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| Date | Jan 20 2015 06:08:56 PM |
| Sender | Nicholas Dirks, Chancellor |
| To | Faculty; Staff; Students |
| Orgs | UCBKL |
| Subject | Campus Update regarding Institutional Accreditation |
| Body | <p>Dear Members of the Campus Community,</p> <p>The WASC Visiting Team, chaired by Michigan President Emeritus Mary Sue Coleman, has now completed its final report and submitted it to the WASC Commissioners for final action in February 2015. The report is available on the campus accreditation website (http://vcue.berkeley.edu/wasc/index.html).</p> <p>The Visiting Team recognized the Berkeley campus as a highly developed institution and commended us for the quality, thoroughness and transparency of our self-study process; our resiliency and resolve in facing budget challenges; our proactive and innovative strategies for mentoring and retaining new faculty; our steadily increasing graduation rates supported by data-driven solutions; our renewed commitment to undergraduate education; our systematic attention to learning outcomes and expectations about both the undergraduate and graduate levels; the integration of equity and inclusion efforts into all dimensions of the institution; and as an exemplar of effective shared governance.</p> <p>The recommendations are entirely consistent with current campus priorities, directions and goals: to establish an ambitious vision for an undergraduate liberal arts education in the context of a research university and to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of academic support programs in enabling this vision; to ensure that undergraduates have the full benefit of learning from research faculty and participating in undergraduate research and scholarship; to accelerate efforts to analyze and improve on time-to-degree and completion rates at the graduate level; and to continue support for departments to reach their equity and inclusion goals, including reducing differential time to degree across different populations of students. In addition, the recommendations that support working with the Office of the President and other campuses in the system to ensure greater autonomy and flexibility for the campuses and a more rational policy concerning tuition increases are most welcome.</p> |

The accreditation process enabled the campus to reflect collaboratively, deeply and usefully on our successes and challenges with particular importance placed on our undergraduate educational mission. The structure it provided came at an especially welcome juncture, as undergraduate education is one of the cornerstone priorities of my administration. Indeed, the self-study, which was already completed when I arrived at Berkeley in 2013, was a key part of my orientation and was required reading for the Undergraduate Initiative Steering Committee, which I formed to further develop and enhance the undergraduate experience.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to everyone who participated in the development of the campus self-study and in the Accreditation Visit. I have asked the steering committee, chaired by Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education Cathy Koshland, which oversaw the development of the self-study, to develop an implementation plan for ensuring that these recommendations receive the full attention they deserve going forward.

I look forward to updating the campus later in the semester following receipt of the official commission action letter that marks the conclusion of this accreditation cycle.

Best regards,

Nicholas Dirks
Chancellor

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