

April 27, 2016

Susan Marquis
Dean
Pardee RAND Graduate School
1776 Main Street
Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138

Dear Dean Marquis:

At its meeting by conference call on April 20, 2016, a panel of the Interim Report Committee convened to consider the Interim Report submitted by the Pardee RAND Graduate School on March 1, 2016.

The panel appreciated the opportunity to discuss the report with you, Associate Dean Rachel Swanger, Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs Gery Ryan, and Director of RAND Human Resources Daniel Borgstadt. The conversation was very informative and helped the panelists better understand the progress the institution has made in addressing the areas cited in the Commission letter, and to understand more fully the plans for moving forward.

The panel commended Pardee RAND Graduate School for addressing the progress it had made in a number of substantive areas since receiving the Commission letter including issues related to program review, improving degree completion, and serving underrepresented students. The panel was also impressed with the review itself. They found it clear, nuanced, and very candid. Additionally, the team appreciated the manner in which actions, results, and plans for the future were clearly presented. Both the Interim Report and the discussion with the institutional representatives helped the panel understand how the Pardee RAND Graduate School has approached each area identified in 2011.

Refining and Conducting Program Review. As noted by the team, the institution has conducted a program review through which they have identified strengths and challenges. In the review, conducted with the help of outside reviewers—Alan B. Krueger, Bendheim Professor of Economics and Public Affairs at Princeton University, and James B. Steinberg, Dean of the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University—the institution focused on various areas including on-the-job learning assessment, curriculum improvement, and dissertation quality assurance. This led to a clear set of recommendations and from those, a set of plans for future progress. This program review also provided a basis for the next review during which it will be important for the institution to clearly focus on and articulate how assessment is being mapped onto the learning outcomes in courses, on-the-job training, and in the dissertation.

Improving Degree Completion. As noted by the Commission in 2011, although graduation rates for students at Pardee RAND Graduate School were well above the national average, the rates revealed that a substantial number of students were not earning

degrees within the time frame analyzed. The institution has taken a thoughtful approach to this challenge and they have identified key reasons for non-completion. Having identified these reasons, they have also singled out key steps, and the results from having taken those steps. The institution acknowledges that more work needs to be done to increase degree completion and with this in mind they have focused on admissions, recruiting and outreach, and engagement with professional groups to increase success. As they move forward, it will be critical for the institution to focus on increasing the number of minority and underrepresented students and their performance, as well as to analyze the interactions of gender, ethnicity and other background variables. Similar comprehensive analyses of the performance and success of international students are recommended.

Next Generation. The panel noted that Pardee RAND Graduate School has provided evidence of its ongoing commitment to the Next Generation Initiative. Additionally, RAND's funding to support the pilot with a faculty workshop in 2013 was noted. The panel encourages even more engagement with faculty from HBCU and HSI institutions, and to address how minority faculty involvement in the Next Generation Initiative can increase the pipeline of viable minority students for admission consideration to the Pardee RAND Graduate School.

After discussion of the progress made by the Pardee RAND Graduate School in addressing areas cited by the Commission, the panel acted to:

1. Receive the Interim Report.
2. Continue the schedule for the Pardee RAND Graduate School comprehensive review for reaffirmation of accreditation (Offsite Review in fall 2019 and Accreditation Visit in spring 2020).
3. Recommend that Pardee RAND Graduate School continue its efforts around program review, improving degree completion, and the Next Generation Initiative in its institutional report for its comprehensive review and to pay particular attention to:
 - a. Further developing the program review process with an emphasis on mapping student learning and assessment across program learning components (dissertation, course work, and on-the-job training).
 - b. Continuing emphasis on working toward improving success rates of underrepresented minority (African American and Hispanic/Latino) and international students.
 - c. Focusing on continuing to explore strategies such as the Next Generation Initiative to increase the pipeline of minority students and faculty at the Pardee RAND Graduate School.

The panel, again, wishes to acknowledge the hard work and important steps the Pardee RAND Graduate School has taken to address the issues outlined in the Commission letter. The Interim Report Committee looks forward to the institution's continued progress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Geoffrey W. Chase". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Geoffrey Chase, PhD
Vice President

Cc: Rachel Swanger, Accreditation Liaison Officer
Members of the Interim Report Panel