

May 31, 2014

Eduardo Ochoa
President
California State University, Monterey Bay
100 Campus Center
Seaside, CA 93955-8001

Dear President Ochoa:

At its meeting via teleconference on May 14, 2014, a panel of the Interim Report Committee considered the report of California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB) submitted on March 1, 2014, along with the supporting documents which accompanied it. The members appreciated the opportunity to discuss the interim report with you and your colleagues: Julio Blanco, Interim Provost; Fran Horvath, AVP for Academic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness and ALO; David Reichard, Professor and former Interim AVP for Academic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness; Ilene Feinman, Dean, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science; John Fitzgibbon, Associate Vice President for Finance; Becky Rosenberg, Director for Teaching, Learning, & Assessment; Acting Writing Program Admin; and Veronica Chukwuemaka, Director of Institutional Assessment and Research. The discussion was informative and helped the panelists to understand more clearly CSUMB's responses to the Commission Action Letter dated July 5, 2011 following the EER Visit of March 16-18, 2011.

That Commission letter asked the institution to address five issues related to the activities of the institution: (1) progress in data collection, analysis, and use; (2) improving retention and graduation rates and assessing student success initiatives; (3) continuing improvements to assessment processes and program review; (4) defining academic rigor; and (5) addressing financial challenges. In addition, CSUMB reported the results of its comparative study of capstone models. The panel commended CSUMB for a coherent, well-written, and easy to navigate institutional report. There was significant evidence of progress in each of the areas, achieved in a time of substantial change and fiscal challenge for the institution. The panel appreciated learning about the appointment of a permanent Provost, who will begin work this summer, the formation of two new colleges, the institution's plans for growth, and the coming impaction designation set for academic year 2015-16.

With respect to data collection and its analysis and use, as well as the improvements in assessment practices and program review, the panel found CSUMB to be candid and self-reflective. The reconceptualization of the office of Institutional Assessment and Research has resulted in a more comprehensive engagement of these professionals in such areas as program review. The panel noted that these program reviews are scheduled and unfold in both curricular and co-curricular areas, thus spanning the institution. The introduction of electronic portfolios has increased the material available as well as facilitated ease of access for assessment purposes. The self-review of the Academic Skills Achievement Program provided actionable evidence for improving the work of tutors in support of student success; in addition, this program review has generated thoughtful plans for further evaluation. The panel confirmed that the cycle of reviews is on track, and complements the institution on the creation and deployment of the faculty

associate role. The panel also noted the temporary suspension of GE program course additions, and the considered fashion by which the institution is moving to cohere this important undergraduate curricular component.

The data presented on retention and graduation rates are evidence of CSUMB's increasing success in moving towards both its and the Chancellor's Office goals. The institution's plans to declare impaction, and to establish a goal of 60% filled full-time faculty slots, bode well for the continuation of this trend. The creation of a data warehouse to manage data related to these important metrics will provide the institution with ready access to evidence. The panel noted the multiple and diverse programs that have been undertaken to improve retention and graduation, as well as the difficulty in determining which efforts have been most successful. An important step has been taken in institutionalizing, beyond the term of an external grant, the Center for Student Success as it was folded into an integrated structure that includes advising and career development. These longer-term commitments should buttress the foundational work to enhance student success.

The panel reviewed the multiple activities in which campus constituencies have engaged to promote increased academic rigor. It took special note of the conversations generated around "academic rigor" and "academic excellence", and understands that these conversations have resulted in changes to the program review process. Rather than declare a conclusion, the institution has opened lines of expanded inquiry, assuring that continuous improvement will be a common theme in evaluation activities. It is noteworthy that these conversations extend across stakeholders and are not limited to a particular organization body or group.

With respect to financial challenges, the panel noted that the institution has been adroit and strategic in its responses to decreased state funding. It noted that the core academic function actually increased its budget in all but one year of the recent downturn. When coupled with plans for growth that have received system approval, the institution appears well-positioned to exit the recession as a financially strong institution.

After deliberation, the panel acted to:

1. Receive the institution's interim report.
2. Continue with the scheduled reaffirmation reviews, with the Offsite Review set for fall 2018 and the Accreditation Visit set for spring 2019.
3. Encourage the institution to continue its fine work in all of the areas reviewed, with a special eye towards the strategic planning that will be necessary to maintain these accomplishments in a time of growth and expansion.

With respect to the next WSCUC review, please be advised that the Commission acted at its June 19 – 21, 2013 meeting, to approve the final version of the *2013 Handbook of Accreditation* and the new Institutional Review Process as outlined in that *Handbook*. Proceeding forward, the institution should rely upon the new *Handbook* as the appropriate guide for matters related to Standards and CFRs. Please contact me if you have specific questions about these changes.

I look forward to working with you and your colleagues at California State University, Monterey Bay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C N Oberg". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Christopher N. Oberg
Vice President/COO

Cc: Fran Horvath, AVP for Academic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness and ALO
Members of the Interim Report Committee