

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

December 3, 2012

Ralph A. Wolff, President
Western Association of Schools and Colleges
985 Atlantic Avenue, Ste. 100
Alameda, California 94501

Dear Ralph:

Pepperdine University's onsite visit, from September 25th to the 28th, was well received by our community. The team's report was thorough, fair, and beneficial in multiple ways. We appreciate the many thoughtful comments of the Visiting Team and intend to make every effort to follow their suggestions as we work toward a wider diffusion and deeper integration of assessment into the culture of Pepperdine University. As the team reported, we have made remarkable progress and are moving in the right direction.

In this letter we want to inform the Commission that our work after the EER continues, and our commitment to our chosen themes remains strong. We remain fully dedicated to a culture of evidence-based assessment and decision-making. Our commitment to this path is assured through our budgeting commitments, through our institutional structures, and, most of all, through the pervasive ethos of our culture. Here are a few examples of our continuing progress since the September visit:

- We have begun to make revisions to our program review guidebook based on the findings from the past two years of program review. These revisions will produce a stronger focus on program reviews that lead to curricular change and the improvement of teaching and learning.
- This academic year we began the first phase of a five-year process for examining and revising the general education program at the undergraduate level. We have recently been accepted to participate in an NSF grant with Tennessee Technical University to assess critical thinking using the CAT instrument. This exercise will provide an excellent opportunity to assess a particular general education skill across Seaver College as well as provide valuable benchmarking data.
- The Office of Institutional Effectiveness has established a plan for the next 6 to 10 years that lays out what needs to be accomplished to meet the WASC Redesign. This plan also incorporates the Visiting Team's recommendations.



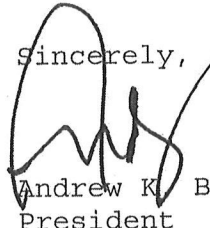
24255 Pacific Coast Highway, Malibu, California 90263-4451
Phone: (310) 506-4451

- We have added students to many of our assessment processes and committees. The Assessment of Student Learning Committee (ASLC) will include a student participant beginning this spring. Students will participate in program review processes.
- The implementation phase of the Strategic Plan is fully underway. Metrics have been established for the Plan.
- We have made significant process towards shared governance since the onsite visit. The University Faculty Council (UFC) has recommended a new model for selecting faculty representatives to the University Planning Committee. In the past, the deans nominated faculty representatives; in the new model, faculty will nominate representatives. Simply stated: we are shifting the primary responsibility for selection from the administration to the faculty.
- In a recent meeting, the UFC proposed changes to the UFC charter, as encouraged by the visiting team. Because we respect faculty prerogatives concerning how this change is to be implemented, faculty must be allowed time to craft the precise language, place the revisions before the faculty in a "comment and review" period, and conduct voting among the faculty. We believe these faculty actions represent important progress since the September visit.
- A new philosophy of governance statement is near final form. It will be edited one more time by the committee working on the document in time for the UFC to review the document at its January meeting.

All these developments since the September visit demonstrate our continuing efforts to integrate assessment, to improve student learning, to make decisions based upon data, and to engage faculty more fully in institutional governance.

We remain grateful to the Commission, the Visiting Team, and the WASC staff for their support of Pepperdine University throughout the reaffirmation process. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Andrew K. Benton
President