

WASC Summarizes Its Reaffirmation of Accreditation

March 3, 1992

B. Lyn Behrens
President
Loma Linda University
Loma Linda, CA 92350

Dear Lyn:

At its February 10-21, 1992 meeting, the Commission considered the evaluation team report of the site visit to the Loma Linda campus on October 28-31, 1991, and the self-study report submitted in preparation for this visit. The Commission was grateful for the opportunity to meet with you and Ian Fraser and to learn of your response to the team report and your plans for the future of the University. The Commission also was pleased to learn from your presentation of the continued progress of the University since the team visit.

The self study and evaluation team report chronicle a remarkable turnaround, a "renaissance" of the University as described by the team, in which you, the Board of Trustees, faculty, administration and staff can take great pride. It is evident that the separation of La Sierra and Loma Linda into two autonomous campuses has infused Loma Linda University with new vitality and focus as a health sciences University. The Commission also wishes to commend the University for the quality of its self study. Not only was the self study extremely well organized and formatted, but the University appears to have successfully used the self-study process to engage a number of substantive issues. As the team report indicates, there is some unevenness in the

content and analysis presented in the report, but overall it is a very fine effort.

The visit to the University was a probation visit, and focussed initially on the responsiveness of the University to the conditions and concerns which led to the probation action in February 1989. The efforts of the University to respond to the concerns has been substantial, and the evaluation team found that in most respects the University has responded effectively to each of the Commission concerns.

The evaluation team report was comprehensive and thorough and led to a number of valuable recommendations, which the University should consider. The Commission wished to highlight a number of areas in the self study and team report:

1. Governance and Administration.

One of the areas in which key changes have occurred has been with respect to the restructuring of the Board of Trustees and the changes brought by new leadership to the University. With respect to the Board of Trustees, it is clear that the reconstitution of the Board has resulted in reduction of size, increased representative character, and in the elimination of conflict of interest. Though these changes are recent in origin, already there is evidence that their impact is significant, and it appears that the Board is operating at a high level of effectiveness. The team also reports that the new structure of the Board, especially the involvement of faculty, students

and administration on its committees, has led to much broader participation of the various University constituencies. Also in response to previous Commission concerns, the Board now has clear authority to act as the governing board over critical areas such as salaries, allocation of resources and setting the University mission. As stated by the team: "nowhere has LLU made more progress more swiftly in addressing the concerns of the Commission than in reorganizing its Board of Trustees and establishing the Board's independent authority over the institution. Loma Linda is to be commended for this remarkable achievement."

It is also clear that there is great promise in the new administrative team assembled since the last WASC site visit. The team has summarized a number of important accomplishments achieved under this new administration.

[T]he President has nearly completed assembling her team of key administrators; many issues of faculty governance have been addressed and codified; comprehensive handbooks have been produced and distributed for students, faculty, staff, and trustees; a planning process that engages many levels of the institution has been developed, and an annual planning cycle begun; and there has been broad and enthusiastic reception for President Behrens' open style that invites the campus community to join her in LLU's renaissance. These are auspicious beginnings, but the real test lies ahead as

institutional gains are consolidated, the transition phase wanes, and the institution embarks upon its long-range plan.

As much as has been done, much lies yet ahead. Faculty understanding of its role and responsibilities in governance needs to be improved, and the new governance structures for the University, especially on a University-wide basis, need to be tested. As is reported by the team, particular attention needs to be paid to the role of the department chairs.

2. Assessments.

The University has begun to address how assessment might be undertaken, but much more thought and effort is needed. The evaluation team found that the self study, as a model of institutional functioning, was lacking in its use of data, and so too is the campus as an organization. Information needs and uses are not comprehensively assessed, data collection appears to be unsystematic, and there is little information about student learning other than results of national licensure examinations. Even these results, however, are not used as a basis for analysis and action. Pass

rates on licensure exams, as well as retention rates among the various schools, vary widely, yet there is little effort to analyze the results. The Commission concurs with the team recommendation that a census of assessment activated currently underway at the University be undertaken, and that the University develop a plan for using student learning outcomes and other data more effectively in its planning and decision making.

3. Diversity.

The University is to be commended for the steps it has taken to study the multiple facets of diversity within the context of the University's mission and its sponsoring church constituency, leading to a thoughtful study and the approval of a new appointment to assist the President in following through on the campus recommendations. The Commission also commends the personal commitment of the campus leadership. As the team recommends, there is need for operational plans to give form to the campus goals, and to establish means for extending the dialogue about diversity issues throughout more of the campus community.

4. Educational Programs.

The Commission was impressed by the extent to which the University mission informs and infuses the educational programs offered at all degree levels, and the extent to which faculty, administrators and students affirm this mission. With respect to undergraduate education, the Commission commends the University for its efforts to address Commission standards, especially those calling for upper division general education and elective courses. The Commission wishes the University to take note that Standard 4.B has been revised, and that the new standards should become the basis for forthright dialogue within the institution. The Commission was also pleased to note the observation by the evaluation team of the many centers of excellence across the University, especially in graduate programs and research. At the same time, the University will need to be conscious about supporting active research within the faculty, and increasing the number of faculty engaged in research.

With respect to off-campus programs, the Commission was pleased to note the responsiveness of the University to the concerns of the Commission and the previous evaluation team. The Commission had been greatly concerned about the large number of off-campus programs and the extent to which they were stretching University resources and the focus of the faculty. The significant reduction of the number of off-campus programs has effectively addressed this concern, and the Commission urges continued caution before new off-campus programs are initiated to ensure that adequate faculty, library and computer resources are in place for such programs. The Commission was also pleased that the University was able to compare on and off campus programs leading to the general conclusion of comparability of learning outcomes. Continued attention should be given to accelerated courses, to ensure that such courses are given only in those subjects appropriate to this format, and that there is monitoring to ensure

Team Roster

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Ralph C. Bohn (Dean of Continuing Education), San Jose State University; **Edwin L. Crocker** (Vice President of Administrative Services), Association of American Medical Colleges; **Harry E. Douglas, III** (Dean, College of Allied Health), Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science; **Elizabeth B. Griego** (Dean of Student Services and Research), Samuel Merritt College; **Olita D. Harris** (Associate Professor), San Diego State University; **Karl J. Hittelman** (Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs), University of Southern California, San Francisco; **Daniel Kostenbauder** (Chair, Board of Trustees), Pacific Graduate School of Psychology; **Russell L. Miller** (Vice President for Health Affairs), Howard University; **Kenneth E. Pflueger** (Director of Library Services), California Lutheran University; **Edyth H. Schoenrich** (Associate Dean, School of Public Health), Johns Hopkins University; **Hortense E. Simmons** (Professor, English and Ethnic Studies), California State University, Sacramento; **Henry Van Hassel** (Dean, Dental School), Oregon Health Sciences University; **Wendell A. Yee** (Associate Professor of Chemistry), Santa Clara University; **Larry Geraty** (President), Atlantic Union College, *observer*; **Robert Williams** (Provost, retired), Kettering College of Medical Arts, *observer*.

that faculty and students accomplish pre- and post-course assignments. The evaluation team also reported efforts of the library to improve support services but, as reported, services remain marginal and need improvement. Of concern as well is the finding that few students, at least in the MPH program, make use of the library. It will be important for the faculty to review the course syllabi to make sure that library use is integrated into the curriculum of off-campus programs. The Commission additionally supports the team recommendation that more effective computer support be provided to implement the University's computer literacy requirement, especially for the School of Public Health.

5. Faculty.

The University is fortunate to have such a dedicated and caring faculty support its educational programs. As noted by the team, there is need for clarification of the faculty member's

responsibilities to the University, the Health Care Facilities, and the Faculty Practice Plans. In addition, tenure policies and practices remain a major source of confusion. Better communication is also needed about the rights of pre- and non-tenured faculty.

6. Finances.

The Commission was pleased to note the significant improvement in University finances, the reduction in external debt, the increase of voluntary support, and the apparently stable enrollment pool. These factors bode well for the University to marshal the resources necessary to accomplish its planning objectives.

Much has been accomplished in the past two years, and the University seems well positioned to capitalize on this momentum to accomplish its educational and service mission in the health sciences. In light of these changes, the Commission acted to:

1. Remove probation.
2. Reaffirm the accreditation of Loma Linda University.
3. Schedule a special visit to the University in the fall of 1995, focusing on institutional progress in addressing the issues raised in this letter and in the team report. The format of the special visit report should follow that suggested in the enclosed memorandum.

Please call me if you have comments or questions.

Sincerely,

Stephen S. Weiner
Executive Director

SSW:dma

Enclosure

cc: Raymond F. Bacchetti
Members of the Team