

WASC SELF-STUDY NEWSLETTER # 2

April 28, 2002

Lessons from WASC Annual Meeting

On April 8-12, 2002 Sandra Kamusikiri, Associate Vice President for Assessment and Planning, Ross Moran, Director of Institutional Research, and Associate Provost Jerry Pritchard attended the annual WASC meeting. This event has become far more than an annual business meeting and has evolved into a major conference where over 450 campus faculty and administrators, WASC commission members, and invited assessment experts from across the county come together for series of training workshops, poster sessions, and sharing of ideas from individual institutions on how they are approaching the self-study process and what has worked in implementing a evidence-based approach.

We learned a great deal, picked up some good ideas that we can implement at CSUSB, were pleased that we were generally on the right track...and were sometimes discouraged by how far much farther along some institutions are in implementing the new standards and embedding assessment in the fabric of their curriculum and operations. Here are a few things we learned:

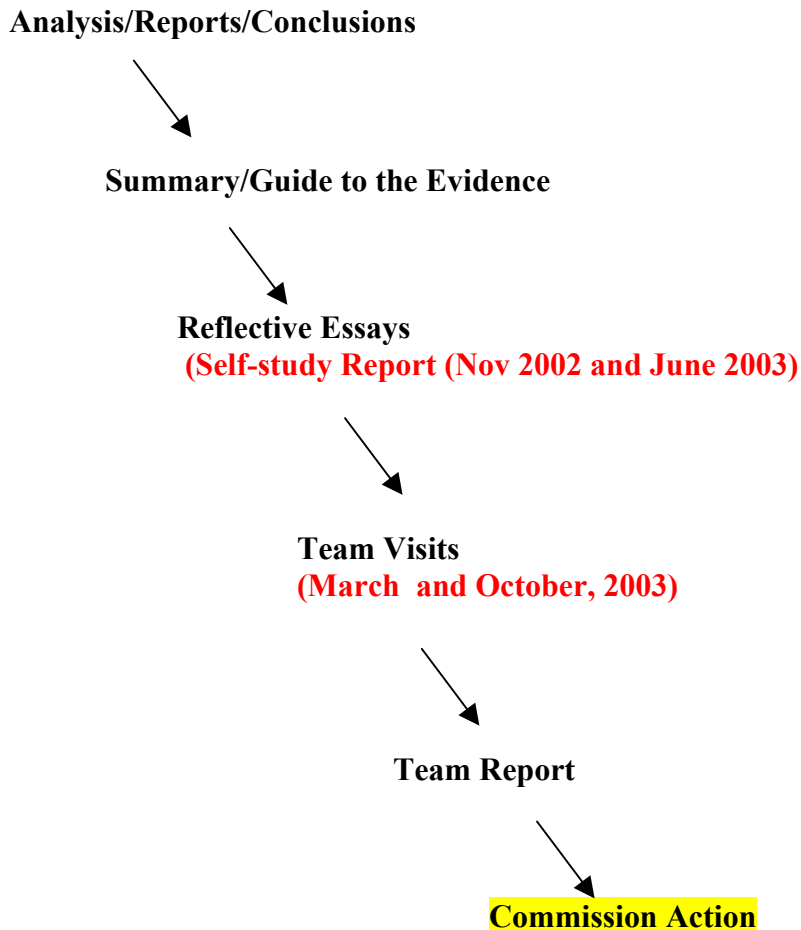
- Institutions are in different stages of transition to new standards depending on when their next visit is scheduled. Things are still in flux with regard to understanding the new guidelines and review process.**
- Only four institutions have been reviewed in new format and standards. Our campus will be the first CSU campus to be fully reviewed under the new standards and format.**
- Widespread faculty involvement and participation are even more essential to the self-study process than in the past.**
- Campus Self-study Reports are still too focused on assertion and description and not enough on analysis and providing facts and proof of effectiveness.**
- We need to focus on topics and issues of importance to your campus' context and mission.**
- We should try to provide good, in-depth examples of a few important measures of effectiveness and quality rather than scattered, unfocused details on many issues and less important indications of quality.**

Levels of the WASC Self-study Process

Our campus is moving along this continuum below. (The diagram probably needs to be going upwards from bottom to top, but sometime it feels as if it is all downhill racing.)

Data Pool/Universe of Evidence





Progress Report on Activities of WASC Theme I Committee “Becoming a Teaching and Learning Institution” *April, 2002*

The Theme I Committee was formed and began its work in the Spring of 2001. We have continued to meet bi-weekly, in summer, fall and winter quarters, except for breaks between terms.

Activities to date:

Summer of 2002 was devoted primarily to:

- reviewing our charge,
- reviewing new WASC standards and advice from WASC staff on how to organize and structure self-studies under the new guidelines and criteria,
- examining the issues and questions raised for Theme I in the WASC Self-study plan, and
- trying to developing a working definition of what is meant by being a

“Teaching and Learning Community”

Although the campus obviously has long been involved in many aspects of providing and evaluating instruction, the focus on “Community” is new.

Our committee decided that there were two aspects of this issue: 1) assessment of current campus activities that encourage and support learning and development of an overall campus environment that is supportive of engagement in teaching and learning in the broad sense, and 2) identification and development of smaller “intentional learning communities” that focus on more limited endeavors and specific outcomes.

To this end, after reviewing the extensive literature on learning communities, discussing material from an American Association for Higher Education workshop on “Designing a Learning Community,” and examining activities at other institutions which have been involved in the National Learning Communities Project, we developed the following working definition:

Learning Community: A group of people with a common set of interests and goals who come together on a regular basis in a specific locale (physical or electronic) to share ideas, enhance understanding, and support one another.

Though the development of intentional learning communities seems inherent in the goals of our campus Strategic Plan, our committee has found little evidence that the campus has systematically promoted this concept or developed extensive mechanisms for development and support of existing or new learning communities. We spent a good deal of time brainstorming possible methods and types of learning communities our campus might offer and looked at the possibility of sending a team visit other campuses and/or attending upcoming regional and national workshops or conferences on this topic, but we decided our committee could not take on this task. It is hoped that a proposed Center for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and a new faculty Academy for Teaching and learning would take on this project. It is also recommended that our campus begin to participate in the national conversation about this topic through participation in AAHE teaching initiatives, The Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, the AAHE Summer Academy, and the National Learning Communities Project.

The Theme I Committee also assisted Associate Provost Pritchard in writing a proposal for our campus to participate in the AAHE Summer Academy. This proposal has been accepted and we plan to send a ten-member team to Vermont in July 2002, where we will have access to consultants who will assist the team in developing a comprehensive plan of activities for the new CSUSB Teaching Academy and for developing intentional learning communities.

Throughout the summer and fall terms we began to list possible evidence and to review available studies’ data that might be used both for the Preparatory Review and the more focused Educational Effectiveness review. One of the first issues we examined was the matter of student effort, amount of out-of-class study, and issues raised over the summer on the campus’ Forum listserv. There were several allegations that students were over-committed in terms of number of units they enroll for and the number of other non-university obligations they have, yet we received a good deal of evidence that the average grades given were going up. Some of the issues raised were:

- Amount of Out-of-Class Study. (Full-time students indicate they study only about 10 hours a week, which is low in comparison to data from other institutions nationally.)**
- Relationship of Grades to Student Evaluations of Teaching Effectiveness. (Those giving the highest grades receive the highest SETE ratings.)**
- Relationship of Grade Distribution and GPA Increase. (Some colleges and departments have continued to inflate GPAs.)**
- Average Student Credit Unit Load. (Average unit load has gone up since 1990 along with GPA.)**
- Increase in Number of Student Grade Grievances and Complaints. (Does this increase indicate a tightening of standards, lack of consistency, or student pressure to lower standards?)**

These matters was placed on the agenda of the Academic Affairs Council Retreat in September, where it received a good deal of discussion. This resulted in requests for further analysis and study.

Several other major studies and reports were examined:

- The CSU and CSUSB Student Needs and Priority Survey (2000)**
- The National Survey of Student Engagement (2000-2001)**
- CSUSB Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Program and the status of development of departmental assessment plans with mission statement, goals, and objectives, measurement methods, and reports for each degree major on campus**
- The ETS Academic Profile exam of basic skills proficiency and general education knowledge of upper-division CSUSB Students**
- Activities of the Teaching Resource Center and the Instructional Quality Committee**
- Trends in Grade Point Averages since 1965 with emphasis on last 10 years**
- Inventory of Good Educational Practices and Community at CSUSB**
- The April 2001 report of the CSUSB Long-range Planning Committee on progress by the divisions toward meeting our campus goals and objectives**
- President Karnig's Behavioral Process and Policy Principles distributed at Fall 2001 Convocation**
- Fall 2000 TRACS Survey of student degree plans, e-mail utilization, internet access, interest in weekend classes, and off-campus location**
- Spring 2001 TRACS Survey on Academic Advising and follow up on National Survey of Student Engagement**

- Winter 2002 TRACS Survey of student perceptions and attitudes regarding educational effectiveness, level of academic support, participation in student activities, needs for out-of-class activities, and computer technology and distance learning
- Commencement Survey of Graduating Students (2001)
- Special SNAPS Survey for Palm Desert Campus (2001)
- Results of Inventory of Good Educational Practice, Effectiveness, and Community
- HERI Faculty Survey carried out in 1992 and 1998

What still needs to be done:

The Theme I Committee is just starting to summarize our findings, to make some conclusions, and form some tentative recommendations. To that end, we have reviewed a draft of the Preparatory Report written by Dr. Ward McAfee, the leader writer for our WASC Self-study. While our Educational Effectiveness Report is not scheduled for completion until later next year, the work of this committee will be informed by the Preparatory Report and that report will also use the data and evidence collected by this theme committee for its final conclusions and recommendations.

We expect to share with the campus community summaries of the major reports that have been undertaken as part of this self-study. The summary analyses and the full data and reports will be available on the WASC Self-study Homepage. Each of these studies will be noted on the campus "Forum" and "Campus" listservs to alert the campus community to the availability of these reports, to inform the campus of the critical issues raised, and to engage the campus in a general discussion and response to these findings.

We still need to obtain and review a good deal of information on:

- Five-year Program Review results in each academic department
- Results/findings of departmental Student Learning Assessments
- Accountability Reports to the Trustees
- GE committee's 5-year report on review of each category of GE program
- Goals, objectives and methods planned for local GE Assessment
- Honors Program Activities
- Learning Support provided by Undergraduate Studies area office's
- CSRD comparative data
- Comparative Data with other Hispanic Serving Institutions
- Role and Activities and Accomplishments of Centers and Institutes
- Sponsored Programs and Grant Activities
- Distance Learning Long-range Plan
- Technology Long-range Plan
- Faculty Focus* publication and other indices of faculty engagement in scholarship and research
- Diversity Committee activities, projects and studies
- Benchmarking and Customer Satisfaction Surveys

- Intellectual Life and Visiting Scholars Program
- Student Clubs and Departmental Activities related to Disciplines
- Library Usage data
- Results of TRC grants and projects
- Computer Technology and usage reports
- Employer Satisfaction Surveys and Regional Needs Assessments
- Analyses of sampling of class syllabi
- Replication of Faculty and Staff surveys

Most of these studies and reports will be included in our “Data Portfolio of Evidence” that will be core of evidence that we meet WASC Standards and to bolster our conclusions in our Preparatory Report and the Educational Effectiveness Report. Dr. Robert Schwabe, former Director of Institutional Research, has kindly agreed to assist the collection of this data. He has already pulled together a large number of scattered reports, statistics, and facts needed to form the core of this data portfolio. We are attempting to develop an on-going electronic data base of trend data, facts and figures which will be part of a “Common Data Set” of information provided annually to the US Department of Education and other agencies and organizations, which is comparable from institution to institution.

Although our final report is not due until spring 2002, the Theme I Committee is attempting to get as much of it work for the Educational Effectiveness Report done this year in order to have time for follow up and further data collection and analysis next year and so that the Preparatory Report due next November can benefit from our work.

Progress Report on Activities of WASC Theme II Committee “Becoming a Safe, Supportive, and Welcoming Campus Community and Physical Environment”

April 2002

The Theme II Committee, chaired by Dr. Howard Wang, Associate Vice President for Student Life, began its work April 2001. Members continued to meet bi-weekly, for the most part when there are no major conflicts, through the current quarter, Spring 2002.

The following is a brief list of activities and accomplishments to date:

- Reviewed the WASC Standards and Review Process in the WASC Handbook (*June 2001)
- Reviewed the basic charge in the self-study plan for the WASC Theme II sub-committee (*October 2001)
- Compared CSUSB Strategic Plan Objectives with questions in the Theme II WASC Self-study Plan 2001-2002 (*October 2001)
- Developed list of areas where methodology for data collection and assessment could be established to meet Goal II and Theme II questions (*Oct. and November 2001). Suggested methods include:
 - Interviews
 - Focus Groups with campus leaders and random samples
 - “Phantom Shopper”
 - Survey at registration (“TRACS”)

- Created a list of existing data and reports that the sub-committee wished to analyze from various surveys:
 - Graduating Student Survey (June/Dec. 2001) Survey results will be summarized in separate newsletter and posting to campus listservs)
 - SNAPS Surveys (Reviewed 2001 CSUSB data and summarized Palm Desert Campus comparative data for Oct. 2001)
 - TRACS Survey for Winter 2002 reviewed and summarized
 - Benchmarking and Quality Improvement Surveys
 - Divisional reports on Strategic Plan Accomplishment
 - Diversity Committee Activities, reports and studies
 - Undergraduate Studies area student learning support activities
 - Student Affairs departments surveys and data collection:
 - Survey of Activities Needs and Plans for Residence Halls (Submitted by Housing, April 02)
 - Student Union Referendum poll results and summary (Draft submitted April 2002)
 - Other Student Affairs programs and services (In progress: received from Student Union, ASI, NSE, SSD, Residential Life, Career Center)

The Theme II Committee is still seeking more examples of the results of the many activities the campus has undertaken in this area of our WASC Self-study and Strategic Plan goals.

Progress Report on Activities of WASC Theme III Committee: “Engaging with the external community and the region” April, 2002

The work of the WASC Theme III team, chaired by Dr. Jan Jackson, Dean of the College of Extended Learning, continues to be productive and on track as it studies the extent to which CSUSB is successful in “Engaging with the External Community and the Region.”

The team spent most of the fall quarter discussing the context for moving forward, and building a framework upon which to structure its activities. At the beginning of the winter 2002 quarter, the work of the Theme III team began in earnest. The first step was to fine tune the questions and research issues underlying the theme, and then determine what the related issues and areas of focus might be. The fine-tuning process resulted in segregating the theme into five research areas which include: (1) image / visibility; (2) continuing education and lifelong learning; (3) community outreach and partnerships; (4) distributed learning; and (5) fundraising. These areas were then further refined via a series of questions pertaining to each area., as follows:

Image / Visibility: The important questions here are: (1) to what extent is CSUSB known in the region and how positively is it perceived?; and (2) does the region look to us as a resource for intellectual and cultural programs? Obviously, the intent of this research area is to focus on how CSUSB might become better known as a primary provider of cultural activities, services and leadership for the region. Dr. Michael LeMay (Political Science) is leading the work of this sub-team.

Continuing Education / Lifelong Learning: Led by Dr. Jan Jackson (Dean of College of Extended Learning), this sub-team is concerned with enhancing the role of the College of Extended Learning. Toward that end, its key research questions are: (1) are we providing the continuing education, professional development, noncredit courses and training needed in the region?; and (2) how can we identify, create and provide needed continuing education services?

Community Outreach / Partnerships: Drawing largely from the work of the campus' Community University Partnership (CUP) office, this sub-team is asking:

(1) has CSUSB used its resources to improve community life? (2) how successful have we been in engaging the community to participate in events on campus and in becoming more attractive as a place for community life; (3) how successful have we been with the campus' community outreach initiatives, such as those sponsored by the CUP office, Title V grant project, and the Inland Empire Center for Entrepreneurship?; and (4) what partnerships have been developed and what are some of their accomplishments? As such, sub-team leader Dr. Rick Eberst (CUP) and his group are concerned primarily with developing and strengthening meaningful partnerships and cooperative programs between CSUSB and the community.

Distributed Learning: Sub-team leader Jim Monaghan (Director of Distributed Learning) and his team want to know: (1) how well have we defined, identified, sorted out and planned for the needs of off-campus and media-assisted degree programs?; and (2) who is the population? In responding to these questions, this sub-team is focusing on the degree to which CSUSB is successful in "transcending time and location in delivery of instruction" by providing courses and programs to underserved populations who are at a distance from the campus via off-campus centers, televised courses, and internet courses. As well, how well does CSUSB respond to the need to provide "learning on demand" and more accessible programs?

Fundraising: Finally, the fundraising sub-team, under the leadership of Pam Langford (Alumni Affairs) is exploring how well CSUSB is advancing and optimizing fundraising efforts. Specifically, this group wants to know the extent to which we are using our fundraising efforts to assist in meeting outreach and community engagement objectives.

All five sub-teams are reviewing campus documents, meeting with various campus and community representatives, conducting surveys and interviews, and collecting data in a variety of forms. In early March, the sub-team concerned with community outreach and partnerships took advantage of the campus' spring career fair and disseminated a questionnaire to the counselors and educators present, asking for their feedback on some of the questions relevant to this sub-theme. In late April, Theme III will be meeting with the University Advisory Board to conduct a survey and solicit feedback on the questions and issues identified above. As well, the continuing education sub-team will be meeting with the Extended Learning Advisory Council in late April to survey the group about the continuing education issues noted above.

As an ongoing activity of the Theme III group, a "Perpetual Catalog of Resources and Documents" is being built. As new documents are identified and referenced, data collected, and information garnered or gleaned, these resources are being committed to the catalog which will serve as the Theme's collection of evidence. Ultimately, this catalog will be transferred to the campus' WASC website.

In May, the sub-teams will begin writing their reports. When completed, these will be summarized into one 15-20 page preparatory report to be compiled with the reports of the other two themes.