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**PRESIDENT**  
Mary Ellen Petrisko

March 6, 2015

Dr. Derry Connolly  
President  
John Paul the Great Catholic University  
155 West Grand Avenue  
Escondido, CA 92025

Dear President Connolly:

At its meetings February 18-20, 2015, the Commission considered the report of the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) team that conducted the visit to John Paul the Great Catholic University (JP Catholic) October 22-24, 2014. The Commission also had access to the Educational Effectiveness Review report prepared by JP Catholic prior to the visit and the documents relating to the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) visit conducted September 26-28, 2012. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the review with you and James Monaghan, Provost and Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO). Your comments were most helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations.

JP Catholic was granted candidacy in 2011. Following a successful Capacity and Preparatory Review for Initial Accreditation in September 2012, this most recent review represents the institution's final step toward Initial Accreditation.

The Commission's action letter of March 11, 2013, highlighted three major issues for special attention during the interval between the CPR and EER visits: maturing in the context of higher education; strengthening strategic planning; and strengthening systems of assessment and program review. Overall the team found a great deal of detailed information, significant progress in all areas, and an appropriate response to every recommendation.

JP Catholic is commended for demonstrating a deepened culture as an institution of higher education and level of institutional maturity, as demonstrated by the following:

- The JP Catholic Board of Trustees has exemplified board development by joining the Association of Governing Boards and using what they have learned from that affiliation for, among other things, policy formation. Board development is also demonstrated by the additional diversity and professional expertise of its members.

- Affiliation with higher education associations extends beyond the board to JP Catholic's faculty and staff.
- Shared governance is demonstrated by the involvement of multiple constituencies including board, faculty and staff, in strategic planning and program review.
- The institution has in place a competent and well qualified administration, staff, and faculty and an engaged board.
- The institution "has updated documentation of policies and procedures in most areas and considers this an ongoing process requiring regular review. This includes human resources, faculty handbooks, board governance, and program review guidelines."
- The institution has revised its organizational structure to bring much greater clarity, as well as collegiality and accountability, to the roles of individuals in the university.

JP Catholic is commended for implementing an effective, widely inclusive, and integrated strategic and operational planning process that details clear expectations tied to defined outcomes. The strategic plan strives to align academic, personnel, fiscal, physical and technological resources. One example of this alignment is the development of a selection process to identify the site for a new campus that took into account both space needs and the potential to advance strategic goals (CFR 1.1, 1.7, 3.5, 3.7, 4.6, 4.7).

The Commission further commends JP Catholic for its well-developed system of assessment and a program review process that evaluates student achievement of learning outcomes, comprehensively examines program and institutional learning outcomes, generates recommendations and plans for improvement, and involves both internal and external reviewers. Faculty are committed to improving learning based on the results of inquiry, evidence, and evaluation (CFR 2.7, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6).

The Commission endorses the findings and recommendations of the EER team and wishes to emphasize the following areas for further attention and development.

**Faculty and Staff Development.** The evaluator team confirmed that JP Catholic faculty are fully engaged in the life of the institution. Faculty take their teaching and student advisement seriously, use professional development to improve, participate in a variety of service obligations and, according to the team, own and manage the current assessment regime and fully integrate it into their workload expectations and planning. The Commission endorses these commitments. The Commission recommends that JP Catholic carefully manage the growing workload of faculty to ensure they also have the time and resources necessary to pursue research, scholarship, and other creative activity, including on-going inquiry into teaching and learning and curricular and instructional innovation (CFR 2.8, 2.9, 4.4).

The JP Catholic staff manual includes policies relevant to conducting performance evaluations. Supervisors use annual reviews to provide staff with feedback about their work but also have on-going, informal conversations with staff regarding their performance throughout the year. Staff are encouraged to pursue professional



development and in-service training. To link the correction of deficiencies to the perpetuation of a culture of quality, JP Catholic might consider strategically aligning the results of regular performance reviews with development opportunities specified in individual improvement plans to guide future performance (CFR 3.3).

**Faculty and Senior Leadership Diversity.** The team reported that JP Catholic’s Board of Trustees has improved its gender diversity, and two of the eight President’s Cabinet members are women. However, according to JP Catholic’s Summary Data Form, there are no full-time faculty who identify as a person of color; 18% of part-time faculty are “non-Caucasian,” and over 80% of faculty are male. It is important for institutions to demonstrate an appropriate response to the increasing diversity in our society through, among other strategies, their hiring criteria and practices. JP Catholic should engage in proactive efforts to increase gender and ethnic diversity on the faculty and senior leadership. In particular, JP Catholic should pursue alternative recruitment strategies that have been successful at other institutions. A consultant with expertise in diversifying faculty and senior leadership may prove helpful (CFR 1.4, 3.1).

**Quality Assurance Processes Across the Institution.** An organization committed to quality assurance employs a deliberate set of processes that guides the institution’s academic and non-academic areas. JP Catholic has built a culture of data-driven decision-making and should continue to cultivate these efforts in order to become increasingly proficient in using evidence to assess financial sustainability, progress in operational plans, and achievement of student learning outcomes (CFR 1.7, 4.1, 4.2).

**Co-Curricular Program Assessment and Development.** JP Catholic uses a variety of curricular and co-curricular strategies to foster student success. According to the team, “Faculty and staff share in the effort to increase integration of co-curricular programs and academic programs for the purpose of students’ overall success and seamless development of whole persons.” Given that the institution’s co-curricular programs use only indirect data for decision-making, it is recommended that a more sophisticated suite of methods, including direct assessment, be developed to evaluate these areas related to student life and spiritual formation (CFR 2.11).

**Preparing for the Next Comprehensive Review.** The comprehensive review process for reaffirmation differs significantly from that used for Initial Accreditation. JP Catholic should become familiar with the 2013 WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) *Handbook of Accreditation* and consider taking advantage of the Commission’s educational programming opportunities to become familiar with this new process. In particular, JP Catholic should establish expected standards of performance for undergraduate core competencies (oral communication, written communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, critical thinking) at a level of rigor adequate to a Bachelor’s degree and ensure that graduates can demonstrate those competencies at expected levels (CFR 2.1, 2.2, 2.6).

In view of the above, the Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Educational Effectiveness Review report and grant Initial Accreditation to John Paul the Great Catholic University for a period of five years.
2. Schedule the next comprehensive review with the Offsite Review in fall 2019 and the Accreditation Visit scheduled for spring 2020.
3. Schedule the Mid-Cycle Review (MCR) in spring 2018.
4. Request an Interim Report in spring 2017. The institution will be expected to address the following: 1) plans to diversify faculty, staff, students and board members and progress with those efforts; and 2) progress with growing faculty workload to ensure time and resources necessary to pursue research, scholarship, and other creative activity.

In taking this action to grant Initial Accreditation, the Commission confirms that John Paul the Great Catholic University has satisfactorily addressed the Core Commitments to Student Learning and Success; Quality and Improvement; and Institutional Integrity, Sustainability, and Accountability, and has successfully completed the four-step review conducted under the Standards of Accreditation (2008 and 2013). Between this action and the time of the next review, the institution is expected to maintain its compliance with WSCUC Standards and uphold its commitment to continuous quality improvement.

Accreditation status is not granted retroactively. Institutions granted the status of accreditation must use the following statement if they wish to describe the status publicly:

John Paul the Great Catholic University is accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), 985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100, Alameda, CA 94501, 510.748.9001.

The accredited status of a program should not be misrepresented. The accreditation granted by WSCUC refers to the quality of the institution as a whole. Because institutional accreditation does not imply specific accreditation of any particular program at the institution, statements such as “this program is accredited” or “this degree is accredited” are incorrect and misleading. The phrase “fully accredited” is also to be avoided, since no partial accreditation is possible.

The Commission stipulates that this action encompasses the degrees offered by John Paul the Great Catholic University at the time of this action, as listed in the attached Consolidated List of Currently Conferred Degrees. In keeping with the WSCUC Policy on Degree Level Approval, John Paul the Great Catholic University is designated as having an "I" (Individual) status for each of the degree levels currently being offered. This means that all new degree programs initiated by the institution will require prior approval through WSCUC's Substantive Change process. Degree programs that have been reviewed and included under this action may be extended to other currently



approved locations of the institution without prior Substantive Change action. Offerings at new locations may need to go through Substantive Change approval, in accordance with the requirements stated in the Substantive Change Manual.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of the John Paul the Great Catholic University governing board in one week. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the JP Catholic website and widely disseminated throughout the institution to promote further engagement and improvement. The team report and this action letter will also be posted on the WSCUC website. If the institution wishes to respond to the Commission action on its own website, WSCUC will post a link to that response.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that John Paul the Great Catholic University undertook in preparing for and supporting this accreditation review. WSCUC 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,



Mary Ellen Petrisko  
President  
MEP/mam

Cc: William A. Ladusaw, Commission Chair  
James M. Monaghan, ALO  
Alan Lane, Board Chair  
[Members of the Educational Effectiveness – Initial Accreditation team]  
Maureen A. Maloney, WSCUC Vice President

Consolidated List of Currently Conferred Degrees  
by John Paul the Great Catholic University as of February 20, 2015:

<b>Degree</b>	<b>Program Name</b>
Bachelor of Science	Business
Bachelor of Science	Communications Media
Master of Business Administration	Film Producing
Master of Arts	Biblical Theology