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Mary Ellen Petrisko

March 7, 2014

Lori Bettison-Varga
President
Scripps College
1030 Columbia Avenue
Claremont, CA 91711-3948

Dear President Bettison-Varga:

At its meeting February 19-21, 2014, the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) considered the report of the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) team that conducted the visit to Scripps College October 22-25, 2013. The Commission also had access to the Educational Effectiveness Review report prepared by Scripps College prior to the visit, the institution's December 20, 2013, response to the visiting team report, and the documents relating to the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) visit conducted in fall 2011. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the review with you, Amy Marcus-Newhall, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty, and Junelyn Pangan Peoples, Director of Assessment and Institutional Research. Your comments were helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations.

Scripps' institutional proposal outlined two themes for this comprehensive review: enhancing the culture of teaching and learning, and educating women to be agents of change. The second theme was subsequently modified for the EER to be "assessment of co-curricular programs designed to prepare women as agents of change." The team found Scripps' institutional EER report "extremely impressive...well-organized, clearly written [and] portraying the condition of the college accurately and in great detail." Overall, the team concluded that Scripps approached the comprehensive review with "rigor" and ably demonstrated "a culture of inquiry and commitment to gathering, analyzing, and using data to improve teaching and student learning."

The Commission's action letter of March 7, 2012, highlighted four major issues for special attention during the interval between the CPR and EER visits: refining and implementing assessment and outcomes-based program review, and strengthening institutional research; strengthening diversity; promoting student success; and leveraging the resources of the Claremont University Consortium.

The team observed significant accomplishments in all areas. As the team noted, "The institutional knowledge base for assessment and capacity for institutional research has been greatly enhanced since the time of the CPR." Scripps has established learning outcomes at the course, program and institutional levels that are grounded in its educational mission; put in place a robust institutional research

and assessment function that produces exceptionally high quality work; conducted program reviews using proven practices in design and implementation; linked program review and assessment to academic and financial planning decisions; showed strong retention and graduation rates with no sustained pattern of disparities by race and ethnicity; created a roadmap for significant and immediate progress in diversity; and collaborated with other colleges in the Consortium to create a new administrative arrangement for the library and explore shared services for students with disabilities.

Beyond these accomplishments, the Commission wished to commend Scripps for its:

Deep commitment to the assessment of student learning both inside and outside the classroom. Beyond rigorously gathering and analyzing data, it was clear from the team report that Scripps used the results for serious reflection and for making changes to improve teaching and student learning. The institution demonstrated deep engagement and commitment to outcomes-based assessment both inside and outside of the classroom. Scripps has positioned itself, in the words of the team, “to validate the achievements of its exceptional students as well as the value of its pedagogical model.”

Improved institutional research capacity. Staff worked closely with faculty to develop and formulate learning goals and assessment strategies. The team reported that faculty, staff, and administrators throughout the college have gained “considerable understanding and expertise in the areas of assessment and data literacy.” In addition, new strategic reports and increased access to available data have enhanced Scripps’ culture of inquiry and evidence-based decision-making.

Progress in diversity. Eight initiatives described in the strategic plan are designed to enhance recruitment and retention of students, staff, and faculty from all racial, ethnic, religious, and socio-economic communities. Initiatives address goals for admissions and financial aid, student success, campus climate, academic programs, and institutional capacity building. The team called the plan “powerful and appropriate.”

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

Ensuring the sustainability of its assessment efforts. Although Scripps has created an exemplary and impressive curricular and co-curricular assessment system, it appears to be rather complex and heavily dependent upon substantial central administrative support. As the team noted, “In order to be sustainable, such a comprehensive system must be efficient.” The Commission recommends that, whenever possible, Scripps streamline procedures, reduce redundancies, and look for efficiencies to minimize burdens on day-to-day operations and activities and ensure institutional sustainability. (CFRs 1.2, 2.3, 4.4-4.7)

Continuing progress on diversity. The Commission expects to see a continued focus on diversity, with particular emphasis on increasing the diversity of the student body, ensuring the success of students who enroll, fostering a respectful and inclusive classroom climate, and engaging issues of diversity both inside and outside of the classroom. In addition, the Commission expects efforts to continue to diversify faculty and staff. While Scripps' has an excellent plan, as the team observed, "Only the future will demonstrate whether the college is successful in achieving its aims." (CFRs 1.5, 2.13, 3.2)

Given the above, the Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Educational Effectiveness Review report and reaffirm the accreditation of Scripps College for nine years.
2. Schedule the next comprehensive review with the Offsite Review in spring 2022 and the Accreditation Visit tentatively scheduled for fall 2022.
3. Schedule a Mid-Cycle Review for spring 2018:
http://www.wascsenior.org/resources/mid-cycle_review.
4. Request an Interim Report due November 1, 2018 on the following issues cited in the EER team report:
 - a. Update on the sustainability of the assessment process for curricular and co-curricular programs.
 - b. Status of the eight initiatives related to diversity in the Scripps Strategic Plan.

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that Scripps College has addressed the two Core Commitments to Institutional Capacity and Educational Effectiveness in an exemplary manner, and has successfully completed the three-stage review conducted under the 2008 Standards of Accreditation. Between this action and the time of the next review, the institution is encouraged to continue its progress, particularly with respect to student learning and success.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of Scripps' 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. The team report and the Commission's action letter will also be posted on the WSCUC website. If the institution wishes to respond to the Commission action on its own website, WSCUC will post a link to that response.

Please note that the Criteria for Review (CFR) cited in this letter refer to the 2008

Handbook of Accreditation. The 2008 *Handbook* continues to be available on the WSCUC website at www.wascsenior.org.

As the institution works on the issues cited in this letter, it should be mindful of the expectations that it will need to meet at the time of its next comprehensive review, which will take place under the revised Standards of Accreditation and institutional review process in the 2013 *Handbook of Accreditation*. These expectations build on past practice and include, for example, student success, quality improvement processes such as assessment and program review, planning, and financial sustainability. However, the 2013 *Handbook* also includes new foci: the meaning, quality, and integrity of degrees; student performance in core competencies at the time of graduation; and institutional planning for the changing landscape in higher education. Scripps is encouraged to familiarize itself with the 2013 *Handbook* and to approach its challenges in ways that will address both old and new expectations.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that the Scripps College undertook in preparing for and supporting this accreditation review. WSCUC 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,



Mary Ellen Petrisko
President and Executive Director

MEP/gc

Cc: Harold Hewitt, WSCUC Chair
Junelyn Peeples, ALO
Linda Taylor, Board Chair
Members of the EER team
Barbara Gross Davis, WSCUC Staff Liaison