



RECEIVED

MAR 03 2008

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
USF

February 28, 2008

Stephen A. Privett, S.J.  
President  
University of San Francisco  
2130 Fulton Street  
San Francisco, CA 94117-1080

Dear President Privett:

At its meeting on February 20-22, 2008, the Commission considered the report of the team that conducted the Capacity and Preparatory Review visit to the University of San Francisco (USF) on October 29-31, 2007. The Commission also had access to the Capacity and Preparatory Report prepared by the University prior to the visit. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and ALO Gerardo Marin. Your comments were helpful.

The reaffirmation review cycle for USF began with the submission and acceptance of the Proposal in June 2005. The Proposal outlined the intention of the University to support the achievement of outcomes directly related to the University's Vision, Mission and Values statement, reinforce the development of the University as a learning community, and align with strategic priorities. More specifically, the proposal called for enhancement of USF's efforts to embed a culture of evidence that buttresses student learning with respect to academic excellence, co-curricular offerings, a "seamless" learning environment, and diversity of the student body, faculty and staff.

The University is to be commended on its thoughtful self-study. It is well aligned with the institution's Vision, Mission and Values Statement; it is congruent with the Institutional Proposal; and it approaches the task of self-reflection with integrity and transparency.

Since the last team visit in 2002, USF has made great strides in the processes of consultation and collaboration with respect to decisions important to the University community. USF's release of significant documents for public viewing is laudable and helps the University hold itself accountable to public demands and expectations, as well as to those of its internal constituents.

985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100  
Alameda, CA 94501  
PHONE: 510.748.9001  
FAX: 510.748.9797  
E-MAIL: [wascsr@wascsenior.org](mailto:wascsr@wascsenior.org)  
INTERNET: [www.wascweb.org](http://www.wascweb.org)

CHAIR  
Sherwood Lingenfelter  
*Fuller Theological Seminary*

VICE CHAIR  
Horace Mitchell  
*California State University, Bakersfield*

Mark Bookman  
*American Jewish University*

W. Bernard Bowler  
*Public Member*

Jerry Dean Campbell  
*Claremont School of Theology*

Anna DiStefano  
*Fielding Graduate University*

James Donahue  
*Graduate Theological Union*

Jackie Donath  
*California State University, Sacramento*

Aimée Dorr  
*University of California, Los Angeles*

John Eshelman  
*Seattle University*

John Fitzpatrick  
*Schools Commission Representative*

Laurence Gould  
*Public Member*

Brice Harris  
*Community and Junior Colleges  
Commission Representative*

Linda Johnsrud  
*University of Hawaii*

Roberts Jones  
*Public Member*

Christina Maslach  
*University of California, Berkeley*

Leroy Morishita  
*San Francisco State University*

William Plater  
*Indiana University -  
Purdue University, Indianapolis*

Sheldon Schuster  
*Keck Graduate Institute*

Eleanor Dantzer Siebert  
*Mount St. Mary's College*

Carmen Sigler  
*San Jose State University*

Larry Vanderhoef  
*University of California, Davis*

Mary (Sue) Wesselkamper  
*Chaminade University of Honolulu*

Michael Whyte  
*Azusa Pacific University*

Paul Zingg  
*California State University, Chico*

STAFF  
Ralph A. Wolf  
*President and Executive Director*

Therese A. Cannon  
*Executive Associate Director*

Richard A. Winn  
*Associate Director*

Barbara Wright  
*Associate Director*

Michelle Behr  
*Assistant Director*

Ingrid Walker  
*Assistant Director*

Shana Antoine  
*Finance & Operations Manager*

In receiving the team report, the Commission endorses the findings and recommendations of the team. In particular, the Commission recommends that USF give continuing attention to several areas:

**Part-time Faculty and Faculty from Underrepresented Groups.** For the campus-based, personalized and residential environment USF offers, the number and proportion of full-time faculty at USF is low. This problem is exacerbated by high turnover and difficulty in attracting young scholars, perhaps because of the high cost of living in San Francisco. The problem of full-time faculty turnover and burnout may be more acute with respect to faculty from traditionally underrepresented groups (e.g. faculty of color, female faculty) who are pressed to provide an additional and visible presence in support of the institution's commitment to diversity in all aspects of the university. The institution needs to reduce its reliance on part-time faculty by assessing the balance between part-time and full-time in each program, and determining the appropriate balance. The Commission was heartened to hear about the University's goal to have 65% of the core curriculum taught by full-time faculty, and encourages it to continue to move forward to achieve that goal. In addition, the University should guard against overutilization of minority full-time faculty for the multiple roles they play in the University. Efforts to increase the number of full-time faculty would be consistent both with the University's goal to assure a "seamless" learning environment, and with its stated values of campus diversity. Such efforts would also provide the basis for improving student advisement, student retention, and program development, delivery and review. (CFRs 1.5, 2.1, 3.2).

**Student Advisement, Persistence and Retention.** Student advisement was one area consistently cited as a major weakness by campus constituents. Advisement is not only information transmission, career advice, and support for student academic achievement; it also serves as a significant point of intersection between the University and its students. Weakness in advising infrastructure, systems, and delivery impacts student satisfaction, and, ultimately, student success, and depresses retention and persistence to graduation. Given that USF has set the bar high with respect to its expectations for undergraduate year-to-year persistence and four-year graduation rates, development and support of effective student advisement is an important area for institutional attention. As reflected above, this issue is related to the concern regarding the number of full-time faculty. (CFR 2.12)

**Educational Effectiveness.** USF has an uneven record on assessment, despite the explicit emphasis on assessment in both the Institutional Proposal and the Capacity and Preparatory Report. The assessment program tends to be heavily reliant on survey and other indirect data. Standards of evidence are not strongly developed, linkages between course and program outcomes are not always clearly articulated, and feedback loops are not always evident. While there are structures in place, they are not used consistently to inform educational effectiveness. The University needs to give focused and sustained attention to the direct evaluation of actual student work, including agreement on what constitutes valid evidence of having achieved learning outcomes. Development of course outcomes, expected levels of student achievement, and linkage to program review must be carried out to inform decision making across campus, not merely in isolated pockets of the University. (CFRs 2.6, 2.7, 4.4, 4.7)

The Commission commends the University for the progress it has made since its last review, as part of this Capacity and Preparatory Review. At the same time, there are several areas where further progress will need to be shown.

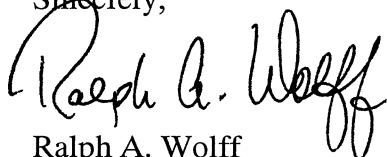
The Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Capacity and Preparatory Review Report and continue the accreditation of the University of San Francisco.
2. Proceed with the Educational Effectiveness Review as scheduled for October 7-9, 2009. The Institutional Report is due on July 15, 2009.
3. Request that the institution incorporate in its Educational Effectiveness Report its response to the issues raised in this action letter and the major recommendations of the Capacity team report. This may be done by referencing where these responses are in the Table of Contents or in an addendum to the Report.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the Chair of the institution's governing board in one week. 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.

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  
Gerardo Marin  
Members of the team  
Michelle Behr