

REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING TEAM
EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

To

University of California, San Diego

October 14-16, 2009

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Reaffirmation of Accreditation

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The evaluation team in conducting its review was able to evaluate the institution under the WASC Commission Standards and Core Commitments and therefore submits this Report to the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges for action and to the institution for consideration.

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SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of the Institution

The University of California, San Diego (UCSD) is a comprehensive, Ph.D. granting, research institution located in La Jolla, California. Founded in 1960 on a commitment to provide strong educational programs in the sciences, medicine and engineering, UCSD has become one of the finest public universities in the country, with many world-renowned graduate programs and an outstanding undergraduate program.

UCSD is part of the ten-campus University of California system, which educates more than 220,000 students, and includes more than 170,000 faculty and staff. The UCSD campus is located on 1,200 acres along the coast of the Pacific Ocean. During the past decade, UCSD has grown its undergraduate population by 42% (from 16,000 to 23,000) and its graduate enrollment by 58% (from 2500 to 4000). There are also 2,000 students in its professional schools.

UCSD is organized by three primary academic entities: the School of Medicine, the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, and the General Campus. The UCSD faculty is extremely productive and committed to its continuing professional development in research and teaching. Its faculty and students are recognized for their efforts in collaborative learning initiatives, and the institution continues to expand its coordination of undergraduate research.

The General Campus, which houses 28 academic departments and 17 academic degree programs at the graduate and undergraduate level, is the primary focus of the Educational Effectiveness Review. Undergraduate education at UCSD is organized around six colleges, led by college provosts, who have responsibility for general education; and the majors and degree programs, overseen by divisional deans and department chairs. Each college has its own mission,

guiding principles, and general education requirements. The Academic Senate oversees the entire curriculum of the university through the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP).

B. The Institution's Educational Effectiveness Review Report: Alignment with the Proposal and Quality and Rigor of the Review and Report

The five member WASC team visited UCSD from October 14-16, 2009 for the purpose of conducting the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER), which constitutes the third phase of the three-part WASC accreditation process. UCSD conducted an extensive self-study in preparation for all three phases of the process, including construction and maintenance of a comprehensive website, three primary oversight committees of faculty, administration, students, and staff, and an Executive Steering Committee comprised of members of the Academic Senate and administrative leaders.

For its reaffirmation of accreditation, UCSD chose a theme-based approach, selecting the four themes: undergraduate program review, information literacy, writing instruction, and foreign language instruction. UCSD completed its Capacity & Preparatory Review March 12-14, 2008 and the WASC Commission acted to receive the CPR report from the WASC visiting team and continue with the accreditation process, with no special visit prior to the EER visit.

In addition to the four themes developed for the review process, in the Educational Effectiveness Review report UCSD addressed four outstanding issues from the Capacity and Preparatory Review: assessment of student learning outcomes, information literacy, diversity, and strategic planning. The team commends the UCSD faculty and staff for its comprehensive work in demonstrating compliance with the WASC standards, providing a culture of evidence and exemplifying a commitment to continuous improvement (CFR's 1.3, 1.9)

The team was in unanimous agreement that the Educational Effectiveness Review Report (EER) was in strong alignment with the proposal submitted in October 2005. The EER was well

organized and clearly written and presented, with links to relevant data and appendix items. The report accurately portrayed the condition of the institution, with transparent and comprehensive input from multiple stakeholders. Standards and Criteria for Review were cited throughout the report.

The institution used multiple forms of evidence to explore the themes and demonstrate its commitment to inquiry, use of appropriate methodology, and data-driven decision-making. The culture of evidence suggests the institution's self-review has led to greater effectiveness of its operations in these areas and continued attention to student learning. (CFR's 4.5, 4.8) Moreover, the team esteems that UCSD has met well, and exceeded, its overarching aim stated in their proposal of "the broader goals of the development of an ongoing campus-wide data portfolio and web expansion of review processes to insure that each academic program has specific student learning outcomes in order to provide the campus with a framework for continual improvement." (CFR's 3.6, 3.7) The work of UCSD to develop a comprehensive electronic data network serves as an exemplar to other institutions.

C. Response to Issues Raised in the Capacity and Preparatory Review

The WASC Commission letter noted four areas for continued attention following the Capacity & Preparatory review: (1) Assessment of Student Learning; (2) Information Literacy; (3) Diversity; and (4) Strategic Planning. Each of these areas was addressed in the Educational Effectiveness Review report. Two of the areas—assessment of student learning and information literacy—are directly addressed in the themes selected by the institution and are treated in Section II of this report.

Diversity

The issue of diversity for UCSD centers primarily on enrollment, persistence, and achievement rates for students of color, although some we interviewed were also concerned about the overall campus culture or climate for students, faculty and staff. As noted in the CPR WASC team report in 2008, “UCSD’s enrollments of underrepresented minorities have held steady over the last ten years.” Two core challenges seem to be increasing the number and yield of talented students of color who apply and are admitted, and tracking and supporting students of color to degree completion.

The WASC team found that significant steps had been taken to recruit students, without significant improvements in yield. In Fall 2009, the yield for all admitted freshman was 23.1%. The team notes concerns by many on campus about the relatively lower freshman admission and yield rates for African American students. The number and proportion of American Indian and Chicano/Latino students at UCSD also falls below the average for the UC system. Approximately 19% of all African American applicants were admitted to UCSD (overall rate was 36%) and the yield rate was 15.9% (overall rate was 23.1%).

A recent report titled “Do UC Us?” which was produced by the Black Student Union at UCSD (and other Black Student Unions at other UC campuses), has recommended some promising new strategies to increase the admission and yield rates for African American freshman that deserve serious consideration. In addition, the Admissions Office and the Academic Senate Committee on Admissions have initiated a new pilot admissions program that will review student applications in a broader, more holistic manner. The team understands and appreciates that this move indicates a willingness to consider evaluating students less stringently on quantitative measures (grades and test scores) and being more open to other indications of

talent (e.g. special talents, leadership abilities, etc.). The team commends UCSD for the steps taken to date and encourages even more aggressive and innovative efforts in this area. (CFR 1.5)

UCSD has been tracking retention and graduation rates for its students for three decades, and is to be commended for its thorough data collection, tracking and disaggregation of data by multiple variables, including gender, ethnic group, transfer student, and student-athletes. (CFR 2.10) It is encouraging that first and second year retention rates of underrepresented minorities are comparable to that of the majority student population. In fact, 94% of all freshmen at UCSD successfully completed their first year of study – a rate that was comparable to UCLA and Berkeley (97% and 96% respectively).

At the same time, the graduation rates of undergraduate students differ vastly across ethnic and racial groups, and from year to year. For example, the five-year graduation rate for all students who entered in Fall 2003 was 80%. The five-year graduation rate was 60% for Mexican American students and 55% for African American students. The six-year graduation rates increase significantly to 75% for African Americans and 72% for Mexican American students, while the overall campus average increases to 85%. The team was not able to locate any reports documenting the reasons for these differences. Some suggested that a dominant reason for the loss of students was due to socio-economic circumstances. We recommend that the campus study this issue and take actions deemed necessary to address differential graduation rates by ethnic and racial group.

The Chancellor developed a Chief Diversity Officer half-time position in 2004, reporting directly to the Chancellor and charged with consolidating outreach efforts, enhancing coordination between offices and addressing diversity challenges in an integrated fashion. This position provides leadership without the benefit of overall budget and hiring authority for diversity programs. Earlier this year, spring 2009, the campus completed a new Diversity

Accountability Framework report, which presented goals and metrics for faculty, student, and staff diversity efforts. The report documents considerable effort in this area.

An analysis of yield by the CDO suggests that the yield rates for all student populations is low, and she suggested the importance of addressing campus climate for all student groups, and that yield be analyzed for all groups. Applicants for all groups has increased, however the admit rate and yield for minority groups remains lower than that for other groups.

At the level of curriculum, each college addresses multicultural and diversity-related content distinctly. Although no college has a specific diversity-related requirement, many of them include attention to multicultural issues, diversity, and global citizenship in their breadth requirements.

Overall, the team found evidence of significant effort being undertaken by many within the institution. The support in place for disabled students, LGBT students and transfer students is commendable, including the developing of a LGBT living learning community, and new transfer student housing facilities. (CFR 2.13) At the same time, it is clear that many faculty, students and staff recognize that overall student diversity efforts have not yielded as much measureable progress as they hope for and that a great deal of effective work remains to be done. The pilot program put in place this fall by the Academic Senate Admissions Committee and Admissions Office is a promising start that begins to align the campus' admissions policies more consistently with other UC campuses, including its main competitors at UC Berkeley and UCLA.

Strategic Planning and Budget

UCSD has engaged in regular cycles of planning and review throughout its history. Currently, it continues its strategic planning within the 2004 Long Range Development Plan (LRDP), which updated the previous 1989 LRDP. (CFR's 4.1, 4.2) This plan, approved by the

Regents, is a general land use plan that primarily guides physical development and facilities outlay for the campus. The plan was completed after years of analysis and vetting with multiple stakeholders, and is aligned with academic planning initiatives, including enrollment, personnel, and faculty growth and sustainment, and technology (CFR's 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 4.4).

In addition to the LRDP, the academic planning process is captured by the "Charting the Course" plan, renewed triennially. This plan incorporates priority setting and planning from departments, the Academic Senate, undergraduate and graduate students, deans, provosts, and other senior administrators. Program Review results are also incorporated into the evidence used in setting priorities and resource allocations. Multiple stakeholders were in agreement that this regular cycle of review is transparent, inclusive, and based on sound principles that represent the mission and purpose of the institution. (CFR's 3.5, 3.6, 3.8, 4.2, 4.3). The WASC team commends the UCSD community on its strengths in this area.

In addition to an evaluation of regular strategic planning and budget decision-making as they apply to educational effectiveness, the WASC team reviewed with UCSD stakeholders its response to the recent economic challenges facing the state of California. UCSD was forthcoming in its response to the questions, and is to be commended for the process it is using to address challenges. Across the campus, members of the UCSD community were supportive of the work and committed to protecting the strengths of the institution.

The State of California has reduced the general fund allocation to the University of California system by more than \$800 million for 2009-10, a reduction that translates into an \$85 million decrease in state funding for UCSD. This is a very significant cut, amounting to roughly 17% of the state's general fund allocation to the campus. That said, it should be remembered that before the reduction, the state provided only 12% of UCSD's consolidated revenues. While the percentage of state funds is dropping to 8.6% of total revenues, the reduction must be seen in

the context of the overall budget of the university. UCSD has a \$2.5 billion consolidated budget, an amount that includes sponsored research and the medical center. Measured against this total budget, the decrease in state funds constitutes a mere 3.5% reduction in revenue. On the other hand, state funding is a very important component of what UCSD calls its “core funds,” \$620 million of unrestricted funds that finance much of the salaries and operating expenditures crucial to the educational enterprise.

UCSD’s immediate response to the \$85 million budget shortfall has been a combination of one-time and long-term reductions. First, they will achieve a one-time savings of \$25 million through University mandated furloughs. Second, they have imposed \$20 million in base reductions in the Vice Chancellor unit budgets. Finally, they have taken a one-time \$40 million internal loan from reserves, to be paid back within a five-year period. This loan from reserves will not impact current operations, but will of course impose an additional \$8 million annual cost in the coming five years as it is repaid.

Given that only \$20 million of the current reductions have come out of base unit funding, it is not surprising that the impact on UCSD’s educational program has so far been minimal. On the other hand, most people on campus realize that the most difficult cuts are still to come. It is anticipated that the savings achieved through faculty and staff furloughs will be replaced by incremental revenue generated by proposed student fee increases, however this still leaves a very substantial ongoing shortfall to be dealt with.

To plan for the necessary reductions, UCSD has established a joint Senate-Administration Task Force on Budget, with representatives from faculty, administration, students and staff. (CFR 3.11) The charge of the task force is to provide recommendations for “sustaining UCSD’s academic excellence and stature as a world-class university, while protecting our core mission of accessibility, teaching and research.” The Chancellor has made clear to the task force

that its first priority must be to protect, to the extent possible, the quality of the education delivered to students. (CFR 3.8)

The work of the budget task force in setting priorities and vision, and the implementation of those goals by the UCSD administration, will be crucial in determining the impact of the state funding crisis on UCSD's educational effectiveness. It is, of course, too soon to determine, or even estimate, the extent or precise nature of that impact. However the visiting team came away from its meetings with several strong impressions about the initial stages of the budget reduction process.

- 1) The Chancellor and Senior Vice Chancellor have been exceptionally clear in emphasizing the priorities that will govern the process: sustaining the quality of the education and research mission, while maintaining access for all qualified students. (CFR 3.8)
- 2) The Chancellor has initiated an open, consultative process that has kept the morale on campus stable and positive.
- 3) All faculty and staff with whom the WASC team met expressed a genuine commitment to the institution and its mission, and to protecting its quality through the ensuing budget reductions. (CFR 3.2)

The WASC team commends the UCSD administration on its initial steps toward dealing with the budget reductions and is confident that the required reductions, though painful to carry out, will have minimal effect on the institution's ability to carry out its mission. (CFR 3.5)

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS UNDER THE STANDARDS

A. Evaluation of the Institution’s Educational Effectiveness Inquiry

The WASC Visiting team organized its review around the four themes selected for the Educational Effectiveness Review by UCSD, and addressed the four WASC standards within and across these themes. The team evaluated both processes for and progress of attention to each theme, including information provided in the proposal, the CPR report, the WASC CPR visiting team’s review and recommendations, Commission recommendations, and our own EER visit findings. Evidence demonstrates that UCSD has comprehensively addressed the four WASC standards through the themes selected, and that the institution is in full compliance with these standards. The team appreciates the efforts and achievements of the UCSD community, and outlines further recommendations within each of the themes below.

Undergraduate Program Review and Assessment of Student Learning

In the Commission letter dated June 25, 2008, the Commission notes that it had “some concern about the degree of progress that has been achieved to date with respect to ...the assessment of student learning outcomes.” It further states that the four themes selected by UCSD address student learning and that it will “want to see that infrastructure is in place, course and program-level learning outcomes have been formulated, direct and indirect data are being systematically gathered, and results are being used to inform courses and programs as a result of these initiatives.”

As a result of the 1998 letter from WASC, UCSD developed a joint Senate-Administration Task Force, convened by the Senior Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs (SVCAA) in 2002-2003. This task force was charged with reviewing undergraduate and graduate

program review processes. In May of 2004 the task force issued its report and the self-study guidelines as part of the newly designed Undergraduate Program Review system. As stated in the UCSD Educational Effectiveness Review Report, submitted to WASC in July 2009, “Two important assessments are currently in effect: (1) the formal program reviews that follow guidelines established by the Academic Senate Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), on which the Associate Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education (AVCUE) serves as a consultant, and (2) studies related to WASC Educational Effectiveness Indicators developed with each academic department in consultation with the AVCUE.” As further described in the 2009 report, all departments and programs, each of the sixth undergraduate colleges, minors and consolidated courses of study are reviewed on a seven to eight year cycle – the Cycle of Instructional Improvement (CFR 2.3). The Cycle includes consultation with the department, the CEP and the Academic Senate Committee on Committees. The AVCUE establishes an ad hoc faculty review committee that includes an external faculty member in the same discipline from another UC campus, or another institution. As part of the review process, a departmental self-study is conducted which includes a response to WASC Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators.

The EER visiting team had the opportunity to review the Educational Effectiveness Indicators for 55 academic department, programs, and colleges, which were included in the 2009 WASC report. In addition, the committee reviewed a sample of two completed program reviews, one from the Division of Biological Sciences and the other from the Sociology Department. During the EER visit, the team also had the opportunity to meet with faculty representatives from these two units. Additionally, the team evaluated the program reviews completed for two of the colleges, Revelle and Muir, with an aim to assessing the effectiveness of general education review processes.

As demonstrated in the review of these programs, the review process is an inclusive, collaborative process that includes the following sequence:

- Review Charge Letter
- Review Data Set
- Program Self-Study
- Review Committee Materials
 - Committee Charge Letter
 - Review Visit Schedule
 - Program Self-Study
 - Review Data Set
- Review Committee Draft Report
- Divisional Dean Response to Draft Report
- Program Response to Draft Report
- CEP Review Summary
- CEP 1-Year Follow-up to Review

The Educational Effectiveness Indicator Tables were completed thoroughly, demonstrating a concerted effort on the part of academic units to provide excellent instruction to students. Most importantly, the process provided an opportunity for the academic units to discover the effectiveness of their teaching methods and make recommendations for program improvement.

(CFR's 2.4, 2.5, 2.6)

Division of Biological Sciences

As reported by members of the Division of Biological Sciences, the division represents the largest number of majors at 6,000. Faculty representatives stated that they felt that the academic review process has changed for the better, that it is more transparent, and that it forced the unit to be more self-reflective. When asked about the process of conducting the review, they felt that they learned a lot from the process, not to be comfortable with the status quo; this kept them motivated to question how effective they are at producing students who demonstrate competencies.

When asked about the logistics of the process, they shared that the AVC provides the required data, and that the process of receiving the data was more efficient than the previous process, and included more data for analysis. They added that the college deans, TA's, students, faculty, lecturers and external reviewers were included in the review visit (CFR 2.7). They felt that the institution has created a review process that is consistent, transparent and equitable. The data allowed the unit to document their challenges as they relate to the unreasonable faculty/student ratios, discover areas that needed attention and make recommendations for improvements to CEP. The review allowed the unit to request, and receive, "impacted major" status, which allows the program to monitor when and at which point new and transfer students are admitted to the program. The review also highlighted the need for improvements in TA training and supervision, both of which are now being addressed.

The negative feedback about the process was the length of time it took, and the faculty suggested improvements in efficiency between stages of the review. The faculty also acknowledged that they were uncertain about how to incorporate the WASC educational effectiveness indicators, and that they are continuing to consider how to develop direct measures of learning across courses. They noted that in the field of Biology, achievement in upper

division courses provides independent evidence of learning in the lower division courses, and course-level measurement happens through grading.

Sociology Department Review

The representatives from the Sociology Department had similar positive feedback about the program review process. The unit had been discussing changes for over seven years, and the curriculum had not been changed for 25 years. The program review allowed them to have a structured conversation, gave them incentive to complete the task and opportunity to be self-reflective. They felt very positive about the process and the results of their findings. They were able to make recommendations, receive feedback and make appropriate changes to the program and curriculum (CFR 2.4). However, they also felt that the process could be more efficient, especially on the implementation of changes such as making changes to curriculum and/or to the catalog. When asked about the implementation of the WASC guidelines they stated that for the institution this is an issue that is “evolutionary” not “revolutionary.” The assessment of learning is the aspect of the guidelines that was the least understood or addressed.

Colleges and General Education

Each of the six colleges participates in the undergraduate program review cycle, with Revelle College going through its review in 2006-07 and Muir College in 2007-08. (Marshall College is scheduled for 2009-10, Eleanor Roosevelt College in 2010-11, Warren in 2011-12, and Sixth in 2012-13.) The inclusion of the colleges in this cycle allows UCSD to engage in systematic review of its general education requirements, since those are administered at the collegiate level, and are different for each of the six colleges (CFR 2.7). In addition, the Council of Provosts meets weekly, maintaining open lines of communication between the colleges while

also preserving the autonomy and diversity at the heart of the UCSD college system (CFRs 3.8, 3.11, 4.8). It is clear that the Provosts— all ladder-rank faculty from diverse departments—as a group are deeply committed to the role of the liberal arts in the undergraduate curriculum, and are concerned about how budgetary pressures may affect that. In particular, they expressed concern about mounting pressure to allow students to place out of general education requirements through AP tests. This, they contend, reduces students' time in the colleges and their ability to develop the learning communities that are essential to the UCSD experience.

Both Muir and Revelle Colleges expressed appreciation for the review process. Muir College's process provides a good example: The Provost described the helpful inclusion of an external reviewer and the useful feedback about their course sequences and other components (CFR 2.7). As a result of reviewers' recommendations, the Muir College Provost and Faculty Executive Committee engaged in wide-ranging discussions about the characteristics that define their general education courses over the course of 2008-09 (CFR 2.4). In addition—and also at the suggestion of the review—Muir College has supplemented its available three-course general education sequences (in Social Science; Mathematics and Natural Science; and Fine Arts, Humanities, and Foreign Languages) with an Environmental Studies sequence. Muir College will report to CEP at the end of AY 2009-10 on their progress on these and several other issues that arose in the review, including the question of accepting AP credit for two of the three courses in any general education sequence; the development of guidelines for what constitute acceptable GE courses and course sequences; and the establishment of procedures for regular, ongoing review of the GE curriculum every three years (CFRs 4.4, 4.6, 4.7). Revelle College's external review encouraged them to re-examine the Eurocentric emphasis of their humanities-based core curriculum. They are doing this, looking at ways to expand the focus of the program while maintaining its emphasis, and are finding that this enlists the interest of new faculty.

These questions are clearly central to the review of Revelle Humanities, which is now in the early planning stages and will begin in 2010-11. (CFRs 2.7, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7)

Even among colleges that have not yet undergone the formal review, there is evidence of ongoing self-evaluation. For example, Sixth College recently held a faculty retreat to review its core curriculum. This revitalized the ladder-rank faculty's commitment to teaching the core courses and, as a result, they have more ladder-rank faculty volunteers to teach core courses than they need for AY 2010-11. (CFRs 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 2.1)

In sum, the WASC team found that this process is comprehensive and closes the loop as it relates to feedback to the system, indicative of the Cycle of Institutional Improvement. (CFR 2.7) The process is designed to be a one to two year process, but sometimes takes longer. The Sociology Department's review process began in April of 2006 and the CEP Review Summary was completed in December of 2007 and the CEP 1-Year Follow-up to Review is pending. The Division of Biological Sciences review process began in March of 2005 and the CEP-1 Year Follow-up to Review was completed in June 2009. The length of the process was mentioned by the faculty and administrators who met with the WASC team, and the team recommends that the institution consider abbreviating the timeframe for program review.

UCSD has addressed extremely well the concern raised in the CPR report about the overall infrastructure of program review. (CFR 2.7) A continuing area of evolution is assessment of learning. UCSD is to be commended for its commitment to this area, as evidenced by the inclusion of WASC guidelines of educational effectiveness in the program review, the creation of administrative positions targeting undergraduate education and whose function in part is to assist with program review and assessment, and by the achievement that all programs have developed learning outcomes. (CFR's 2.3, 2.4) The team recommends strongly that UCSD continue this commitment through assistance to programs in how they now map outcomes in

their curriculum, identify indirect and direct evidence of learning, and develop means to measure the achievement of the outcomes. (CFR 2.6)

Information Literacy (Digital Fluency)

The campus has made significant progress in its self-study of information literacy (or digital fluency) since the CPR visit. A report completed in July 2009 by the Senate-Administration Advisory Group for Information Literacy documented its many innovative programs and strategies in this area, reviewed programs and best practices in this area at other universities around the nation, and presented a bold and compelling vision for the future. (CFR 2.2 a)

The report focused on three core competencies: (1) foundational competencies (including the foundational knowledge of computing); (2) conceptual competencies (an understanding of the history, development and general structural features of digital technologies and digital information); and (3) expressive and rhetoric competencies (the ability of to use digital information and artifacts in the creation and communication of meaningful arguments in the digital environment).

The report made the following recommendations: (1) digital information fluency should be an explicit expectation of every graduating UCSD student; (2) teaching the skills and conceptual abilities associated with digital information fluency should be accepted as a communal responsibility; (3) teaching digital information fluency and supporting students as they acquire digital information competencies should be accomplished by leveraging and enhancing existing structures; and (4) a workgroup should be established to implement the vision and plan.

We understand that the report's recommendations have been embraced by the Academic Senate and the Administration, and that a new group will be charged in Fall 2009 to work on implementation of the report's recommendations. The team commends the campus for this excellent report and for its exciting and compelling vision to enhance digital fluency among all students. (CFR 3.7) The team recommends that digital fluency be embedded into program reviews for undergraduate degree programs and that the new work group engage students and alumni in its efforts. This exciting new digital fluency initiative has great potential for external funding to launch and assess some of its initial efforts.

Writing Instruction

At the time of the CPR visit, UCSD had conducted studies of both first-year writing and entry-level writing. The study of entry-level writing—primarily of ESL students—found that the arrangement with San Diego Community College to provide basic writing instruction was resulting in students' clearing that requirement and entering the college writing programs more quickly than they had previously. This was a clear and positive finding. The study of first-year writing at UCSD was less decisive. That study sparked extensive discussion on campus, but was also methodologically flawed. The main outcome of this discussion at the time of the CPR visit was that the writing directors had worked together to generate a list of outcomes for first-year writing. (CFR 2.1, 2.3) These outcomes were, as the Director of the Core Curriculum at one college described, the articulation of "things we were doing anyway," and so in one sense were an organic development. They are now being integrated into T.A. training across the writing programs, and are forming a common vocabulary for writing across the diverse curricula of the colleges. (CFR 3.4, 4.7)

As a result of recommendations made in the CPR report, the college writing programs/core

curricula have been added to the regular schedule of academic reviews: one college's core curriculum will be reviewed each year, starting with the Making of the Modern World (MMW) sequence at Eleanor Roosevelt College (ERC) in 2009-10; Revelle Humanities in 2010-11; the Muir College Writing Program in 2011-12; and so on. (CFR 2.7) The WASC team was able to review the plan for writing assessment in the MMW program that is currently in progress, and also to see the plan for ongoing writing assessment that the Muir College Writing Program (MCWP) has developed and is beginning to implement at the EER visit. Both are methodologically sound. (Muir's was developed in consultation with Brian Huot, one of the leading experts in the field of writing assessment.) In the ERC assessment, papers were collected from 100 randomly selected students in their third and sixth quarters of the six-course core curriculum sequence (Making of the Modern World). This sequence emphasizes direct writing instruction in quarters 2 and 3, and expects students to develop those writing skills in the subsequent quarters. Collecting papers from MMW 2, 3 and 6 thus provides a somewhat longitudinal view of student development. As of the EER visit, these papers had been scored but that data had not yet been analyzed. In addition, the MMW Director was planning interviews with a subset of the students included in the study, to identify their meta-critical awareness of what they had learned. (CFR 4.8) (Studies in the field indicate that such awareness is crucial to transferring writing skills to different rhetorical situations—as ERC students will have to do as they focus increasingly on more disciplinary-specific writing tasks.) MMW plans to incorporate discussion of the results of the study into its annual meeting to evaluate and improve the program at the end of each academic year. (CFR 2.4, 2.6, 4.7)

The Muir College Writing Assessment Plan indicates ongoing attention to the quality of instruction and assessment of student learning. This past academic year, the program has adopted John Bean's *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical*

Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom as the central text for their T.A. training course. (CFR 3.4) This will not only provide those graduate students with material for teaching MCWP 40 and 50 (the required Muir College writing courses), but also with broader pedagogical training. The Assessment plan itself shows that Muir has largely completed the first stage, which centers on developing goals and objectives for the program and its courses; incorporating those goals into pedagogical training and course materials; and developing scoring rubrics for evaluating progressive drafts of particular assignments. (CFRs 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.7) The next stage is to collect portfolios of student writing and the instructors' materials (assignments, syllabi, and so on) in order to undertake a holistic assessment of the effectiveness of the pedagogical training and student progress. (The evaluation will take place in summer 2010.) The plan anticipates that the results of this assessment may lead to changes in teacher training, pedagogy, course materials, and the like, which will be implemented in the T.A. training in winter-spring 2011. (CFRs 2.4, 2.6, 4.7) They will then further examine student writing, repeating the assessment-training cycle annually, and supplementing the information from the direct assessment of teacher materials and student writing with student feedback through online surveys and focus groups interviews. (CFRs 2.5, 4.4, 4.8)

There is some concern from the writing directors (shared by the college provosts) that budgetary pressures will compromise the integrity of the writing programs. According to the official statement of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, writing courses are ideally capped at 15 students per section (and should not have more than 20 students per section). There is considerable evidence that larger courses not only constitute an undue burden on the writing faculty because of the time-intensive nature of responding to student writing, but also that students learn less in larger courses and become less deeply engaged in their material. (See Alice Horning, "The Definitive Article on Class Size," *WPA: Writing*

Program Administration 31.1/2 [fall/winter 2007]: 11-34.) Accordingly, the WASC team recommends that the current enriched instructor/T.A. ratio in writing courses across the colleges not be substantially reduced. (CFRs 2.1, 3.4, 4.7)

Foreign Language Instruction

In its proposal for reaffirmation of accreditation, UCSD chose to explore the delivery of foreign language instruction as a means to assess its institutional and organizational learning outcomes rather than student learning outcomes. Foreign language instruction is decentralized across campus and there is no one unit with sole responsibility or oversight of instructional aims, methodological emphases, or pedagogical training and evaluation. Rather, foreign language instruction occurs across four academic units, which report to three different deans. Each of the six colleges varies in the degree to which it requires foreign language instruction directly or includes it as a possible means of satisfying general education breadth requirements. Because the Chancellor identified international proficiencies as a significant emphasis of the UCSD undergraduate education, UCSD used the reaccreditation process as an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of this structure and its impact on instruction and student learning. (CFR 2.1)

In 2003, UCSD created a joint Senate-Administration Advisory Committee on Language Instruction to examine language instruction organization; the need for this committee was supported by faculty from the departments that deliver language instruction, as well as the chief faculty academic committee on curriculum, the CEP, and by deans and provosts across the institution.

The committee charge was to consider a broad range of issues related to language instruction on the UCSD campus. It was asked to assess language course offerings, the coordination of instruction among teaching units and client areas, pedagogical issues, resource

requirements, the administration of the language programs, and instructional facilities available for language instruction.

The committee completed a comprehensive, transparent, and inclusive evaluation of these issues, including gathering information from stakeholders across the institution, identifying peer institutions in this field and analyzing their outcomes and structures, reviewing data on enrollment, language offerings and scheduling, facility assessment, and course evaluations, consulting with campus and external language experts, and holding campus focus groups and discussions about language instruction with relevant offices such as the International Center, and offices of Academic Advising within and across the colleges.

The committee report was completed in October 2006. As an example of the complex network of decision-making at UCSD, the report was reviewed by three standing committees of the Academic Senate: CEP, Graduate Council, and Planning and Budget), as well as chairs and directors of all academic units involved in language instruction, divisional deans, college provosts, deans of academic advising, and the AVCUE and SVCAA.

Seven primary recommendations were developed:

- A. Proficiency-based language instruction is endorsed as a campus-wide principle.
- B. Foreign language instruction should be strengthened and expanded.
- C. A UCSD Center for Language Instruction (CLI) should be created.
- D. A standing Language Instruction Advisory Committee should be established.
- E. Impediments to obtaining language instruction should be removed to encourage UCSD students to acquire foreign languages.
- F. Heritage Language is a widely accepted term in the field of linguistics and language instruction, and the continued use of this term is appropriate.

G. The Linguistics Language Program (LLP) should be transferred from the Division of Arts and Humanities to the Division of Social Sciences.

Of these seven recommendations, three have been acted upon by the time of the EER WASC visit in October 2009: 1) the development of a standing committee, the Language Instruction Coordinating Committee; 2) the transfer of the LLP into the Division of Social Sciences, and 3) the development of a new comprehensive web portal that lists all languages offered, course and department affiliation, and level of instruction. Of the other four recommendations, there was not agreement at the Senate level that further action was needed or warranted. The primary recommendation for the creation of a Language Center to centralize some language instruction and training was not endorsed. As noted in the EER report, “This WASC review theme on language instruction has been the most difficult to make progress on because it involves reallocation of resources as well as intellectual and cultural issues that must cut across several academic units to reach consensus.” (EER report. P.15)

In summary, the theme of foreign language instruction has provided the institution with both markers of achievement and room for improvement. The achievements are noteworthy and should not be underestimated: reaching their initial aim of evaluating the worth of the decentralized structure as well as affirming its continuation; establishing an understanding and general agreement (albeit not unanimous) about the proficiency-based methodology as the primary institutional method of language instruction; creating a standing language-focused and well-represented committee; completing the transfer of one language program into a different academic unit with campus-wide consensus; and developing a comprehensive electronic tool for students, faculty, and staff. (CFR’s 2.1, 2.3) Additionally, the development of the web portal provided a worthwhile audit of all languages delivered and their corresponding data (enrollment, frequency, etc). More than 80 languages are taught at UCSD, and this is a realization to be

affirmed and celebrated.

The room for improvement rests in the uncertainty of how the additional recommendations will be addressed and where the authority resides to address them. The committee established provides an opportunity for continued discussions, but the charge of the committee and the frequency with which it meets is less than what was hoped for in the original recommendation—its role is “coordination” rather than “advisory.” Furthermore, the EER report notes that the “committee is working on campus-wide guidelines that will define language proficiency and outcome measures so that students achieve an identified level of competency.” (EER p. 14) But there was no evidence that this conversation had started, or how such guidelines would be reviewed, approved, or implemented. (CFR 3.8)

Many of the underpinnings for continuous improvement with respect to further discussions about pedagogy and methodology, as well as training and evaluation, were to be developed through a centralized language laboratory/center, which was not approved by the Academic Senate. It was unclear how those recommendations—and aspirations—will be acted upon without that body.

The WASC team encourages continued attention in this area, including developing institutional benchmarks to define and then track progress on the aim that all students have “international proficiency,” as well as tracking foreign language instruction across the institution. Currently, of the six colleges, only two require foreign language instruction and in other colleges it may be used as a breadth requirement. There is not currently a tracking of how many students take language, which language, and whether they take language due to a direct requirement, a breadth requirement, a requirement for study abroad, or as an elective. Study Abroad is a growth area for the institution, and language study for most countries is necessary, especially through the EAP programs.

Although its work to date has been slower than desired, and not all of the aims of the proposal have been realized, UCSD is to be commended for its serious attention to this issue. If it truly desires to be a campus whose undergraduates have “international proficiency,” foreign language instruction will continue to be critical to those efforts. (CFR’s 4.1, 4.4, 4.7)

Commitment to Student Success

In addition to the attention to student learning through a comprehensive academic program review structure, and the intention to improve writing instruction, foreign language instruction, and digital fluency, all of which directly impact student success, the visiting team found evidence of a robust and dynamic array of student support services. (CFR 2.13) Students and staff expressed appreciation for the renewed energy and commitment to students led by the new Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs.

Despite budget reductions, the campus continues to sustain and enhance student services. There is a promising movement of providing more information and self-service options via student portals. This development has the potential to enhance service and reduce some costs. In addition, under the leadership of the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, there is a renewed focus on assessment of student services. Collaboration among many student services departments is evident, especially through the new student wellness program called Live Well. Services for transfer students and veterans have been improved in recent years (CFR 2.14). The team commends the campus for opening a new housing facility in Fall 2009 for 1,000 transfer students that is expected to grow to serve 2,000 students in Fall 2010. Another student group, veterans of military service, is also being addressed through intentional efforts to reach out to this population and assist them with academic and personal-social issues unique for them.

The campus is poised to strengthen and better coordinate its academic support services for undergraduate students. A July 2009 report by the Senate-Administration Task Force on Coordination of Undergraduate Academic Support called for a broad-based, centralized learning center for all undergraduates similar to those at other UC campuses (including UC Berkeley and UCLA). In light of current fiscal realities, the Task Force acknowledged that implementation of this recommendation would take some time. They made other important recommendations that would enhance academic support services with little or modest investments. Among these recommendations were a new comprehensive web site to assist students in identifying academic support services; better coordination between and among existing support services (especially the Office of Academic Support and Instructional Services (OASIS) and services provided by departments and colleges); and a centralized writing center.

Efforts to strengthen and enhance coordination of academic support services have the potential to increase four- and five-year graduation rates, especially among students who are first-generation and/or students of color. The team supports efforts undertaken in this area and encourages the campus to move as quickly as it can, given budget realities, to enhance its academic support services.

The team also commends the campus on its undergraduate research initiatives. These programs have provided new opportunities for students and faculty to work together and for students to experience firsthand the process of discovery. The development of a new web portal for students to learn about undergraduate research in general, and the thorough listing of opportunities and processes for application and assistance, is a fine example of the commitment to reaching students through technology and coordinating efforts across the many colleges and curricular/co-curricular units.

Many student support offices report that they are making increasing use of the web to make their services more readily available to students. (CFR 3.7) For example, the Registrar's Office, Office of Financial Aid, Career Services Office, and International Center/Study Abroad are taking increasing advantage of Web 2.0 technologies, not simply putting information online but offering interactive services. This process has been expedited by some of the pressures resulting from furloughs and other budgetary issues. As offices have lost staff time and had to reduce their open hours, they are making increasing efforts to use technology to ensure that their student services are not compromised. Many of these offices coordinate efforts (for example, Financial Aid is working with the Wellness Office). In addition, students were extremely positive about the support offices. In particular, one transfer student observed of the Financial Aid Office: "They're all talking to each other."

Similar progress has been made in the creation of a web portal for foreign language offerings. This site delineates each of the languages offered, specific courses and schedule of offerings, and the academic units responsible. Again, UCSD is to be commended for its efforts at using technology for its own data tracking purposes, and for providing improved access to students and families about its offerings.

The one exception in this regard was the input from one transfer student, a veteran. He contrasted UCSD with San Diego State in this regard. While at UCSD he has to go to the Financial Aid Office, his College office, *and* the Office of Student Affairs to have any piece of paperwork completed, students at San Diego State can go to a Veterans' Services Office, which streamlines matters. As the number of veterans attending college increases, the University will do well to address this constituency.

In short, though a large and comprehensive university, UCSD has achieved much to provide a collegiate experience for its undergraduates. The role of the Colleges in this regard is

critical; they provide that part of the institution that affords undergraduates the opportunity to build community, form relationships with peers and faculty, and access support services for their success. The high first and second-year retention rates suggest success in this regard. The team encourages the institution to continue to support the Colleges in this role, and to consider means to expand these services, within and beyond the College structure, to students beyond the first two years.

SECTION III. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW AND THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

The WASC team expresses its unanimous appreciation for the cooperation from all members of the UCSD community. The team was impressed by the highly positive input we received from faculty, students, staff, and administration about the character of UC San Diego, and the universal commitment to high quality education. (CFR's 1.1, 1.2, 1.3) This is especially noteworthy at a time of financial uncertainty. Even those with budget concerns were all very favorable about their experience at the institution and the desire to protect and continue to enhance the stellar reputation of UCSD. As one faculty member said to a member of the visiting team: "It would take much more than the current budget reductions to damage UCSD."

Commendations and Recommendations

1. *Reaffirmation of Reaccreditation Review.* UCSD had a highly structured and organized review, across the three phases of proposal, Capacity & Preparatory Review, and Educational Effectiveness Review. At all times, the team appreciated the seriousness and intentionality of UCSD, the transparency, and the comprehensive nature of their work. (CFR 1.3)

2. *Institutional structure and coordination.* UCSD is to be commended for its achievements in both protecting the autonomy of its many divisions at the same time it has improved coordination and established common language and goals. This was demonstrated through the role of the Colleges in the institution, in the efforts in writing instruction, information literacy, and foreign language instruction. In each theme, there has been marked development in arriving at common goals and measures of accountability without sacrificing the individual nature of methodology and/or pedagogy. (CFR 3.8)

3. *Academic Program Review.* The development of the academic program review process also deserves commendation. UCSD has refined the infrastructure and developed appropriate roles for the central administration with respect to data collection, organization, and facilitation of the process. Likewise, the addition of external review and the incorporation of WASC educational effectiveness indicators help units shift to a continuous improvement model. (CFR 4.4, 4.6)

While the team commends the institution for its structure and practices it has recommendations about 1) the continued attention to the assessment of learning, 2) the role of the CEP in program review, and 3) the timeline for academic review:

The team recommends that the institution continue to encourage and assist academic programs in understanding and incorporating learning assessment as a part of the review process. (CFR's 2.4, 2.6)

Furthermore, the team recommends that the institution reassess the roles and responsibilities of the CEP, to consider its authority in disciplinary and curriculum-based decision-making, and the efficiency of its timelines for decision-making. For example, at most institution's of UCSD's caliber, new courses and catalogue changes would not require approval

beyond the department level, a practice that seems at best intrusive and at worst an impingement of academic freedom. The team suggests some means for programs to provide feedback to the CEP on its own operation, and that the CEP establish clear written guidelines for programs relative to process, potential action items and implementation steps.

Lastly, the team recommends that the overall timeline of program review be reconsidered, with an aim to shortening the process, which at times stretches the review to two or three years. While these program reviews are extremely valuable, it serves little purpose for them to take so long to complete.

4. *Diversity*. UCSD has demonstrated its serious attention to diversity initiatives and is to be commended for its work in admissions and its attention to student support. The team encourages it to continue its work.

The team strongly recommends continued attention to those diversity initiatives focused on yield efforts and in the area of student support services. The efforts to explore and possibly adopt a holistic admissions process should be continued, as should be the peer analysis of yield for different student groups. (CFR 1.5)

The team also encourages the institution to undertake an analysis of the gap between first- and second-year retention rates and overall achievement and graduation rates for students of color. The laudable success in retention should be studied for insight into how greater persistence to graduation might be achieved. (CFR's 2.6, 2.7)

5. *Budget and Strategic Planning.* UCSD has responded well to the budget challenges facing the state. Its senior administration has demonstrated openness to the process of prioritization and decision-making. It is obvious that campus morale remains high and that the institution has a commitment not to lose momentum on their strategic initiatives. (CFR 1.2, 1.3, 3.5)

6. *Affirmation of the Colleges.* The structure of six colleges for undergraduate students has been reviewed and the WASC team supports the decision to continue with this structure and strengthen the role of the Colleges at the institution. The inclusion of the Colleges in the academic program review process highlights the institution's intention to affirm the role of general/liberal education and the collegiate experience as a vital and vibrant complement to the disciplinary education. (CFR 3.8, 3.11)

7. *Writing Instruction.* The WASC team commends UCSD for its selection of writing instruction as a theme for their reaffirmation of reaccreditation. The work in this area is noteworthy, especially the development of common goals and the completion of the pilot studies of student writing across levels.

The team encourages further work in this area, especially with respect to the common writing goals, the assessment of learning, and the choice of methodology and pedagogical practices. The team recommends that all Colleges continue the work begun in the two pilot studies. (CFR's 2.5, 4.4)

8. *Foreign Language Instruction.* Similar to the theme of writing instruction, the WASC team commends UCSD for its focus on foreign language instruction. The approval of a standing committee, the development of common proficiency goals, and the efforts at coordination are

very positive developments. Likewise, the new web portal for students and campus members is an excellent tool.

The team encourages UCSD to continue to build on progress made at coordination and cross-program communication. Because internationalization is a core emphasis of undergraduate education, UCSD is encouraged to consider how it realizes this aspiration. The team recommends developing of benchmarks for this goal, and tracking data on language instruction within and beyond language requirements. (CFR's 4.3, 4.4)

9. *Digital Fluency*. The team commends UCSD on its substantial progress since the CPR visit, especially the work of the Task Force.

The team recommends that UCSD follow through on the recommendations of the Task Force regarding the incorporation of digital fluency goals in the program review process for all academic programs. This action would serve as an avenue for further progress in this area while acknowledging disciplinary variation in how best to incorporate digital fluency into the curriculum.

10. *Student Success*. The WASC team commends UCSD for its attention to enhancing student support services, and its attention to the needs of distinct student groups. It also commends the campus on its efforts to coordinate and expand undergraduate research opportunities. The progress in developing electronic tools for students is noteworthy, especially in the areas of language offerings, undergraduate research, financial aid, and study abroad. (CFR's 2.13, 3.7)

The WASC team recommends continued efforts in the coordination of student support services, especially as they relate to persistence beyond the first two years.

In conclusion, the WASC team reiterates its appreciation for the forthcoming, thoughtful, and collaborative spirit of the UCSD community in its engagement with the visiting team. Throughout the visit, the team noted time and again the strength of the evaluations completed, those that were institution-based themes and those that responded to WASC areas of interest. The team has every confidence in the ability of UCSD to address areas for continuous improvement while it continues to advance as a leader in higher education.