MEMORANDUM FROM THE OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

W O O D B U R Y  U N I V E R S I T Y

DAVID ROSEN, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

DT:  16 December 2005

TO:  President Kenneth Nielsen

CC:  President's Cabinet
     Heemanshu Bhagat
     Don St. Clair
     Seta Javor
     Ken Jones
     Richard Nordin

        WRSC
     Barbara Bowley, Chair
     Ilene Blaisch
     Claudia Campos
     Satinder Dhiman
     Steve Dyer
     Zelda Gilbert
     Nick Roberts
     Randy Stauffer

RE:  WASC’s Official Response to the Proposal

The enclosed letter affirms the acceptance of Woodbury University’s Institutional Proposal. The letter iterates the splendid job done by Barbara Bowley, the committee, and the community.

While the letter note areas that the University should consider in implementing the proposal, we will address those areas as we proceed.

The letter informs us that our Capacity and Preparatory Review will occur in spring 2008 and our Educational Effectiveness Review in fall 2009.

Finally, the letter gives us the freedom to make minor adjustments to our proposal and to make major changes in consultation with the Commission staff.

I look forward to discussing this letter with you more fully.

Congratulations!
December 14, 2005

David M. Rosen
Senior Vice President, Academic Affairs
Woodbury University
7500 Glenoaks Blvd.
Burbank, CA 91510

Dear David:

At its November 30, 2005, meeting, a panel of the Proposal Review Committee considered Woodbury University’s proposal for its next reaccreditation review. Members of the panel asked me to express their appreciation for your participation in the telephone conference call, and for that of your colleagues: Kenneth Nielsen, President; Barbara Bowley, Head of the WASC Reaccreditation Committee; Randy Stauffer, Dean of the Faculty; and Matthew Mallard, WASC Coordinator. Your collective responses to panel questions and comments were helpful in assisting panel members in their understanding of your institutional context and the intent and approach of your proposal for the comprehensive review. As sometimes is the case, the conference call revealed that there is considerably more going on at Woodbury than was immediately evident in the proposal itself.

The panel commended the University for the thoughtfulness of the proposal, representing broad participation of the campus community and significant reflection on the challenges and opportunities facing the institution at this time. The panel particularly noted the sense of candor and the collective commitment to learning that characterized the document. The Workplan and Milestones document (Appendix A) was revealing as to the level of thought and planning being expended by the institution. By the manner in which key issues were described, the proposal communicated the flavor of an institution that both understands and embraces the values and processes of the WASC review.

As indicated to you by telephone on the day of the panel meeting, your proposal has been approved. It now becomes your work plan for the subsequent steps in the review cycle. This letter can serve, however, as a supplemental guide for the institution’s next steps.
As you proceed with implementing the Proposal, the panel identified several issues for your consideration:

1. The panel recommends that the Woodbury team spend even more time articulating among its stakeholders the important distinctions between the Capacity & Preparatory Review and the Educational Effectiveness Review. Several of the key planning steps mentioned in the proposal as intended for the EER might be better envisioned as an aspect of the C&PR. For example, several of the timely activities spelled out in Theme Four under Action #1 (p. 10) will support the purposes of the EER to the extent that they have already been implemented in preparation for the C&PR.

2. The panel affirms the University’s intentions to continue involving the faculty at a significant level in the review process and recommends that such plans be incorporated into a well-articulated process. This would include clearer identification of the persons or teams responsible for each work product. While the panel has not asked for such a plan to be submitted for their review, they strongly recommend that this level of intentionality be undertaken for your own internal guidance and for achieving the level of coherence that is indicated in the proposal.

3. While the panel admired Woodbury’s proposal for its ambitious scope, they also wished to sound a cautionary note that the Workplan is, in fact, feasible. Recognizing that the proposed activities, especially related to the EER, are broad in scope and will require significant and prolonged effort by faculty and administration, the panel suggests that Woodbury consider beginning with a small number of pilots, or representative cases, for the activities described in Themes 3 and 4, then extend these activities to the wider campus as time and resources allow.

4. The panel noted with appreciation that Woodbury is drawing from the AAC&U “Greater Expectations” materials as it reviews and renews its General Education curricula. However, this important source was not visibly referenced in the proposal as a framework for the assessment work the institution intends during the review cycle. The panel recommends that the institution consider a more overt commitment to enhancing its skills in assessing GE-related learning; this would be an asset both to the institution and to the region.

5. During the phone conversation, the panel was pleased to learn that the issue of faculty workload remains important to the institution, even though it was not addressed directly in the proposal documents. Related matters of the balance between full-time and part-time faculty are also clearly a focus of your inquiry. The panel recommends that these matters be brought to a higher level of planning and action as this review cycle continues to unfold.

As you know, at its June meeting, the Commission reviewed comments from institutions on the timing between the Capacity & Preparatory and the Educational Effectiveness Reviews and has now made the normative schedule between visits to be 18 months. Therefore, the Capacity & Preparatory Review will be conducted in spring 2008 followed by the Educational Effectiveness Review in fall 2009. The proposal as approved now becomes the framework for the accreditation
review process and represents a plan of action and commitment by the institution. The proposal will be distributed to visiting teams for both the Capacity & Preparatory Review and the Educational Effectiveness Review, and with the Commission following each Review. The data tables and relevant material are to be updated and included as part of the Capacity and Preparatory Review presentation. It is understood that adjustments in the activities undertaken as outlined in the Proposal will be made as implementation occurs. Major changes to the proposal, such as a change in theme or in major focus of activities for the accreditation process, are to be approved in advance by Commission staff.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the contents of this letter or the action it conveys. I look forward to working with you as you move toward the next stages.

Sincerely,

Richard Winn
Associate Director

Cc: Kenneth R. Nielsen, President
    Proposal Review Committee
    Ralph A. Wolff