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**PRESIDENT**  
Ralph A. Wolff

July 3, 2012

Deborah Freund  
President  
Claremont Graduate University  
150 East Tenth Street  
Claremont, CA 91711-6160

Dear President Freund:

At its meeting June 13-15, 2012, the Commission considered the report of the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) team that conducted the visit to Claremont Graduate University (CGU) March 21-23, 2012. The Commission also reviewed the Capacity and Preparatory report and exhibits submitted by the university prior to the visit and your response to the CPR team report, dated May 23, 2012. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and Provost Jacob Adams. Your observations and updates were very helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations.

In the July 2002 Commission letter following CGU's last reaccreditation, four areas were identified for attention: (1) clarifying the meaning of excellence in teaching, learning and research; (2) integrating and making more coherent academic planning within the (then) new organizational environment; (3) developing meaningful student learning outcomes and defining transdisciplinarity; and (4) achieving diversity goals. Overall the team concluded that "CGU had made significant progress" in addressing the areas identified by the Commission, though more work was needed in several of these areas, as further highlighted below.

CGU's institutional proposal outlined two themes for the Capacity and Preparatory Review: Transdisciplinary Studies and Research that Matters. CGU added an integrative essay to its CPR report to describe the realignment efforts underway under your leadership as the new president.

In terms of the first theme, all doctoral students at CGU are required to take at least one course in Transdisciplinary Studies. These courses are taught from the perspective of at least three fields and with faculty from two different schools at CGU. The team's examination of Transdisciplinary Studies "revealed a series of strengths and weaknesses that sometimes seem to contradict each other." For example, some students chose CGU specifically because of the opportunity to engage in Transdisciplinary Studies and ended up taking additional courses beyond the single course requirement. Other students took exception to the requirement that did not seem to serve their academic goals or enrich their studies. The team concluded that more work is needed "if the program is to function as a fruitful aspect of the CGU identity."

Research that Matters is defined by CGU as research that addresses social problems and values, with a heightened potential to contribute directly to society. The team concurred with CGU's self-reflection that clear definitions and assessments of student learning in this area are "not fully formed." CGU has developed a rubric to measure learning outcomes, but its use was just getting underway at the time of the visit and it was not

fully incorporated into all schools. The team urged more work to “develop a common definition, language and metrics, which will indicate success at achieving excellence in Research that Matters.”

The realignment initiative includes consolidation of schools from the current nine to a smaller number, and a review of services that are currently housed in individual schools that could be provided centrally. The team commended CGU for engaging in a process that “evaluates how strategies, structures and resources align with the objectives for student learning.” The team urged CGU to develop metrics for measuring the success in achieving the goals of this effort.

The Commission commended CGU for its strong leadership team and the skill, openness, candor and sensitivity reflected in managing the realignment process; the climate of inclusion that permeates the institution; the commitment of CGU to diversify its revenue streams and rebalance its master’s and doctoral portfolios to improve student learning and success; the dedication of students, staff and faculty to CGU and its values; and its engaged board of trustees.

The Commission also endorsed the recommendations of the CPR team and wished to emphasize the following areas for continued attention and development:

**Strengthening diversity.** The challenges of achieving greater levels of racial and ethnic diversity within the student body, faculty and staff, noted in the July 2002 Commission letter, continue today. The team was “disappointed” by the low numbers of underrepresented faculty, staff and students; the lack of compelling evidence to show that CGU was “utilizing data to enhance its community and improve the environment for underrepresented and underserved students and faculty;” and the approach of current school diversity plans which “read as reports or commentary” on the status quo and provided little in the way of “alternatives or next steps.” The Commission appreciated hearing from you that the board of trustees has placed diversity issues as a priority on its agenda, that each new school will revise and improve its previous diversity plan, and that new underrepresented faculty members have been hired. The Commission expects this area to continue to be a high priority, and for CGU to develop a multi-faceted, university-wide diversity plan. Such a plan would include goals and strategies for short- and long-term success and would outline mechanisms for measuring and monitoring progress in campus diversity on an ongoing basis. (CFRs 1.1, 1.5, 2.10, 2.13, 3.2)

**Advancing student learning outcomes and assessment.** The Standards of Accreditation place special emphasis on the obligation of institutions to assess student learning and identify ways to improve it. While CGU has developed learning outcomes at the course, program and institution levels, these are not necessarily in alignment nor are the results of assessment of learning outcomes used as a basis for decision making and continuous improvement. The Commission concurs with the team that CGU needs to “develop an academic plan that connects institutional goals, programmatic goals, course goals and student learning outcomes.” The Commission expects the university to develop and implement appropriate assessment strategies that provide direct evidence of students’ achievement and to make public the results of assessments of learning outcomes and other indicators of student achievement. In addition, the Commission urges greater clarity on the definition and meaning of “Research that Matters,” and more fully developed methods to assess the extent to which students are meeting this outcome. Finally, the Commission finds that the university needs to make “more focused and consistent use” of its extensive data-gathering efforts to make improvements and “to guide academic and administrative operations.” (CFRs 1.2, 2.10, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7)

**Developing metrics for the realignment initiative.** The Commission commends CGU for its realignment efforts “focused at its core on student learning” and recognizes that realignment is a “work in



progress that will be continuously refined and improved.” The Commission was pleased to hear that CGU has begun work to create a matrix of measurable goals and specific strategies for assessment “against which the progress and success of this initiative can be gauged.” The Commission expects the matrix to be completed by the time of the next visit. The Commission also appreciated hearing that CGU is developing a new financial model that will fund research efforts and that the next team should be able to evaluate its impact. (CFRs 3.5, 4.2)

**Enhancing Transdisciplinary Studies.** Because of the importance of transdisciplinarity “to the structure of (CGU’s) curriculum and to its self-representation,” and because the team encountered “occasional confusion and polarization of opinion” about these courses, the Commission expects the upcoming program review of Transdisciplinary Studies to be comprehensive, rigorous, thorough, detailed, and examine direct evidence of student learning. Further progress on this issue should be assessed at the time of the Educational Effectiveness Review visit. (CFRs 2.1-2.6, 2.12, 4.6-4.8)

**Rebalancing master’s and doctoral enrollments.** The team observed that the ratio of faculty to student research advisees is “high,” particularly for doctoral students. The Commission expects CGU to examine its master’s and doctoral enrollments and to consider rebalancing enrollments to reduce what the team described as “heavy faculty mentor loads,” with the goal of improving student learning, student success and institutional strength. (CFRs 2.1, 2.12)

The Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Capacity and Preparatory Review report and continue the accreditation of Claremont Graduate University.
2. Reschedule the Educational Effectiveness Review from fall 2013 to spring 2014. The Institutional Report is due 12 weeks prior to the scheduled visit.
3. Request that the institution incorporate its response to the issues raised in this action letter and the major recommendations of the CPR team report into its Educational Effectiveness Review report. You may include this analysis in an appendix to your Educational Effectiveness report or incorporate it into the report.

In extending the timeframe until the Educational Effectiveness Review, the Commission hopes to provide the institution with time to build upon its progress to date, so that by the time of the EER, CGU will have nearly completed a realignment of its schools and departments, and the impact of those changes might be more reliably assessed.

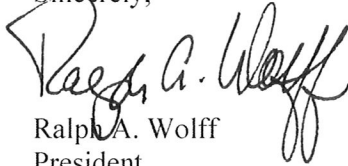
In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of CGU’s governing board in one week.

In keeping with WASC policy adopted in November 2011, this letter and the underlying team report also will be posted on the WASC website in approximately one week. If you wish to post a response to the letter and/or team report on your own website, WASC will also post a link to that response on its website. Any link that you wish to provide should be forwarded to the attention of Teri Cannon so that it may be included on the WASC website. As noted in the Commission policy, team reports and action letters are foundational for institutional accountability and improvement. Institutions are expected to disseminate these documents throughout the institution for the purposes of promoting ongoing engagement and

improvement and encouraging internal communications about specific issues identified in team reports and action letters.

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

RW/bgd

cc: Linda Johnsrud, Commission Chair  
Alana Olschwang, ALO  
Donald Baker, Board Chair  
Members of the CPR team  
Barbara Gross Davis, WASC