March 7, 2011

Susan Desmond-Hellman
Chancellor
University of California, San Francisco
500 Parnassus Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94143

Dear Chancellor Desmond-Hellman:

At its meeting on February 16-18, 2011, the Commission considered the report of the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) team that conducted the visit to the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), on October 13-15, 2010. The Commission also reviewed the EER report and materials submitted by the University prior to the visit, and materials related to the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR), conducted in spring 2009. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and Vice Chancellor and Accreditation Liaison Officer Joseph Castro. The updates and additional information you provided and your observations, were helpful.

The Commission commends UCSF for the serious engagement with the WASC review process, as shown by many stakeholder groups across the institution. The review was organized around the well-chosen self-study themes of: 1) the learning environment; 2) student learning outcomes; and 3) diversity. The team commented in particular on the focused achievements in the 18-month interval between the CPR and the EER visits. Using the CPR team's recommendations as the organizing framework for its report, the institution brought to a high degree of completion several key theme-related projects, although some of these projects are still in the process of coming to full fruition. While much of this work was accomplished concurrent with the University's Long-Range Development Plan, the team found the achievements to be closely aligned with WASC Standards and Criteria for Review (CFR).

The Commission commends the University and its several professional schools for exemplary levels of student achievement. With highly selective entrance requirements, retention rates at virtually 100 percent for all degree programs, and graduation rates for professional schools at between 93 and 98 percent, students typically perform at or near 100 percent pass rates on nationally-normed licensure exams. The PhD program completion rates in the Graduate Division are also above national norms. It is evident to the team and to the Commission that UCSF intends to preserve and, where possible, improve on these indicators of academic quality. The team's report gave special attention to the galvanizing impact on the faculty of the individual schools that resulted from the creation of the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC). This technology-enhanced learning environment has garnered multi-disciplinary faculty participation around learning outcomes, in keeping with one of the three themes for this review. The Commission commends the establishment of the TLC and also notes that the goal of using the TLC to foster greater interdisciplinary learning awaits more complete development and assessment.

The institution's efforts to enhance a somewhat nascent centralized institutional research function, particularly for purposes of obtaining and disseminating student achievement data, have already been successful. However, deployment and use of data in program review vary somewhat by school – a matter for further development as described below.

The Commission endorsed the findings, commendations, and recommendations of the team and wishes to emphasize the importance of giving attention to the following areas, as cited in the team report.

Building Institutional Research Infrastructure. Building on its significant achievements to date, the University should continue to develop its centralized research infrastructure with a particular focus on supporting the analytical needs of those constituencies with common interests (CFRs 4.4, 4.5, 4.7). The Office of Institutional Research will need to be supported with appropriate staffing and with collaborative access to, and analysis of, requisite data (CFRs 3.1, 3.7).

Assessing Learning and Using Data. As noted above, data for use in assessing learning and reviewing programs are being collected and utilized effectively in some schools. However, the team noted "with concern the variable amount of data examined in program review processes from department to department." As a next step, data from student learning outcomes assessment in the Graduate School and at the university level should be used to support decisions and to demonstrate and improve learning. Assessing institutional-level outcomes, in keeping with the recommendations of the team report, should yield useful findings that can both support improvement and show achievement (CFRs 1.2, 2.7, 2.10, 4.6, 4.8) Further, the University should more consistently make public its key statistics related to retention, time-to-degree, and achievement of outcomes for each degree program (CFR 1.2).

Enhancing Information Technology. The University has undertaken a number of initiatives, each of which will place great demands on the institution's information technology infrastructure. Included in these initiatives are the development of a campus-wide technology help desk, more extensive use of e-portfolios, increased remote access to library resources, assessment of both academic and clinical learning, and collection and analysis of assessment data. These initiatives will require the institution to continue to mature its information technology systems, particularly at the university level (CFRs 3.6, 3.7).

Continuing Diversity Initiatives. The University is noted for its visible commitment to diversity, as seen in its highly diverse student body, faculty, and staff. The Commission commends this commitment and encourages UCSF in its aspirations to develop exemplary practice, as expressed through its ten-point Diversity Initiative. Aspects of this commitment warrant continuing attention, such as the clarification and full implementation of the roles of key diversity leaders, mentoring of under-represented minority faculty and staff in critical career pathways, and innovative pipeline strategies (CFRs 1.5, 2.10, 2.12, 3.1).

Given the above, the Commission acted to:

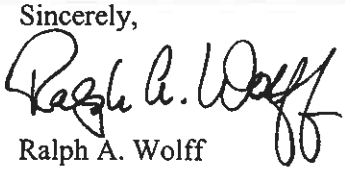
1. Receive the Educational Effectiveness Review report and reaffirm the accreditation of the University of California, San Francisco.
2. Schedule the Capacity and Preparatory Review for fall 2020 and the Educational Effectiveness Review for spring 2022.
3. Request an Interim Report to be submitted on November 1, 2014 on the following issues cited in the EER report: 1) building institutional research infrastructure, 2) assessing educational effectiveness and student learning, particularly regarding institutional outcomes, 3) enhancing information technology, and 4) continuing diversity initiatives. Progress in these areas should be demonstrated, as defined above.

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that the University of California, San Francisco 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, copies of this letter will be sent to UC President Mark Yudof and the chair of the UC Board of Regents. 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 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,



Ralph A. Wolff
President

RAW/RW/cf

cc: Linda Johnsrud, Commission Chair
Joseph Castro, Vice Chancellor and ALO
Russell Gould, Chair of the UC Board of Regents
Mark Yudof, President, University of California
Members of the EER team
Richard Winn, WASC Vice President