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PRESIDENT

Ralph A. Wolff

July 5, 2011

William Eisenhardt
President
California Maritime Academy
200 Maritime Academy Drive
Vallejo, CA 94590-8181

Dear President Eisenhardt:

At its meeting June 22-24, 2011, the Commission considered the report of the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) team that conducted a visit to California Maritime Academy (CMA) March 1-4, 2011. The Commission also reviewed the Educational Effectiveness report submitted by the Academy prior to the visit, the documents related to the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) conducted in May 2009, and your response to the team report dated May 20, 2011. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you and with Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Gerald Jakubowski, and Accreditation Liaison Officer Graham Benton. The updates and additional information you provided and your observations were helpful.

The Commission noted in particular the institution's significant engagement, subsequent to the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR), which resulted in a thorough and well-organized self-study representative of broad institutional input. The presentation portrayed progress in the key areas identified by the CPR team and candor regarding the challenges that remain. As reported by the team, "the EER report and appendices as well as the materials in the Team Room and discussions with the campus community are of high quality and rigor. CMA is to be congratulated given the many challenges it has faced over the last several years."

CMA selected four themes for its review: Intellectual Learning, Applied Technology, Leadership Development and Global Awareness. The Commission is satisfied that the themes chosen by the institution to frame its self-study have been effective in focusing analysis and action around issues of importance to CMA. For example, the team reported a productive re-balancing of technological knowledge with rigorous academic learning, which was linked to the theme of Intellectual Learning. Similarly, the Commission noted the significant progress that has been made in incorporating program- and institution-level student learning outcomes throughout the curriculum. The assessment of these outcomes is linked to a more rigorous program review process that is being followed by each program and that incorporates external reviewers and externally normed comparative data. As a key sign of effectiveness, the Commission also noted the 85 percent placement rate for CMA graduates. These are critical steps in CMA's continuing integration of its distinctive program with the California State University system.

The Commission agrees with the team's positive reports regarding the technological education provided through the upgraded *Training Ship Golden Bear* and through the high caliber simulation center. Incorporation of specific learning outcomes linked to these facilities, while recent, appears both promising and ongoing. Furthermore, CMA's

distinctive emphasis on leadership development as a core learning outcome has noticeably matured since the CPR visit, through an agile incorporation of its core vision into a greater range of curricular activities.

The decision to include concerns about diversity within the larger theme of Global Awareness has allowed CMA to position this value in the context of a key institutional goal. The team commended the multiple efforts being deployed to deepen awareness of a diverse world even while recommending that a more intentional student experience be developed.

The Commission endorsed the findings, commendations, and recommendations of the team and wishes to emphasize the importance of continued attention to the following areas, as cited in the team report:

Assessment of Student Learning, Program Review, and Student Achievement. While the institution has demonstrated substantial achievements in incorporating relevant assessment strategies across its programs, and has used these to frame a more robust program review process, some of these strategies have yet to become embedded and sufficiently sophisticated to serve CMA well into the future. In particular, the Commission urges a more robust system for identifying, obtaining, analyzing, and using key achievement data. As noted by the team,

The review team strongly recommends that special attention be paid to enhancing the accurate recording, management, analysis and reporting of student enrollment data. In addition, Institutional Research data should be used as the bases for the assessment of student success and educational effectiveness and to guide improvements from the institution to the classroom level.

Such a system may include assigning these institutional research functions to the registrar or other properly qualified and positioned person, supporting the ongoing work of the Assessment Council, innovating assessment approaches for those outcomes distinctive to the leadership and global awareness goals, and drawing on carefully selected, externally normed data to set targets for each program. (CFRs 2.4, 2.6, 4.3) The development of assessment competencies and leadership within the institution, through faculty development, sharing of good practice within the institution, and making specific resource allocations to support this development, will be essential to sustaining the promising work that has begun. (CFRs 2.11, 3.4, 4.2) The Commission also encourages a more evident reliance on direct measures of student achievement, supplemented as appropriate by indirect measures. (CFRs 1.2, 2.4, 2.7 and related Guideline, 4.5- 4.7)

Unity and Diversity. The creation of the Unity Council represents a creative vehicle for addressing an essential but often elusive goal of an education that is both representative of, and responsive to, the highly diverse world in which CMA graduates live and work. The Commission recommends that the initial reports, plans, and publications emanating from the Council move more fully into the operations and culture of the Academy. Obtaining and using more detailed data that tracks achievement by demographic groups, using such data to evaluate the success of various diversity strategies, and working to understand the distinctive needs of each student segment are important next steps in addressing this critical challenge. (CFRs 1.5, 2.10, 2.12, 4.5) As noted by the team, “the next step will be to develop and implement a sound assessment process to determine the degree to which students actually learn global awareness, cultural awareness, and respect and tolerance for diversity.” Recent gains in recruiting a more diverse faculty should be sustained. The ultimate goal of these efforts will be to document that specified learning about “unity in diversity” is actually taking place as an aspect of a CMA student’s experience. (CFR 2.6)

Refinement of the Leadership Program. Because cadet-based opportunities to develop leadership competencies represent a defining characteristic of the CMA educational experience, the Commission

urges the institution not to relax its efforts to bring this aspect of the curriculum to the highest possible level of effectiveness. As confirmed by the institution's report, there "is the need for greater continuity through personnel changes and for a more systematic approach for integrating the various leadership development components on campus." In particular, the Commission recommends that CMA continue its efforts to stabilize the roles and clarify the functions of those who oversee this aspect of the curriculum. The learning outcomes associated with the leadership program should continue to be more fully integrated with the institution's outcomes. (CFRs 2.11, 3.11, 4.2)

Ongoing State Funding Challenges. Although not in any way a reflection on either the Educational Effectiveness Review or CMA's leadership, the Commission noted the sharp decline in the financial resources provided by the State of California and the short- and long-term impact of the state budget on California State University campuses. The Commission was especially concerned about the potential consequences of recently proposed education funding reductions on educational programs and student learning, and the ability of state-supported campuses to sustain academic quality and effectiveness. Acknowledging that each campus will be affected differently and develop its own plan to address these changes, the Commission requests that in its next interaction with WASC, CMA share its plans for the changed level of state support and explain how the changes have impacted its students, faculty and staff, and offerings. (CFRs 3.5, 4.1-4.3)

The Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Educational Effectiveness Review team report and reaffirm the accreditation of California Maritime Academy.
2. Schedule CMA's next comprehensive review visit for spring 2019. As you know, the Commission is in the process of considering major revisions to the current three-stage institutional review process. It expects these revisions to be adopted by June 2012 and implemented during the following two years. Once the revised process is adopted, WASC staff will communicate with you and your ALO to explain the impact of any changes on your next comprehensive review and on the interactions you may have with WASC before that review.
3. Request an Interim Report to be submitted by March 1, 2014, addressing progress on assessment, student achievement and program review; diversity; the student leadership program; and financial challenges, as identified in this letter.

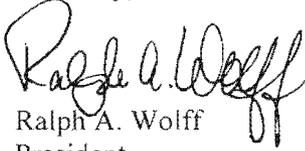
In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that California Maritime Academy has satisfactorily addressed the Core Commitments to Institutional Capacity and Educational Effectiveness, and has successfully completed the three-stage review conducted under the Standards of Accreditation. Between this action and the time of the next review, the institution is expected to continue its progress, particularly with respect to educational effectiveness and student learning.

In accordance with Commission policy, copies of this letter will be sent to Chancellor Charles Reed and the chair the CSU Board of Trustees 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 Academy 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ralph A. Wolff". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "R" and "W".

Ralph A. Wolff
President

RW/rw

cc: Linda Johnsrud, Commission Chair
Graham Benton, ALO
Charles Reed, Chancellor, CSU System
Herbert L. Carter, CSU Board Chair
Members of the EER team
Richard Winn