



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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May 7, 2024

WASC Senior College and University Commission
1080 Marina Village Parkway
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Alameda, CA 94501

Dear WSCUC Commissioners,

On behalf of the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), please thank the volunteers of the Special Visit Team for their time, expertise, and commitment to higher education. The team provided valuable observations and recommendations for the continuous improvement of the NPS's education programs. The faculty and staff are already working diligently to implement the Special Visit Team's recommendations and document the evidence of these improvements and their impact on improving the educational experience of our students.

In preparing for the Special Visit, it was helpful to look back at the progress NPS made and the challenges it faced in addressing each of the four issues identified by WSCUC as part of the reaffirmation of NPS' accreditation in 2021. Self-study and self-reflection are integral to achieving continuous improvement. We also recognize the value of an independent external review of the evidence of the hard work that we have done to advance each of the four key issues evaluated. The team's report on the most recent Special Visit has brought to light our successes, particularly in addressing two of the issues, as well as the gaps we need to attend to for the other two issues.

We appreciate the team's commendations of our work to improve our planning and budgeting process to secure resources, our campus modernization plan, and our efforts related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We devoted considerable time and resources to making these improvements, and we will continue our efforts to enhance our performance in those areas. These efforts are instrumental to our ability to make the necessary changes for the other dimensions.

Perhaps the most beneficial part of the Special Visit was the team's feedback regarding assessment and our strategic plan. The team was objective and forthright in their evaluation and recommendations. I agree that NPS has a significant amount of work to do to lay the foundations for and sustain an institutional assessment program. In addition, I agree with the team that NPS needs to develop and use metrics to assess the impact of the Vision and Strategic Framework.

In an effort to incorporate the feedback we received from the team's visit, in the past two months we have already taken several important steps. One major stride forward is that we established an Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). OIE will be responsible for overseeing Accreditation, Institutional-Level Assessment, and Institutional Research. I appointed a new Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) within OIE who will have more time to devote to accreditation responsibilities than was previously possible for the Vice Provost of Academic Affairs who also served as our ALO. The OIE Director and team worked directly with leadership to create a plan for overseeing student assessment on campus, both creating new and using already established committees within the institution to provide effective student assessment knowledge, actions, and oversight. We engaged directly the NPS Faculty Academic Council to participate in the assessment

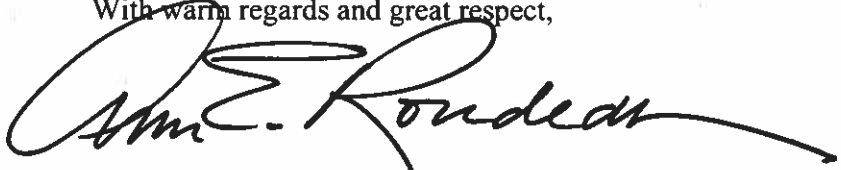
process. We also plan to establish an assessment steering committee which will include faculty, staff, and student representatives.

The Special Visit Team also recommended that campus leaders consider participating in professional development opportunities offered by WSCUC. Part of the plan for establishing an institutional assessment plan for NPS is to send the OIE team to professional development. This month, three members of the OIE team, including the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, and the ALO, attended the WSCUC Accreditation Resource Conference (ARC) in San Diego. The ALO participated in the new ALO orientation and ALO forum. The OIE team found the conference to be very beneficial and is eager to apply for this year's WSCUC Accreditation Leadership Academy. The OIE team members will attend James Madison University's Assessment 101 course this June and participate in Indiana University's Assessment Institute in October. I believe these workforce development opportunities will greatly enhance OIE's understanding of best practices within assessment and better focus NPS' assessment efforts.

Reflecting on the visit itself, I feel that the experience was incredibly beneficial for NPS, and we have made note of several ways we will improve the experience for future visits. First, we will increase faculty involvement in the assessment process, and provide more evidence and documentation of our efforts to improve student learning at NPS. Second, we will establish clear policies and procedures to standardize implementation of assessment. In addition, we will work to foster a culture of assessment on campus, drawing from insights shared from other institutions at ARC, and learning from our peers. Third, we will better leverage our connection between our ALO and the WSCUC VP. Our new ALO is already in regular contact with NPS' WSCUC VP and will continue to work with him to ensure we are on track to successfully meet our obligation to our students, the Navy, and WSCUC.

I recognize that NPS has significant work ahead, and that continual improvement will require consistent and continuous effort. We are committed to changing our practices in fundamental ways to align with the WSCUC recommendations. Once again, I truly appreciate the time and expertise of the Special Visit Team, and their honest and thorough feedback. Their recommendations and commendations gave us essential insight into our organization. As we strive for better outcomes, we are committed to learning from our shortcomings, taking responsibility for our actions, and fostering a culture of accountability and progress in line with WSCUC guidelines, and the Navy's call to action, "Get Real Get Better."

With warm regards and great respect,



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