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## INTERSEGMENTAL COMMITTEE OF ACADEMIC SENATES

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*Chair, Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates*  
*Telephone: (510) 987-0711*  
*Email: [Michael.Brown@ucop.edu](mailto:Michael.Brown@ucop.edu)*

*c/o University of California*  
*1111 Franklin Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor*  
*Oakland, CA 94607-5200*

July 2, 2007

**MARGARET SPELLINGS**  
**U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION**

Dear Secretary Spellings:

The purpose of this letter is threefold: 1) to introduce to you the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates as the faculty voice of public higher education in the State of California; 2) to impress upon you the importance and need for regional accreditation and peer review; and 3) to encourage your cooperation with the regional accreditation associations and other non-federal negotiators.

The faculty who serve on the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS) represent the University of California (UC), the California State University System (CSU), and the California Community College System (CCC). Together, they represent over 97,000 higher-education faculty serving more than 3 million students at 142 institutions of higher education. Specifically, the UC Academic Senate represents 16,000 faculty, 209,000 students, and 10 institutions. The CSU Academic Senate represents 23,000 faculty, 417,000 students, and 23 institutions. And, the CCC Academic Senate represents 58,000 faculty, 2.5 million students, and 109 institutions. ICAS and the faculties it represents are passionately committed to the same imperative goal: excellence in teaching and learning.

As educators, we well understand the value of assessing educational outcomes. Devotion to the continuous improvement of educational processes is a central part of our culture and our identity. However, research has clearly shown that the further removed educational controls and mandates are from the teaching-learning interface, the less effective they become in improving education and serving students. In fact, controls imposed from afar tend to homogenize the activities and outcomes of education, discouraging local innovation and robbing local institutions of their ability to improve educational processes and actively respond to our rapidly changing world.

The faculties of public higher-education in the State of California support the activity and philosophy of the regional accreditation associations. We believe their longitudinal commitment to rigorous, informed, and well-designed peer review is the most effective way to achieve the outcomes we all seek. We support the efforts of regional accreditors to clearly identify and document appropriate criteria and best practices that serve the ends of educational excellence.

We strongly encourage you to listen to the regional accreditation associations. The U.S. regional accreditation processes represent rigorous, locally informed peer review. They achieve precision in diagnosing needs and problems, while facilitating and demanding meticulous, innovative, and locally specific improvement. It is the peer review process that ensures distinctive and responsive content, discipline by discipline, customized to meet the diverse needs of unique student populations from disparate communities. The faculties of California's public institutions of higher education would welcome your positive response as a reaffirmation of the collaborative and innovative spirit on which the future excellence of American higher education critically depends.

Sincerely,



Michael T. Brown, Chair of the Intersegmental  
Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS) and  
Vice Chair of the University of California  
Academic Senate



John B. Oakley, Chair of the University of  
California Academic Senate



Barry Pasternack, Chair of the California State  
University Academic Senate



Mark Wade Lieu, President of the California  
Community Colleges Academic Senate

Copy: Roberta Achtenberg, Chair, California State University Board of Trustees  
Kay L. Albiani, President, California Community College Board of Governors,  
Lamar Alexander, US Senator, Tennessee

Barbara Beno, Chair, Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (CRAC)  
Barbara Boxer, U.S. Senator, California  
Mark Drummond, Chancellor of the California Community College System  
Robert Dynes, President, University of California  
Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senator, California  
Diane Griffiths, Secretary to The Regents, University of California  
E. Jan Kehoe, Chair, Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior  
Colleges, Western Association of Schools and Colleges  
Edward M. Kennedy, Chair, U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor,  
and Pensions  
David Long, California Secretary of Education  
Jack O'Connell, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
David Obey, U.S. Representative, Wisconsin's 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District  
Charles Reed, Chancellor, California State University  
Joseph Richey, President and Chair, Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges  
and Universities, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)  
Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor, California  
David Ward, President, American Council on Education  
Ralph A. Wolff, Secretary-Treasurer, Accrediting Commission for Senior  
Colleges and Universities, Western Association of Schools and Colleges