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July 17, 2012

Joseph Subbiondo
President
California Institute for Integral Studies
1453 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94103-2557

RE: WASC Spring 2012 Interim Report

Dear President Subbiondo:

At its meeting by conference call on July 6, 2012, a panel composed of members of the WASC Interim Report Committee considered the Interim Report submitted by California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) on March 1, 2012. In addition to the Interim Report and its accompanying materials, the panel reviewed supporting documents, including the June 30, 2008 Commission action letter following the February, 2008 Educational Effectiveness visit and the December 20, 2012 letter to CIIS from its WASC liaison regarding reporting on current and unexpected challenges at CIIS.

The panel appreciated the opportunity to discuss the report and CIIS's progress with members of the CIIS team: Judie Wexler, Academic Vice President, Dean of Faculty, and Accreditation Liaison Officer; Parminder Bajaj, Vice President Finance and Administration; and Chip Goldstein, Dean Academic Planning and Administration. The updates and information that they provided were helpful to the panel in understanding the institution's current position and future possibilities.

At its June 2008 meeting, the Commission highlighted four areas for further attention: educational effectiveness outcomes; diversity in the curriculum and campus climate; financial growth and sustainability; and faculty/staff support. The Commission action included a request for an Interim Report in spring 2012 focusing on those four topics. The December 2012 letter from CIIS's WASC liaison requested that the IR report also include an update on three unexpected challenges at CIIS: the low federal financial composite ratio; the loss of APA accreditation for the PsyD program; and the grading/financial aid matter in the Anthropology department that led to the termination of two faculty members.

The Interim Report panel noted progress in each of the four areas highlighted in the June 2008 action letter even in the face of the unexpected challenges. The panel commended the openness and transparency with which CIIS has managed its progress and unexpected challenges.

However, the panel also found remaining work to be done in each of the areas highlighted by the Commission and further reporting needed as the other three challenges are addressed. The panel's observations about the topics highlighted in the Commission action letter follow:

Educational Effectiveness Outcomes. The 2008 Commission action letter encouraged CIIS "to focus on articulating explicit, shared learning outcomes, and ensure that assessments provide useful information about these outcomes for program improvement and institutional understanding of its performance in this area." It also recommended the use of aggregate outcomes data to inform decision making, the involvement of adjunct faculty in assessment, and more finely tuned assessment plans in all programs and courses. The panel found that while there has been progress in these areas, work remains to be done, especially in the development of institutional learning outcomes, the use of aggregate data for decision making, and the consistency of assessment across programs. The panel encourages all programs to rapidly come up to the level of performance of the most progressive programs at CIIS and the institution to continue to develop a culture of assessment that is useful to CIIS as it evaluates the quality of its academic endeavors and the effectiveness of its education. It is expected that by the time of the next WASC review all programs will have measureable student learning outcomes at the course and program levels, that there will be demonstrable evidence that all of the learning outcomes have been assessed, and that there will be examples of how the assessment of learning outcomes at the course and program level has been used to improve the quality of the academic endeavors at CIIS. (CFRs 1.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.11, 4.3, 4.4, 4.7)

Diversity in the Curriculum and Campus Climate. In 2008, the Commission urged CIIS to "move beyond traditional, categorical thinking about diversity" and increase "the populations of diverse groups at all levels." The current CIIS strategic plan has defined "diversity" and the panel noted progress in diversity for students, faculty, scholarship, and curriculum. However, the Institute's goal for student diversity has not yet been met. It appears from the discussion that diversity results for faculty are not yet at the level desired and the panel found no data for the percent of increase or goals for faculty diversity. The results of the 2008 three-year diversity plan were not apparent in the report. It is expected that the levels of diversity in various constituencies on campus will be supported by explicit data in future reviews. The panel was concerned about the apparent lack of progress in the level of diversity of the Board of Trustees. The panel recommends that CIIS board and staff develop a goal for diversification of the Board of Trustees and track progress toward that goal. The panel reviewed a list of activities that indicated CIIS has explored additional routes to a diverse institutional environment such as the inclusion of guest speakers, the facilitation of dialog, and forums for new voices, but the panel was unable to determine how these activities fit into an intentional plan of culture change that meets WASC's expectations for diversity. (CFRs 1.5)

Financial Growth and Sustainability. The 2008 Commission action letter recommended that CIIS increase student financial support, develop reserves and contingency funds, and "increase its capacity to use data for financial decision making." The panel found that CIIS has made progress in difficult times, including using the sale of a building to add to its reserve funds, projecting a balanced budget for 2012-13, and increasing institutional scholarship aid. The panel notes that long-range financial plans and budget models are expected but were not yet complete. Such plans and models should be completed and employed as soon as possible. The panel observed that CIIS had included considerable hard evidence in this area to support its report. (CFR 3.5)

Faculty/Staff Support. Faculty and staff support was raised as a critical issue in both the CPR and EER reports. The 2008 Commission action letter states that “[i]ssues of workplace manageability pervade the Institute and directly affect both its capacity and effectiveness in meeting its educational mission.” The Commission recommended that the Institute identify and address the root causes for staff dissatisfaction. The panel found that these issues were not well addressed in the Interim Report. Panel discussion with the participants from the Institute primarily centered on the Institutional Effectiveness Survey and how that might be used to address the issues mentioned by the Commission. The panel recommends including broad questions about staff satisfaction in all instances of the survey. The panel also recommends continued progress toward the institutional goal of faculty and staff salaries located at the 60th percentile. (CFRs 2.1, 3.1-3.4)

The panel also addressed the three challenges as requested by the December 20, 2012 letter from the WASC liaison: the potential loss of APA accreditation for the PsyD program, the grading/financial aid concerns and faculty terminations in the Anthropology Department, and CIIS’ low federal financial composite ratio. The panel learned that the Composite Financial score for 2011-12 is 1.8 and that the projection for 2012-2013 is 1.6 or higher. CIIS’ appeal of the loss of APA accreditation for the PsyD program is scheduled for July 25, 2012. The panel also learned of CIIS’ efforts to rectify all grading discrepancies in the Anthropology program and to hire new leadership which will set that major back on track. CIIS appears to be addressing these three challenges in an open and transparent manner. The Institute is also going through all of its academic policies to guard against such challenges in the future, planning for the future of the PsyD program regardless of the outcome of the appeal, and carefully monitoring its progress toward financial growth. The panel encourages the Institute to continue updating WASC on these three issues until they are resolved.

The Interim Review Committee acted to:

1. Receive the Interim Report with commendations and recommendations.

CIIS is scheduled for an off-site review in spring 2016 and an on-site review in fall 2016 in accordance with the revised visit process.

Please let me know if you have any questions about this action.

Sincerely,



Diane Harvey
Vice President

cc: Judie Wexler, Academic Vice President, Dean of the Faculty, and WASC ALO
Prasad Vepa, Board Chair
Members of the Interim Report Committee