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Ralph A. Wolff

March 5, 2010

Maria Klawe  
President  
Harvey Mudd College  
301 Platt Boulevard  
Claremont, CA 91711-5990

Dear President Klawe,

At its meeting February 17-19, 2010, the Commission considered the report of the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) team that conducted the visit to Harvey Mudd College (HMC) October 6-8, 2009. The Commission also reviewed the college's Institutional Proposal, approved in November 2007; its Capacity and Preparatory Review report, submitted in July 2009; the report of the CPR visiting team, finalized in November 2009; and the college's December 15, 2009 letter of response to the recommendations of the team, received in December. The Commission would like to thank you, Dean of Faculty Robert Cave, and Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and ALO Janel Hastings for participating in the Commission's review. Your comments were very helpful.

In conformity with its Institutional Proposal, the college's CPR report focused on three themes: experiential learning; increasing the diversity of the student body; and assessment of student learning. In addition, the college fully documented its compliance with the Core Commitments, the Standards of Accreditation, and all Criteria for Review.

The Commission would like to join the WASC team in commending the college for its many achievements. The team report noted that the college enjoys strong leadership, campus morale is high, and sound fiscal management has served the college well in the economic downturn. The college has had notable success in increasing the representation of women – both students and faculty – and the overall quality of both the faculty and student body is outstanding. The commitment to the college's mission, to create leaders whose education combines rigorous training in science and technology with the liberal arts, is a vital part of campus culture.

The Commission was further impressed by your detailed letter of response, outlining specific actions to be taken in relation to the team's ten recommendations. These recommendations range from various aspects of assessment, diversity, experiential learning, the co-curriculum, and student services to issues of governance, leveraging endowment, and workload. The Commission endorses the team's recommendations and looks forward to seeing

the results of the college's planned actions in each instance. At the same time, the Commission would like to make the following observations.

**Assessment.** The college has made an excellent start at assessment of student learning, and its plans are promising. The Commission would merely emphasize that as the college develops its assessment system, it will be essential to focus on development and implementation of *direct* methods. The college should also ensure that processes are in place to consistently analyze, interpret, and use the findings. As these direct approaches are developed, it will be important to structure them in ways that are sustainable over the long term at both institutional and program levels and applied to experiential as well as course-based learning. (CFRs 1.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.10, 2.11, 4.6, 4.7)

**Diversity.** The goal of improving representational diversity is laudable, and the college can build on the success of its gender diversity effort as it seeks to increase the numbers of underrepresented groups among students, faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees. However, the entire student body, and indeed the entire campus community, would benefit from defining and assessing the *educational* benefits of a diverse learning environment. (CFRs 1.5, 2.10, 3.2, 4.6)

**Student success.** While student success rates are high (over 90% of students complete their degrees in four years), rates among subpopulations vary; this variability requires attention. These efforts, too, need to be sustained over the long term at both institutional and program levels. (CFRs 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 4.4, 4.6)

As you know, the Standards of Accreditation place special emphasis on student learning and on the obligation of institutions to assess student learning and identify ways to improve that learning. The Commission, along with the visiting team, anticipates progress by the time of the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) visit in the following areas: development of assessment at the program and institution-wide levels; incorporation of assessment findings into the formal program review process; and creation of linkages from assessment and program review to planning and budgeting. In short, the team should find a more fully developed infrastructure for assessment and improvement of learning.

Beyond that, the Commission would note that the particular focus of the EER is on findings or results that are available to answer the question: "How well, how effectively, is Harvey Mudd College achieving its educational and other goals?" Thus the team will want to see not only process but *findings* and *benchmarks* that show course and program outcomes are being attained at an appropriate level or standard for the college. Additional targets and indicators – e.g., related to experiential education, diversity, financial management, IT, leveraging of consortial resources, etc. – should be identified and evidence provided to show the extent to which they are being achieved.

The team concluded its visit confident that HMC is in a position to advance on schedule to the EER, and the Commission shares this confidence. Thus the Commission acted to:

1. Accept the Capacity and Preparatory Review report and continue the accreditation of Harvey Mudd College.
2. Proceed with the scheduled the Educational Effectiveness Review visit in spring 2011. 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 to 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 accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of Harvey Mudd's 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.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that the college 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 and Executive Director

RW/bw

cc: Sherwood Lingenfelter, Commission Chair  
Janel Hastings, ALO  
William A. Mingst, Board Chair  
Members of the CPR team  
Barbara Wright