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**PRESIDENT**  
Ralph A. Wolff

March 7, 2011

Daniel Oliver, USN ret.  
President  
Naval Postgraduate School  
1 University Circle  
Monterey, California 93943

Dear President Oliver:

At its meeting on February 16-18, 2011, the Commission considered the report of the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) team that conducted the visit to the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) on October 26-28, 2010. The Commission also had access to the Educational Effectiveness Review report and exhibits prepared by NPS prior to the visit, the institution's January 7, 2011 response to the visiting team report, and the documents relating to the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) visit conducted March 11-13, 2009. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the review with you, Provost Leonard Ferrari, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Doug Moses, Vice President, Information Resources and Chief Information Officer Christine Haska, University Librarian Eleanor Uhlinger, and Director of Institutional Planning and Communications and Accreditation Liaison Officer Frances Horvath. Your comments were helpful, especially in light of the unique and distinctive mission and context of NPS.

The Naval Postgraduate School's institutional proposal outlined three themes for this comprehensive review: 1) Strategic Planning for the Next Century, 2) Integrating a Campus-Wide Program of Improvements, and 3) Supporting an Evolving Academic Enterprise. These themes were effectively addressed through the entire comprehensive review. The Commission was particularly gratified by the EER visiting team's report that NPS leadership had implemented suggestions from the recent CPR report, and "the effects of those changes are already evident."

The Commission's action letter of June 26, 2009 highlighted three major areas for special attention between the Capacity and Educational Effectiveness Reviews: the need to build on the foundation already in place for assessing learning outcomes and continue identifying the distinctive characteristics of an NPS education, assessing the achievements of these outcomes, and incorporating assessment results into program review and planning efforts. The visiting team found that NPS took full advantage of the EER stage of the comprehensive review to address fully each of these issues.

The Commission acknowledged that NPS has enhanced the groundwork for assessing student learning, which had been laid years ago by virtue of its mission and service to the U.S. Navy. The visiting team remarked that NPS was "a model for others" in mapping coursework to program learning outcomes, conducting and supporting rigorous and robust program and curriculum reviews, and utilizing direct measures of student learning to an increasing degree. In addition, one of the major themes of the comprehensive review included a self-critique of the institution's efforts to identify its distinctive educational characteristics: stressing the relevance of NPS study and research, extending



education to all military service groups and global partners, and broadening research in national security. Finally, the Commission noted the institution's significant efforts in strategic decision making in the "evolving academic enterprise." It is clear that NPS is committed to maintaining a strong focus on continuous quality improvement in educational effectiveness.

The Commission endorsed the recommendations of the EER team and wished to emphasize the following broad areas for continued attention and development:

**Solidifying the Commitment to a Quality Education.** The Commission acknowledges the sound and effective protocols for the assessment of student learning and the impressive results that have been realized. However, the team also found that "campus-wide use and understanding of learning outcomes is just emerging in many departments" and that programs not accredited by external agencies are "not as far along" in assessment. Therefore the Commission urges NPS to move aggressively to expand good assessment practice to all programs, to solidify academic quality controls and planning mechanisms such as the Educational Effectiveness Steering Group (EESG), to adapt models currently being used by concurrently accredited programs, and to support and sustain the impressive work of PETAL (Promoting Excellence in Teaching to Advance Learning). (CFRs 2.3, 2.5-2.7, 3.4, and 4.1-4.4)

**Expanding the Institution's Reach.** NPS has accomplished much in recent years to expand its reach in national and educational environments. It will be important that the institution bolster this new level of visibility and viability in critical ways. These include: 1) diversifying funding sources for NPS programs, realizing that emerging international partnerships have the potential to strengthen its capacity to address global issues both in and outside the classroom; 2) achieving and sustaining the ability to compete successfully for distinguished research scholars within the national and international educational community; 3) engaging in cooperative agreements and securing additional revenue sources at a broader national level; and 4) strengthening and deepening appropriate infrastructure to support the institution's rigorous distributed learning program around the world. (CFRs 1.5, 2.2, 3.6-3.7, and 4.1-4.2)

**Effecting Strategies for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.** NPS has been energized under strong leadership and increased mutual trust among members of faculty and the administration, taking steps to increase its ability to adapt to rapidly changing needs while astutely managing resources during recent years of economic and organizational turmoil. Challenges remain, however, in terms of effecting vital approaches for extending its mission and purposes into the near future. Working with its parent organization, the U.S. Navy, NPS should continue to develop strategies that can lead to cost savings and the redeployment of assets. NPS also must work to build a unified and well-coordinated institutional identity, extend further the excellent reputation of and support for the institution, and build synergy with the NPS Foundation in order to increase external support. In addition, NPS should continue to develop the diversity of the student body, recognizing the value and richness of diverse perspectives among the student body. Finally, it is critical that the institution pursue its strategic planning goal of building its physical plant to an optimal capacity that will meet essential needs in the coming years. (CFRs 3.5-3.6, 3.8, 4.1-4.2, 4.8)

Given the above, the Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Educational Effectiveness Review report and reaffirm the accreditation of Naval Postgraduate School.
2. Schedule the Capacity and Preparatory Review for the fall of 2020 and the Educational Effectiveness Review for the spring of 2022.

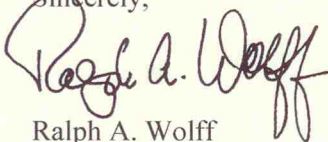
3. Request an Interim Report to be due on March 1, 2014, addressing the issues mentioned above: 1) completion of assessment protocols across all academic units with the assistance of groups such as the EESG; 2) progress in expanding international partnerships, recruiting distinguished research scholars from the international pool, broadening sources of revenue, and strengthening delivery systems in distance learning; and 3) the development of strategies for sustained cost savings, reputational advancement, further diversification of the student body, and enhancement of the physical plant to match capacity needs.

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that Naval Postgraduate School has satisfactorily addressed the Core Commitments to Institutional Capacity and Educational Effectiveness, and has successfully completed the three-stage 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, particularly with respect to educational effectiveness and student learning.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the NPS Board of Advisors chair in one week. The Commission expects 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.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that NPS undertook in preparing for and supporting this accreditation review. WASC 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,



Ralph A. Wolff  
President

RW/kb

cc: Linda Johnsrud, Commission Chair  
Fran Horvath (CIV), ALO  
Lee Gunn, Board of Advisors Chair  
Members of the EER team  
Ralph Wolff and Keith Bell