



February 3, 2012

Dr. Ralph Wolff
President
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Dear Dr. Wolff:

I am writing this letter on behalf of the CETYS University System, in response to the Report of the WASC Visiting Team Educational Effectiveness Review of November 18-21, 2011, and in partial fulfillment of the requirements for initial accreditation.

CETYS University (CETYS) formally initiated an international accreditation process with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) in 2004. This transformative institutional experience, which we understand as a long term commitment to continuous improvement, has already led to substantial learning throughout CETYS community members (e.g., the Professoriate, Students, Academic and Administrative Support Staff, Senior Leadership, and our Board of Trustees).

As CETYS celebrates its fiftieth anniversary, the institution is already better overall in particular because of the WASC accreditation process. We have modified the way in which quality education is designed, organized, implemented and evaluated. The institution has diligently followed through with WASC recommendations issued after the capacity, and educational effectiveness visits. Thus, continuous improvement across the institution is evident.

CETYS sees the recommendations as a learning opportunity to improve the quality of its education. As a result, following WASC recommendations have modified CETYS capacity in the areas of faculty, library, learning assessment (curricular and co-curricular), academic program review, information systems and organizational structure. Further, the recommendations put forward by the visiting teams have produced profound reflections in the professoriate and the administration. They have taken the time to reflect about the educational effectiveness of the institution, which in turn, helped sharpen the metrics to evaluate student learning objectives, graduation and retention, and to demonstrate with qualitative and quantitative evidence their progress.

Upon closing this important stage in CETYS University's lifecycle, there is a clear and firm commitment to follow closely the recommendations received from the most recent visiting team relating to educational effectiveness. The following paragraphs will describe the institution's response to each one of the recommendations received from the WASC evaluating team.



1.- Increase the number and percentage of faculty members with doctorates.

The institution will continue its commitment and support to increase full-time faculty as well the percent with doctorates. As per the institution's long range plan, CETYS 2020, between 2011 and 2020 the institution will be augmenting full-time faculty by up to 50%. The initial self-imposed goal of having 50% of all full-time faculty with doctorates by the year 2020 will be reviewed and reset at a higher level after following the appropriate discussion and consultation process with the professoriate. Progress is being achieved through a multiple strategy already under implementation that involves supporting current faculty to move from ABDs to full doctorates, fund other faculty to begin pursuing their doctoral studies, and to emphasize the doctorate as the preferred degree for new full-time faculty hires. In addition, with respect to full-time faculty assigned to graduate programs, 100% must possess the doctoral degree. In 2012 alone, CETYS has budgeted over \$1 million US dollars to support this initiative. We are clear that fulfillment of this recommendation will not only increase the quality of our professoriate and our academic programs but also help the institution to achieve its goals of internationalization and global competitiveness.

2.- Mature the structures and processes of faculty governance including the Academies and the Academic Advisory Committee:

As a result of the WASC accrediting process, there has been an increase in the nature, substance, and process for faculty participation at CETYS. Key to this has been the establishment of the Academies (learning communities across our three campuses) and Academic Advisory Council (AAC). Accordingly, CETYS will continue to work on and improve the Academies and the AAC (through the commissions on Institutional Policies and Academic Organization, Student Life, Faculty and Program Development, Co-Curricular Development), and will enrich and expand as appropriate their participation in academic and strategic planning as well as its tactical and operational implementation.

3.- Follow through on plans to enhance and build library collections and support staff to adequately support student learning:

Another important and essential learning outcome of the experience with WASC has been the development of a Library Strategic Plan. After the WASC 2007 Visit, CETYS contacted and received support from the Director of Libraries at UCLA to put together said plan, which then became the foundation for the continued development of our libraries as reflected as part of CETYS 2020.

The results have made a major difference to the availability and diversity of learning resources and services for our students and faculty. The inventory of e-books doubled between 2007 and 2009, and continues to increase annually in support of both undergraduate and graduate programs. Our Ensenada Campus has a new library building and the Tijuana Campus has a remodeled and upgraded library, with significant investments in physical and digital resources across all three campuses. CETYS also developed an information literacy initiative for faculty and students. Lastly, the institution has been investing in staff development that is leading towards an improved and more professionally oriented library services. All of the above will contribute to strengthen not only student learning overall but the emerging institution's research culture.



In line with all prior accomplishments, the institution will continue to implement investments and improvement pertaining to library collections, library services, and staff as per CETYS 2020.

4. Learning Outcomes and Program Review.

In relation to this recommendation which encompasses four components (completion of academic program reviews, a multiyear schedule for assessment of the program learning outcomes, use of external reviewers in academic program reviews, and the continuation of assessment of co-curricular programs), the institution acknowledges, embraces, and has begun to attend and address them in full in relation to the necessary timelines, focus, process, and participation of relevant parties (e.g., Academies), and will report progress to WASC.

5.- Robust Information Systems.

The institution will continue to invest in the development and enhancement of data base systems, portals, and information systems (i.e., SICU, PEI, PIA and Mi Campus), as well as to improve their integration, access, and reporting capacities, thereby responding to the needs of faculty and administrators for more clear, accessible, and timely data and information for planning, budgeting, and decision making. This will include as in others a provision for the consultation and participation of appropriate users.

CETYS Universidad reiterates its commitment to the address the five recommendations put forward by the WASC Visiting Team and acknowledges the value they have to strengthen the institution's goal of continuous improvement of educational quality, to enhance our contribution and service to the border region, and the aspiration to achieve global competitiveness.

The WASC process and the use of WASC standards have helped CETYS not only meet but exceed similar standards being used in the Mexican context. As this experience continues to move forward, there is shared sense of pride of what has been accomplished at this point. Most importantly, we firmly believe that we have a more solid foundation upon which to continue to serve and offer quality programs to our students.

On behalf of CETYS and the higher education community in Baja California and Northwest Mexico, we sincerely thank you and WASC for your advice and support.

Fernando León-García
President
CETYS University System
Baja California, Mexico