

# UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED

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December 14, 2010

Ralph Wolff  
Executive Director  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges  
985 Atlantic Ave., Suite 100  
Alameda, CA 94501

Dear Dr. Wolff:

As the 10<sup>th</sup> campus of the University of California and the first new UC campus established in the past 45 years, UC Merced is pleased to provide documentation in support of the Education Effectiveness Review associated with the determination of initial WASC accreditation. Since the candidacy review in 2006 UC Merced has made substantial and sustained progress towards its goal of becoming a research university that is also centered on the academic success of its students.

In our Application for Candidacy three years ago (2006), we focused on select case studies to represent the emergence of key trends for capacity and educational effectiveness at a new university. Those case studies have laid the foundation for our current assessment initiatives that engage the entire university, foremost in the efforts of faculty throughout the undergraduate and graduate curriculum. This comprehensive effort also has been supported by staff in co-curricular units that reinforce our campus mission as a student-centered research university. This collaborative engagement in course, program and institutional assessment has enabled us to plan carefully for the type of recursive evidence gathering and analysis of that evidence that informs meaningful curricular change. It also has established a culture of evidence that is entirely appropriate for a research university.

In the intervening decades since the establishment of the last three University of California campuses there is much that has changed in both the nature of the students attracted to the University of California and the conditions that need to be met to build a modern research campus. Needless to say, the State's protracted financial difficulties during the formative years of UC Merced's development have had obvious implications for a start-up university still largely dependent on State resources, especially one with a research mission such as ours. The EER report we are submitting addresses the ongoing challenges that the campus has had to endure in what continues to be a most difficult financial downturn. Despite these difficult times, we have established a solid record of success in providing a UC-quality education for our students, about half of whom are from low income families and are also first-generation college students whose needs we address with care and increasing insight as detailed in the attached EER. That insight derives in large measure from our ongoing assessment of student learning in curricular and co-curricular programs throughout the university.

We are proud of this achievement as represented in our 2011 EER for Initial Accreditation. UC Merced invites questions on this report from the Review Team and all others participating in the review. The campus looks forward to the Team visit and discussions in the Spring 2011.

Ralph Wolff  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges  
December 14, 2010  
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Your contacts for requests for additional materials, arrangements for the team visit, and any additional questions you may have are noted below:

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We welcome the insights that the Educational Effectiveness Review will bring as we also anticipate the positive impact that initial accreditation will have on our students and their future aspirations.

Sincerely,

  
Sung-mo "Steve" Kang  
Chancellor

Cc: Keith Alley, EVC/Provost  
Evan Heit, Chair of the Academic Senate