



June 28, 2004

Martin Chemers
Acting Chancellor
University of California, Santa Cruz
1156 High Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95064

Dear Chancellor Chemers:

At its meeting on June 17-18, 2004, the Commission considered the report of the Preparatory Review team that visited the University of California, Santa Cruz on February 4-6, 2004. The Commission also had access to the Institutional Presentation for the visit and the March 29, 2004, letter from Lynda Goff, Accreditation Liaison Officer, in response to the team report. The Commission found the opportunity to discuss the review with you, Peggy Delaney, Interim Campus Provost/Executive Vice Chancellor; Michael Cowan, Senior Advisor to the Chancellor; and William Ladusaw, Interim Vice Provost/Dean of Undergraduate Education, helpful in better understanding the institution and the issues raised by the visiting team.

The accreditation review cycle for UCSC began with the University's Proposal for Reaccreditation, which was accepted by the Proposal Review Committee on December 2, 2002. The Proposal outlined the intention of the University to focus the Preparatory Review on building capacity for educational effectiveness, particularly in further developing the program review process. In the Proposal, UCSC stated its intention to use the opportunity provided by the reaccreditation process to improve the use of learning outcome and other performance measures for general education and the colleges, and to explore how best to incorporate program review results in institutional decision-making and resource allocation.

The Preparatory Review site visit was conducted on February 4-6, 2004. The Commission commends the University for the seriousness and thoughtfulness with which it prepared for and organized the Preparatory Review and the institutional presentation. The University planning team designed the visit process to engage a broad spectrum of faculty, staff, and administration in stimulating small-group discussions about educational quality and future planning, which resulted in a very good use of team member time and expertise. The use of carefully-selected resource materials compiled into three-ring binders for all participants provided helpful context to the discussions and served to deepen the

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dialogue on dozens of topics. In addition to the well-designed and well-organized visit process, the team's work was assisted by clear and explicit links made between the Preparatory Review Presentation and the University's ongoing strategic planning efforts.

Since the last WASC comprehensive visit 10 years ago, the University has experienced significant growth and progress in many areas. Enrollment grew in the last decade from 10,000 students in fall 1994 to 15,000 in fall 2003. Two residential colleges were added to accommodate the expanded student body and 250 new faculty members were hired. A building renaissance has brought nearly one million new square feet in academic classrooms and housing, and 50 acres of oceanfront property have expanded research opportunities at Long Marine Laboratory. The University has successfully preserved its commitment to a high quality undergraduate experience with numerous opportunities for student development, including research projects, service learning, and international experiences. The increased emphasis on research and graduate education is marked, with new graduate and professional degrees in Environmental Studies, Ocean Sciences, Environmental Toxicology, Politics, Philosophy, Education, and the Baskin School of Engineering. Significant interdisciplinary work has resulted in new research institutes and activities, new scholarly directions, new technologies, and a spirit of innovative scholarship. Extramural research support has increased significantly, from \$5.8 million in 1993-94 to \$22.7 million in 2002-03. The visiting team commended the University on its progress in so many areas. The Commission shares the team's commendations on these accomplishments.

The Commission will take its final accrediting action in June 2005, following the Educational Effectiveness Review. At this time, the Commission accepts and endorses the Preparatory Review Team Report and urges the University to take into consideration the observations and recommendations offered by the evaluation team. In addition, the Commission highlights the following issues for the University:

Sustaining momentum with the new University leadership through the review process. The University has profited from strong, stable, effective, and innovative institutional leadership. Past leadership engaged the University in effective strategic planning, oversaw the growth of the curriculum and student body, developed strong community ties, enhanced external funding, and provided exemplary communication of University vision to all constituencies, including WASC. With the resignation of the Provost at the end of 2003 and the resignation of the Chancellor, UCSC is involved in two searches key to its future growth and direction. Most recently, the Vice Provost/Dean of Undergraduate Education and WASC ALO, who has played such an instrumental role in organizing the review on campus, has also announced her resignation. While the Commission appreciates that there remains a depth of leadership and years of administrative leadership experience, as testified to in the Panel telephone conference call, it is still mindful that the new Provost and Chancellor will need to work closely and cooperatively with the Interim Provost and Chancellor and with faculty leadership in implementing the University's plans and shared vision with regard to educational effectiveness and the reaccreditation process. The new

leadership will need to be informed about the plans and progress for the Educational Effectiveness Review as well as about Commission expectations for assessing and improving student and organizational learning, so that the Chancellor and Provost, if hired in time, can take leadership roles in the review and resulting action plans.

Forging a stronger connection between planning and budgeting. Significant budget reductions caused by the state budget crisis challenge UCSC to maintain its programs at the current high levels of effectiveness. In the future, student tuition and fund-raising must assume a greater burden for making up the current deficit in revenue streams, and this shift must be managed carefully, particularly if UCSC is to remain in a growth mode for graduate education and research. The evaluation team raised the question of whether there has been sufficient planning both to mitigate the effect of the budget reductions on the University and to plan the shift to increased graduate student enrollments. The team, in discussing how graduate fellowships could be expanded recommended, noted “that all existing student support funding sources (endowment funds and financial aid money, including grants and work-study) be examined with a view toward potential reallocation of resources” (Team Report, p. 8). A stronger reliance on data will be required in all areas of the planning process, with a clear connection between budget planning and program planning. Such planning should include financial, enrollment, and personnel projections, alternative forecasting, and multi-year planning scenarios. The team further recommended that Santa Cruz include in its planning ways that the University might stimulate a more entrepreneurial and risk-taking spirit among its faculty to extend its reach beyond Santa Cruz to areas where growth is anticipated.

Exploring the balance between undergraduate and graduate education. The visiting team observed that many of UCSC’s new faculty members are focused increasingly, and with positive results, on strengthening the research focus of the University. At the same time, students raised with the team the concern that the graduate and research focus could detract from the tradition and stated mission of “an uncommon commitment” to undergraduate education. The Commission also noted that freshman core courses offered in the colleges are not taught by tenure-track faculty and that freshman discovery seminars taught by tenure-track faculty are not offered in the colleges. As the University is well aware, the challenges for the future will be to preserve the distinctiveness and integrity of the undergraduate/graduate balance and to continue the unique living/learning nature of the University, while exploring the growing emphases on graduate students and research, all within the context of constrained resources. The team made a number of good suggestions about such ways to expand UCSC’s unique commitment to undergraduate education and to graduate education, including extending graduate student living/learning arrangements and locating graduate facilities centrally on campus. The evolving undergraduate/graduate/research priorities balance will be a topic for continuing conversation for the University and an expected focus in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

Demonstrating that learning outcomes are assessed and findings are used in curricular and pedagogical decisions. The Commission recommends that the University use the Educational Effectiveness Review as an opportunity to evaluate its many data sources and analyze these sources to determine what steps might be taken to improve their use and their integration. For example, the team recommended deeper analysis of such sources as NSSE, SERU21, and research funding support sources, and recommended institutionalizing the practice of brief, analytical papers on the implications for decision-making that result from data being collected. The team report raises several questions that will be important to the Educational Effectiveness Review:

- How, when, and to whom should data be distributed and interpreted to have the greatest impact on student-learning outcomes?
- How will the information influence curriculum development?
- What implications does it have for faculty development and the improvement of teaching?
- How will change be tracked? (Team Report, p. 17)

It is the Commission's expectation that, among the data being reviewed regularly in the planning process, there is evidence of the achievement of educational effectiveness, including student-learning outcomes (see Criterion for Review 4.3).

Implementing the revised program review process. While the team commented on the progress made by the University in developing a revised protocol for the structure, timeline, and content of the program review process, the scheduling of the Educational Effectiveness Review provides an opportunity for the University to update the team and the Commission on the continued development of the program review process. The University stated in its accreditation Proposal:

We will . . . examine our current review procedures . . . particularly in terms of how we might incorporate regular reviews of our undergraduate general education programs and our colleges, and how we can begin to use outcome performance measures in assessing our departments. Specifically . . . what kinds of benchmarks can be used to evaluate program effectiveness at both the graduate and undergraduate level? How can student outcomes be incorporated into the departmental review process?

While the Commission is encouraged by the University's attention to program review, it notes that the use of student-learning outcomes and other performance measures were not fully developed in the Preparatory Review visit. Under Standards 2 and 4, each institution is responsible for developing a deliberate and intentional plan to assess learning at all levels. Because program review is of core importance to the assessment of learning, and because it is one of the most powerful forms of institutional accountability and quality assurance for learning, the Commission expects that, in the Educational Effectiveness Review UCSC will

review how learning outcomes are incorporated in program review and how the it is assuring itself that all graduating students have the composite and comprehensive learning habits and skills expected of them by the time they leave the University. In addition to outcome performance measures, there should be a general working infrastructure and clear institutional processes to identify data needs and quality indicators to support the assessment of student learning (see Criteria for Review 2.4 and 2.7).

Preparing for the Educational Effectiveness Review. The team report reiterates the intention of the University to address in the Educational Effectiveness Review (1) the growth and improvement of graduate programs, and (2) the enhancement of undergraduate academic engagement, with both topics focused on educational goals and institutional capacity to measure and assess learning outcomes. The team recommends, and the Commission concurs, that particular attention be paid to the interaction between these two objectives. In the concluding section of the team report (Section IV, p. 21-22), the team poses several questions for institutional to be taken up in the Educational Effectiveness Review. These questions center on how UCSC can protect and extend its areas of strength, as exemplified by its undergraduate programs and by its tradition of faculty engagement, in its plans to expand graduate, professional, and research programs. The team proposed the University consider the use of resources to extend its teaching-centered models to graduate education, link postdoctoral students with the teaching enterprise, and track assessments of learning as changes are made.

The Commission commends the University on its selection of useful themes for the Educational Effectiveness Review. It also reminds the University that, in its Educational Effectiveness Presentation, it will need to document and demonstrate how it meets the Standards of Accreditation as they relate to student and organizational learning. Several Criteria for Review have been referenced throughout this letter as areas for institutional reflection as it prepares for the Educational Effectiveness Review.

Finally, the Commission has recently approved an inventory of educational effectiveness indicators in table format, now required with all institutional presentations. In the case of UCSC, this data table is to be submitted with the University's Educational Effectiveness Review materials. The table may be helpful, as well, in assessing the current state of progress with respect to learning outcomes and program review. The table is enclosed with this letter.

The Commission acted to:

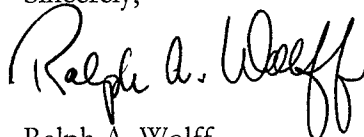
1. Receive the Preparatory Review Report and continue the accreditation of the University of California, Santa Cruz.
2. Proceed with the Educational Effectiveness visit on February 2-4, 2005. The report for the Educational Effectiveness visit is due on November 12, 2004.

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3. Request a meeting be scheduled between WASC staff and the new UCSC chancellor and provost to discuss the reaffirmation of accreditation process as soon as possible after the chancellor takes office.

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ralph A. Wolff". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "R" and "W".

Ralph A. Wolff
Executive Director

cc: James Appleton
Lynda Goff
Members of the team
Elizabeth Griego

Enclosure

7. Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators

Why is WASC Interested in Data of This Kind? The indicators asked for in this table provide evidence of how an institution approaches its quality assurance activities that ensure and improve student learning. This table is required for the Proposal and is to be updated at the Preparatory and Educational Effectiveness Reviews to indicate the extent to which the institution is already engaging in the kinds of activities that will be reviewed by the team and Commission as evidence of its systems of educational effectiveness. When the table is complete for all degree programs, the evaluation team may sample from the institution's list of activities to understand how systematically and comprehensively the institution addresses the quality of its learning infrastructure. For example, institutions are expected to have educational objectives for degree programs and the institution as a whole (CFR 1.1, 1.2, and 2.4). In order to ensure that educational objectives are met, learning outcomes are to be reflected in academic programs and policies (CFR 2.3) and published and widely shared in the institution, with students, and among other stakeholders (CFR 2.4). The faculty is expected to take collective responsibility for reviewing and demonstrating the attainment of those expectations (CFR 2.4). The ongoing and regular collection and use of data help assure the delivery of programs and learner accomplishments at a level of performance appropriate for the degree or certificate awarded (CFR 2.6). Program review then examines and improves curricular currency and effectiveness of degree offerings (CFR 2.7) to ensure and improve student learning (CFR 4.4). In sum, for an institution to be committed to educational effectiveness, it must have in place a system that regularly uses evidence in a variety of ways to improve student learning. The indicators listed in this table collectively demonstrate an institution's commitment to quality assurance systems that improve educational results over time (CFRs 4.1 and 4.5).

Issues and Challenges. Not all institutions have yet established the expectation for learning outcomes and learning assessment measures for all degree programs. This table may be used as an audit for the institution to determine where such systems are in place, and where programs may need assistance in developing those measures before the WASC review is initiated. It is critical for an institution to be explicit about its expectations for these measures and to provide monitoring to assure that every degree program has in place a quality assurance system for assessing, tracking and improving the learning of its graduates. Some measures and indicators are embedded in the curriculum and may be difficult to list distinctly and individually in a table format. As a result, institutions may wish to meet the intent of this data table with a supplementary narrative.

Data Element 7.1 – Educational Effectiveness Indicators

Description. This data table requests brief narrative information on specific quality assurance activities undertaken by the institution at the time of completion of the table. The following information is requested for each degree program, for general education, and for the institution as a whole: 1) whether formal learning outcomes have been developed (may be answered yes/no); 2) where the learning outcomes for the degree are listed (include course syllabi, catalogs, and other publications as applicable); 3) the measures or indicators used to assess student learning (examples include capstone courses; comprehensive assessment examinations; student, alumni, and employer surveys; portfolio review; licensure examination; etc.); and 4) the date of the last program review for the program (presumably this program review will have produced a report that the team may review).

A sample format designed to address this requirement follows.

Sample Format 7.1 Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators

CATEGORY	Have formal learning outcomes been developed?	Where are these learning outcomes published? (Please specify)	Other than GPA, what measures/indicators are used to determine that graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree? (e.g., capstone course, portfolio review, licensure examination)	Date of last program review for this degree program
At the institutional level:				
For general education if an undergraduate institution:				
List each degree program:				
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