaboration with the National Opinion Research Center’s Survey of Earned Doctorates and coordinated accurate reporting of both static and dynamic census data for the Graduate Division.

By the end of this academic year, UCSB will have made substantial progress in nearly all of the major areas highlighted by the Visiting Team. UCSB’s intention is to incorporate student learning outcomes at the undergraduate level into the campus infrastructure and culture in a way that will lead to an intentional paradigm shift. Our strong tradition of rigorous program review will be enhanced department-level reflection on outcomes and active exploration of assessment-related research questions. At the graduate level, the conversations that have been initiated will continue to increase awareness and use of institutional data and program success indicators and create an interdepartmental forum for sharing creative approaches to training graduate students effectively.

I look forward to speaking with you in February.

Sincerely,

Henry T. Yang
Chancellor