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March 4, 2013

Robert Brower  
President  
Point Loma Nazarene University  
3900 Lomaland Drive  
Point Loma, CA 92106

Dear President Brower:

At its meeting via teleconference on February 27, 2013, a panel of the Interim Report Committee considered the report from Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU) submitted on November 1, 2012, along with the supporting documents which accompanied it. The members appreciated the opportunity to discuss the interim report with you and your colleagues: Kelly Fulcher, Provost and Chief Academic Officer; Margaret Bailey, Vice Provost for Program Development, Accreditation, and ALO; Mary Paul, Vice President for Spiritual Development; Frank Quinn, Director, Ryan Library; Kathy McConnell, College Dean for Arts and Sciences; Holly Irwin, College Dean for Social Sciences and Professional Studies; Andrea Liston, Associate Dean for Accreditation and Assessment, School of Education; Maria Zack, Co-chair Planning Action Committee and Chair, Department of Mathematical, Information, and Computer Sciences; and Kim Bogan, Associate Dean for Student Success and Wellness. The discussion was informative and helped the panelists to understand more clearly PLNU's responses to the Commission Action Letter dated February 28, 2008 following the Educational Effectiveness Review of October 3 – 5, 2007.

The report was deep and broad in its responses to the Commission's requests for further analysis on the three issues of: (1) assessment of student learning outcomes; (2) new program development/program review process; and (3) use of evidence of student learning in decision making. The panel commended PLNU and its teams for the substantive progress that has been made in all three areas of effort. An overarching observation was the significant institutional investment, both across and down the organization structure, which PLNU made in responding to the Commission's request. In particular, with respect to assessing student learning outcomes, the panel commended PLNU for: developing ILOs and learning outcomes for general education; developing a comprehensive budget to support assessment; adopting NILOA's Transparency Framework "Assessment Wheel" and deploying the Wheel so effectively; establishing assessment coordinators in each academic unit; moving to a highly-developed stage of assessment through the meta-analysis of assessment processes; participating in different improvement initiatives such as the DQP; exploring the use of national instruments for assessing general education; and codifying the institution's plans to continue to build capacity.

In regards to the new program development/program review process, the panel commended PLNU for maintaining a noteworthy history of program review, and for its continuous refinement and improvement over the last 20 years. The effort will build on this foundation with the establishment of a permanent Program Review Committee, giving the institution a venue for oversight and quality assurance. The panel also commended the institution for its efforts to align curricular and co-curricular units in the conduct of program review and development, including the revision of guidelines and the

deployment of a Memorandum of Understanding to identify responsibilities for and steps to action.

Finally, with respect to the use of evidence of student learning in decision making, the panel commended the institution for the exemplary use of the Assessment Wheel. This institution-wide modality evidences a high level of accountability and transparency. Further, faculty engagement in using the results of assessment efforts, to modify and enhance their curricula, was notable. The use of a Guidebook to inform and support faculty is additional evidence of the institution's commitment to ongoing improvement.

The panel appreciated the specific and careful answers to its question about the sustainability of such a comprehensive continuous improvement effort. The panel encourages the institution to continue to calibrate the investments it assigns to this effort, and to make the important decisions to focus on some, rather than all, the activities in which it is engaged.

After deliberation, the panel acted to:

1. Accept the institution's interim report.
2. Request that the institution include an update on the evolution of its exemplary assessment and continuous improvement efforts, as appropriate, in its next WASC review.

With respect to the next WASC review, please be advised that the Commission acted, at its February 20 – 22, 2013 meeting, to approve the *2013 Handbook of Accreditation* and the new Institutional Review Process as outlined in that *Handbook*. Accordingly, the next interaction with WASC will be an Offsite Review in fall 2016, followed by an Accreditation Visit in fall 2017. There is no longer an Institutional Proposal required. Because PLNU's review will occur during the phase-in portion of the *Handbook's* implementation, the institution must address three (rather than five) core competencies in its institutional report (which is prepared in advance of the Offsite Review). Please contact me if you have specific questions about this change in the process and content of the reaccreditation process.

I look forward to working with you and your colleagues at Point Loma Nazarene University.

Sincerely yours,



Christopher N. Oberg  
Vice President

Cc: Margaret Bailey, Vice Provost for Program Development, Accreditation, and ALO  
Members of the Interim Report Committee