July 13, 2007

John E. Sladek  
President  
California Lutheran University  
60 West Olsen Road  
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

Dear President Sladek:

At its meeting on June 20-22, the Commission considered the report of the team that conducted the Educational Effectiveness visit to California Lutheran University (CLU) on March 21-23, 2007. The Commission also had access to the Educational Effectiveness report prepared by the University prior to the visit and the Capacity and Preparatory review of the University from March 2005, and the subsequent Commission action letter, dated June 30, 2005. The Commission Panel appreciated the opportunity to discuss the review with you; Christopher Kimball, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Leanne Neilson, Associate Provost, Graduate and Adult Programs and ALO; and Halyna Kornuta, Director of Assessment. Your comments were helpful.

The Educational Effectiveness team reported that CLU has made steady progress in response to the CPR and Commission recommendations. The University is now completing a comprehensive strategic plan with an emphasis on enrollment growth, improved admissions and retention. These goals are to be accomplished in part by focusing on capital improvements to make the University more attractive to new and continuing students. Planned facilities include a campus center, academic facilities and a new residence hall. A strategic approach to the reduction and control of the tuition discount rate is underway, with a plan to reduce the tuition discount rate to 35% by 2012.

The team further found that issues of diversity, quality of graduate programs, and the assessment of student learning have been addressed in a meaningful and in-depth manner by CLU. The team refers to the University as having begun to embed the assessment and planning process into the life of the University, and CLU has been able to generate widespread participation by all of its constituencies. In May 2006, a plan was adopted to improve faculty compensation, and funds have been allocated to improve full-time and part-time salaries over the next few years, beginning with a 12.5% increase of adjunct salaries. A Center for Equality and Justice has been created to integrate
domestic and global diversity into the curriculum and co-curricular life of the institution. Diversity issues have been established as a priority, and funds have been allocated through CLU’s budget committee for diversity initiatives.

The team noted, in particular, the faculty and institutional commitment to meaningful program reviews. The Commission commends the University for its continuous progress and commitment to building a comprehensive system of quality assurance and for the seriousness with which the University community was engaged in the entire accreditation review process. Especially noteworthy was the extensive involvement of the University’s faculty and staff.

In addition to its commendations, the team made a number of recommendations which the Commission endorsed. The Commission highlighted the following areas for institutional attention:

**Assessment of Student Learning.** The University has identified broad learning outcomes for all undergraduate students and, using these broad goals, has begun to develop learning outcomes for each department and program, as well as co-curricular areas. As CLU focuses on student learning, it will need to continue to identify the standards of performance warranted for graduation and extend assessment into graduate level programs. The program review process has begun to incorporate assessment of these student learning outcomes, and now needs to be extended across all academic and nonacademic units. Further, though greater clarity is needed to formalize accountability for the process and follow up to its recommendations.

Through the accrediting review process, considerable assessment data is now being regularly collected; the team found more attention needs to be paid to analyzing the data (qualitative and quantitative), communicating learning results more broadly, and structuring discussions of these results at the departmental and University level. Most importantly, greater attention needs to be paid to learning results. (CFR 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7)

**Planning Issues.** As the strategic planning process proceeds, the University will need to incorporate an academic plan which integrates enrollment management, faculty recruitment and retention, and financial and fundraising plans. Academic priorities need to be identified to drive the institutional strategic plan. As part of the academic plan, CLU should also consider reducing the proliferation of small academic departments and its reliance on adjunct faculty. In keeping with the University’s commitment to diversity, a more formal plan to increase student, faculty, staff, and Board diversity would be important, with timelines and benchmarks. (CFRs 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.11)

The Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Educational Effectiveness Review report and reaffirm the accreditation of California Lutheran University.

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that the institution has satisfactorily addressed the Core Commitments to Institutional Capacity and Educational Effectiveness, and has successfully completed the multistage 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 and be prepared to respond as expectations of institutional performance, especially with respect to Educational Effectiveness and student learning, further develop under the application of the Standards of Accreditation.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the Chair of the institution’s governing board in one week. It is the Commission’s expectation 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.

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,

Ralph A. Wolff
President and Executive Director

RW/aa

Cc:  John D. Welty
     Board Chair
     -Leanne Neilson
     Members of the team