June 24, 2008

Mildred Garcia
President
California State University, Dominguez Hills
1000 E. Victoria Street
Carson, CA 90747

Dear President Garcia:

At its meeting on June 18-20, 2008, the Commission considered the report of
the team that conducted the Educational Effectiveness visit to California State
University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) on February 13-15, 2008. The
Commission also had access to the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER)
report and the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) report prepared by the
institution, as well as your response to the team report, dated May 12, 2008.
They appreciated the opportunity to discuss the report with you, Professor
Shirley Lal, Professor Caron Mellblom, and ALO Linda Pomerantz-Zhang.
Your comments were very helpful.

During both the CPR and EER visits, the teams found CSU Dominguez Hills
to be seriously and effectively engaged in the WASC review process. As
expressed in the EER team report, “Throughout the accreditation process,
CSUDH demonstrated integrity, commitment, and resolve to engage each of
the three stages of the review for institutional improvement across the core
functions of the organization.” (p. 2)

The EER site team reported a number of aspects of the institution’s work that
warranted commendation. Perhaps the most evident was the dedication of the
faculty to the success of each member of the very diverse student population.
This was evidenced in part by the innovative academic support programs,
essential in view of the high percentage of students requiring remedial
attention. The team also noted that, in spite of the transitions in key leadership
positions immediately following the CPR visit, the self-study leadership team
revealed sufficient depth and focus to carry forward the EER report without
loss of effectiveness. These sustained efforts reinforced the team’s perception
that many of the activities pertaining to student learning and success were in
fact embedded into the institution’s culture rather than being recent or
temporary in character.
The Commission also notes that the CSUDH faculty has demonstrated skill and insight in the assessment of learning and in the use of assessment results to improve learning. Across most units of the campus, faculty and staff appear to be familiar with the concepts of “a culture of evidence,” significantly aided by high-quality faculty development efforts. Key committees have worked with the academic senate to develop effective strategies to ensure that adequate numbers of students apply, and are admitted and retained. An inclusive strategic planning process has continued to make progress in moving a large number of initiatives forward. The opening of the new Loker Student Union has revitalized several critical aspects of the campus environment.

The Commission particularly appreciates the extraordinary range of courses, programs, and other activities that reflect the institution’s commitment to diversity. As the team noted, “The broad and creative approach to diversity described as ‘interactional diversity’ is a concept worthy of greater exploration and dissemination in the academy. CSUDH demonstrates its uniqueness as well as the creativity of its diversity efforts in ways unexplored by other institutions.” (CFR 2.9) The Commission commends these positive and effective efforts and urges their continuing development and sharing.

The team also noted several areas that warrant continuing attention. While the active and faculty-driven University Student Learning Outcomes Assessment committee (USLOAC) has had a significant campus-wide impact, the incorporation of student learning outcomes at the course and program levels is not uniform across the institution. It is seen as sluggish in some departments. Similarly, the linkage between student learning outcomes and the University Planning Council is still evolving. While the institution has implemented an effective focus on improving student writing competencies across the curriculum, other core competencies of the general education program have yet to receive similar attention (CFRs 2.3, 2.7, 4.7).

The EER team was satisfied that the institution is aware of its unfinished work in these and other areas, and has established appropriate priorities and processes to make reasonable progress in each of them. Together with their new institutional leadership, the faculty and staff at CSU Dominguez Hills show evidence of being poised to sustain the efforts that have characterized the institution during this review cycle. The Commission commends the CSUDH community and urges it to give continuing attention to these issues and to the recommendations in the team report.

The Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Educational Effectiveness Review Team Report
2. Reaffirm the accreditation of California State University, Dominguez Hills.
3. Request in Interim Report in spring 2012 addressing progress in the incorporation of assessment of learning in academic and co-curricular units within the institution, and the linkage of the results of such assessment with its strategic planning processes.
4. Schedule the Capacity and Preparatory review for spring 2018 and the Educational Effectiveness review for fall 2019. The institutional proposal will be due in spring 2016.

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that the institution has satisfactorily addressed the Core Commitments to Institutional Capacity and Educational Effectiveness and has successfully completed the multistage 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 and be prepared to respond as expectations of institutional performance, especially with respect to Educational Effectiveness and student learning, further develop under the application of the Standards of Accreditation.

As you know, the Commission has recently approved revisions to the Standards and Criteria for Review and the Institutional Review Process. Your next comprehensive review has been scheduled in keeping with the changes to the timing of the review process. The Commission suggests that you review the changes to the CFRs, effective July 1, 2008, so that you are prepared to address the revised CFRs in your next review.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the Chair of the CSU Board of Trustees in one week. A copy of the letter will also be sent to Chancellor Charles Reed. It is the Commission’s expectation 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.

Congratulations on the successful completion of the accreditation review process. Please contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,

Ralph A. Wolff
President and Executive Director

RW/aa

cc: Sherwood Lingenfelter
    Charles Reed
    Board Chair
    Linda Pomerantz-Zhang
    Members of the visiting team
    Richard Winn