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**PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Ralph A. Wolff

June 24, 2009

Janet Holmgren  
President  
Mills College  
5000 MacArthur Blvd.  
Oakland, CA 94613

Dear President Holmgren:

At its meeting on June 17-19, 2009, the Commission considered the report of the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) team that conducted the visit to Mills College on March 4-6, 2009. The Commission also reviewed the Capacity and Preparatory report submitted by the College prior to the visit. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the visit with you, Professor of History and ALO Marianne Sheldon, and Executive Vice President for Institutional Advancement Ramon Torrecilha. The updates and information provided by you and your colleagues, and your observations about the review, were very helpful.

Mills' institutional proposal used the WASC Standards as a framework for reflection. At the same time, three thematic elements were featured in the proposal and institutional report as priorities: student retention and persistence, graduate education, and assessment of student learning. With respect to the first theme, Mills has worked to increase the diversity of the student body in order to more closely mirror demographic trends locally and nationally. Changes in the composition of the student body have challenged the institution to closely monitor retention and graduation rates and to develop initiatives to support student persistence. Mills is to be commended on this initiative.

The Commission endorsed the findings, commendations and recommendations of the CPR team. The team observed that Mills has paid close attention to key WASC concerns and recommendations from 1999 and 2004 visits, and that it is well positioned to meet the expectations for the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER). As the team report states,

The team believes firmly that Mills has the institutional capacity and infrastructure necessary for demonstrating educational effectiveness by the time of the EER. The administration's commitment to assessment, program review, and linking resource allocation to institutional goals is an encouraging development. Recent administrative appointments have been put in place to assure that a structure exists for gathering and analyzing appropriate evidence. Indeed, the team observed that a culture of evidence has begun to emerge and should help to move the institution's level of attainment from the 'emerging' to the 'developed' level."

At the same time, the Commission would like to emphasize the importance of the recommendations included in pp. 22-29 of the team report. In particular, at the time of the Educational Effectiveness Review, Mills will be expected to document and demonstrate that student learning outcomes are being measured, assessed, and evaluated,

and the results of these assessments are leading to program improvements to ensure that educational objectives are being met at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

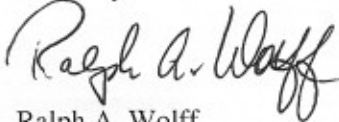
The Commission acted to:

1. Receive the Capacity and Preparatory Review report and continue the accreditation of Mills College.
2. Proceed with the scheduled Educational Effectiveness Review visit in Fall 2010.
3. Request that the institution incorporate its response to the issues raised in this action letter and to the major recommendations of the CPR team report into its Educational Effectiveness Review report. In addition, the institution is expected to prepare a brief analysis of how it meets the expectations established in the changes to the WASC Standards and Criteria for Review, which were effective July 1, 2008. These changes can be found on the WASC website at [www.wascenior.org](http://www.wascenior.org). You may include this analysis in an appendix to your EER report or incorporate it into the report.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of Mills' 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 about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Ralph A. Wolff  
President and Executive Director

RW/aa

cc: Sherwood Lingenfelter, Commission Chair  
Marianne Sheldon, ALO  
Board Chair  
Members of the CPR team  
Richard Osborn

