

# UC DAVIS WASC INSTITUTIONAL PROPOSAL

6/14/00

**Format and Required Elements:** Institutional Proposals are to include the following elements:

## **1. Statement of Institutional Context**

Since the 1991 reaccreditation of UC Davis, the campus has undergone several profound changes and has many challenges to face in the years ahead. Some of these changes were predictable, others were less so. As was the case with institutions throughout the state of California, the unanticipated budget problems of the early 1990's forced the University to make significant cutbacks. Thus, just as the last WASC team was issuing its report, the campus was compelled to grapple with an unprecedented resource challenge, the worst in the history of the state.

One way in which the University dealt with the cut of almost 25% of its annual budget was to encourage older faculty to take advantage of a very attractive early retirement plan. Several hundred faculty members retired between years 1990-91 and 1992-3. By the late 1990's the state's economy began to recover. Simultaneously, the number of UC eligible students began to balloon and the Davis campus was asked to increase its number of students by approximately 500 to 900 per year for the next several years. At present we expect an overall increase of 6,000 students by 2010. Thus, just as a new generation of UC eligible students are seeking to enter our classrooms and laboratories, the first wave of boomer faculty ineligible for the retirement packages of the early 1990's will begin a significant exodus.

During the next several years we expect to hire several hundred new faculty as we plan to serve the needs of the growing student population and replace the faculty that are now eligible to retire. A more predictable challenge that we must face is the one in the shift in the state's demography, which will have clear implications on the ethnic composition of the new students and faculty.

Also, when WASC last visited UC Davis, the current cycle of explosive growth in the use of information technology on campus was just beginning. Since then there have been large technical advances, but it is not yet clear what the truly profound impacts on our campus will be.

Although these are serious challenges, the UC Davis campus community looks forward to meeting them. We have an extremely competent and dedicated cadre of faculty, staff and students. Because of its location, the campus boasts a very safe, and, in the context of California, affordable location. A member of the American Association of Universities since 1996, our academic and research programs routinely rate at the upper end of the scale, and our students compete well both in the job market and in graduate and professional schools.

## **2. Goals and intended outcome of the Accreditation Review Process**

UC Davis will pursue several goals throughout the WASC review process. Some are overarching concerns, while others are more specific. We are always eager to serve our students better and believe that by focusing our educational effectiveness component on research and information technology, we will be able to assess how well we are succeeding in two areas which are central to our mission.

Three general goals can be mentioned first. UC Davis is looking forward to the opportunity to engage the campus more broadly in the review process through the capacity review. We are particularly interested in developing educational objectives for the integration of teaching,

learning, and research. Given the enrollment growth and faculty turnover we anticipate, we are eager to develop strategies to consistently communicate our campus priorities as articulated in our mission statement and academic planning documents.

Regarding our inquiry into research, we would like to be able to provide our faculty with best practices for integrating research into the student learning experience. We are also interested in developing more specific student research goals for the ten academic initiatives recently developed for the campus. We intend, thereby, to gain a clearer picture of ourselves that will, in turn, help us articulate to various audiences what it means to be a research university and the ways in which the research component of our mission benefits our students, their parents, and other constituencies.

Regarding our inquiry into information technology, we want to ensure that sound pedagogical and intellectual practices drive our deployment of technology, rather than letting the availability and seductiveness of new technologies drive our endeavors. At the end of this WASC accreditation process, we would like to have criteria that will help the campus departments and programs reach informed decisions about the use of technology in instruction. Additionally, we would like to have an improved sense of how best to enable us and our students to develop the new literacies required by the digital age.

### **3. Description of how representatives of the institution's constituencies were involved in the development of the Proposal and will be involved in the review process**

December 1, 1999: Steering Committee appointed and charged

January 14, 2000: *DATELINE* article describing accreditation process

January 18, 2000: Steering Committee meets to discuss accreditation process. Campus list-serve established for suggested self-study topics. Vice Provost—Undergraduate Studies constructs WASC web page.

February 2, 2000: Campus directive announcing preparation for accreditation visit and welcoming suggestions for topics via e-mail.

February 10, 2000: Steering Committee meeting

March 1, 2000: Senate Vice Chair Kiskis requested comments from Academic Senate committee chairs.

March 1, 2000: WASC presentation to College of Engineering (chair and directors) by Vice Provost—Undergraduate Studies

April 4, 2000: WASC presentation to College of Letters and Science (department chairs and directors) by Vice Provost—Undergraduate Studies

April 10, 2000: Steering Committee meeting

April 12, 2000: Vice Provost—Undergraduate Studies meets with members of the ASUCD Academic Affairs office.

May 1, 2000: Campus Open Forum

Publicity for forum included: campus directive to announce forum, articles in *THE AGGIE*, *DATELINE*, and *THE DAVIS ENTERPRISE*.

May 26, 2000: WASC Steering Committee meeting

May 30, 2000: Vice Provost—Undergraduate Studies meets with members of the Council of Vice Chancellors to review institutional proposal.

June 7, 2000: WASC Steering Committee meets to review institutional proposal

June 13, 2000: Vice Provost—Undergraduate Studies meets with members of the Council of Deans and Vice Chancellors to review revised institutional proposal.

June 16, 2000: *DATELINE* announcement of web availability of draft Institutional proposal.

June 19, 2000: Vice Provost—Undergraduate Studies meets with Academic Computing Coordinating Council to review information technology theme.

June 19, 2000: Chancellor Vanderhoef hosts final Spring 2000 WASC Steering Committee meeting

**How will the campus community be engaged in the review itself and in the subsequent follow up:**

The WASC Steering Committee will continue to meet and work with existing campus committees already charged with matters related to self-study topics.

The Vice Provost—Undergraduate Studies will continue to advise and update the campus administrative bodies; namely, the Council of Deans and Vice Chancellors and the Academic Leadership and Planning group of the progress in the WASC reaccreditation. The Academic Senate Vice Chair will continue to advise the Senate Executive Council of progress in the WASC reaccreditation.

The campus-wide list-serve enables the campus community to contribute to the reaccreditation process. The Vice Provost's web page will be kept current and additional pertinent information will be added as needed.

We will continue to publish articles in the weekly campus newspaper, *DATELINE*, and the daily student newspaper, *THE AGGIE*, the *Staff News*, and *THE DAVIS ENTERPRISE*.

**4. Proposal of how the Preparatory and Educational Effectiveness Reviews would be staged and timed to meet institutional goals and demonstrate institutional fulfillment of the two Core Commitments**

At present, UC Davis is scheduled to undergo the preparatory site visit during fall 2002 with the integrated standards visit scheduled for spring 2003. UC Davis is on the quarter system. We believe an October 2002 preparatory visit followed by the second visit as early as is feasible for WASC and the team early in our winter 2003 academic quarter would offer the most continuity.

**5. Format for presentation of evidence to demonstrate compliance with Commission standards.**

UC Davis will use the Preparatory Review Process to demonstrate that it meets the requirements of the WASC Core Commitment to Institutional Capacity. The basis for this review will be a web-based data and policy portfolio addressing the essence of the four WASC standards as distilled by key UC Davis faculty and administrators. The campus will be selective, not exhaustive, in compiling the portfolio, and will concentrate on identifying those data and policies that best illustrate that the campus operates at or above the threshold level for accreditation with regard to institutional resources, structures and processes. Additionally, the Portfolio will address issues raised by the Commission in its review of the UC Davis Fourth-Year Report (1996) as well as those arising from our self-study under the revised accreditation standards and our ongoing strategic planning processes. The Portfolio will be standing and accessible to internal and external constituents.

We propose that the Portfolio be generally organized into the following sections:

- Introductory statement on the purpose and design of the portfolio and summary data describing the campus;
- Standard One: Defining Institutional Purposes and Educational Objectives, essay describing why the data elements were selected, what they mean to the campus and how they fulfill the essence of the standard, followed by evidentiary data;
- Standard Two: Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions; organized as for Standard One;
- Standard Three: Developing and Deploying Resources and Organizational Structures to Assure Sustainability; same as above;
- Standard Four: Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement; same as above;
- Integrative Essay summarizing the capacity review under the four standards and relating this review to Educational Effectiveness and the themes the campus has chosen to demonstrate this Core Commitment. Recommendations for improvement and follow-up steps included as necessary.
- Campus response to previous Commission and team concerns

**6. Description of the format for the Educational Effectiveness Review, and themes or issues to be addressed.**

#### INTRODUCTION

As a Land Grant institution, the University of California at Davis is dedicated to serve the people of the state of California. Our teaching and research are together oriented to that goal. Since the most effective mode of "technology transfer", perhaps better called "research transfer" or "knowledge transfer", is via people, who in our case are students, it is essential that they should be immersed in and benefit from the research programs at our campus. It is therefore appropriate that our educational effectiveness self-study should investigate the extent to which we have been successful in the past and could be more effective in the future in meeting that goal. Also a particularly rapidly developing area is information technology. While its recent effects have been large, we can expect immense impacts on the University and our state in the near future. We must prepare our students and ourselves for the wild ride that is just beginning. We believe it is for these reasons that our campus quickly converged on the proposed self-study

topics addressing the integration of teaching, learning, and research and the role of information technology in the process.

It is also a result of our Land Grant origins that we are a campus with a very wide range of programs and many different specialized goals. We do not think that it is necessary or desirable to have a single specific implementation of our general vision that is applied across the board. Rather we expect each segment of the campus to implement our broad educational objectives in the manner that is most beneficial to its students and the goals of its programs.

#### RESEARCH TOPIC

"The institutional goal of research universities should be a balanced system in which each scholar--faculty member or student--learns in a campus environment that nurtures exploration and creativity on the part of every member" [Boyer Report<sup>1</sup>].

The California system of higher education identifies the campuses of University of California as the primary foci for research. In any given document about the Davis campus, its status as a research university is stated and celebrated. The faculty and the administration take this responsibility to the state of California quite seriously, and many of the decisions the campus makes are driven by questions about the appropriateness of certain choices for a research campus. Like most university faculties, we identify our mission in terms of research, teaching and service. However, we emphasize the view that teaching, learning, and research should form an integrated whole. In this portion of our study, we propose to examine the extent to which we have actually implemented such a view, the impact it has had on our students, and the ways in which we could improve the integration of the processes and thereby our educational effectiveness.

For the sake of brevity, we will use the word "research" in the paragraphs that follow, although we would like the reader to consider that we are really using that label to refer to all of the manifestations of scholarly work that counts as research for our faculty. For example, our faculty in Art Studio are expected to create works of art that pass muster with their peers, and these creative endeavors are considered research projects for them.

In a discussion of the integration of research into the curriculum, there are four variables that play important roles: the student's educational level (lower division, upper division, or graduate), the discipline of study (ranging from fine arts to physical sciences), the student's objective (general intellectual development or preparation for a post baccalaureate goal in a professional, academic, or corporate environment), and the aspect of research in which the student is involved (ranging from learning about research to the independent discovery of new knowledge). The first three are important in determining the fourth.

We propose to conduct this analysis in two ways. First, we plan to study the integration of teaching, learning, and research on our campus. Secondly, we plan to analyze the specific research programs that have been developed for students on the campus and the ways in which students are introduced to research.

"In a setting in which inquiry is prized, every course in an undergraduate curriculum should provide an opportunity for a student to succeed through discovery-based methods" [Boyer Report]

In part one we will ask the following kinds of questions: do we have stated educational objectives that reflect our vision for the integration of teaching, learning, and research? How are

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<sup>1</sup> The Boyer Commission Report on Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities. 1998 Shirley Strum Kenny - State University of New York at Stony Brook

these objectives implemented in our practices? Have we been successful in this integration at the lower division level, and have lower division students in introductory courses benefited? Do our new campus initiatives have components that will provide exciting new research opportunities for undergraduate as well as graduate students? Are major course requirements, major course curricula, and the delivery of these major courses designed to implement an integrated view of teaching, learning, and research? Are these patterns consistent across the campus?

In part two, we will assess the specific research opportunities available to students. Have these programs been the benefit to students that our educational objectives envision? How can we use the information we get to improve the programs? Also we would like to explore the ways in which students are introduced to and encouraged to pursue their own research goals. This investigation will cover students at all levels: lower division, upper division, and graduate. Finally, we will ask whether all students who would benefit from research experiences have opportunities to pursue them?

#### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY TOPIC

"No institutions are better suited to make a difference to our technological future than research universities." [Boyer Report]

We propose to study several aspects of information technology as it relates to educational effectiveness at UC Davis. Our students need information technology skill and understanding to function effectively both while students at UC Davis and after graduation in graduate school or in their careers. We must identify those needs, provide the resources to meet them, and assess our effectiveness in doing so. However, to serve our students well, we must also encourage, as we do for other subjects, a thoughtful approach that goes deeper than just the acquisition of technique. Also we will study the way in which enhanced information technology may provide an opportunity to improve faculty pedagogy and student learning.

Faculty at a research university such as UC Davis are demanding users of computers in their research and are often innovative in that use. Thus it is appropriate that our students should benefit from this environment of heavy use of information technology. However, since we are a large campus with the potential to deploy almost any technology, the possible costs are without an obvious upper limit. It becomes necessary to address, in a most serious way, the questions: "what is important?", "how much is enough?", and "who pays?" Although we do not propose to answer those questions in the self-study, we will make a contribution to the background of knowledge that will facilitate a rational approach to those questions.

Possible questions for inquiry:

- 1) Most of our students will be heavy users of computers while attending UCD and after graduation. They will need to develop an understanding of computing systems and a thoughtful approach to their application in solving complex problems. How can we be most effective in providing that?
- 2) What has been the impact of advances in information technology on student learning at UCD and what will/should the future impact be?

Elaboration on these two questions follows.

"Because research universities create technological innovations, their students should have the best opportunities to learn state-of-the-art practices ..." [Boyer Report]

- 1) To answer the first question, we must first identify the skills and understanding that are needed. Then we will address the following questions: are the resources to meet those needs in place? Is there adequate access to those resources? Are students being adequately informed through course requirements or in other ways about the skills and understanding that

have been identified as important? Do our methods of providing guidance and access work equally effectively for all the diverse groups of students on campus? Are faculty informed about the post-graduation professional needs of students who will be working in non-academic sectors? Do we have the ability to evaluate our success in meeting the identified needs? Do we have structures in place to ensure that we continue to identify and meet these needs as the rapid changes in information technology continue? In all steps of this analysis and in much the same way that we encourage critical thinking in other areas, we will emphasize the importance of helping students to develop an intelligent and thoughtful approach to the appropriate use of information technology. Technique should not substitute for depth of understanding and judgment.

"The best teachers and researchers should be thinking about how to design courses in which technology enriches teaching rather than substitutes for it." [Boyer Report]

2) We will evaluate what has happened in the recent past at UC Davis in the application of new information technologies to instruction and use the results to help articulate a vision for the future. Our discussion will distinguish the direct consequences of improved communication from the more significant impacts of powerful presentation tools on content and pedagogy. Does more effective electronic communication enhance real learning? Will rising expectations for faculty use of information technology add to or detract from faculty ability to craft high quality courses centered on student learning? What does past experience at UCD tell us? Have advances in information technology really given us a tool to improve student learning? If so, are we providing adequate support to faculty to use the technology and yet remain focused on student learning rather than on the complexity of using the technology? Will the new Instructional Technology and Digital Media Center address these issues?

#### **7. Signed statement of Institutional Stipulations to include:**

- 1. UC Davis is using the review process to demonstrate its fulfillment of the two Core Commitments, and will engage in the process with seriousness, that data presented is accurate and will fairly present the institution.**
- 2. UC Davis has published and publicly available policies identified by the Commission for this purpose. Such policies will be available on request through the period of accreditation.**
- 3. UC Davis will abide by procedures adopted by the Commission to meet Department of Education procedural requirements**
- 4. UC Davis will submit all regularly required data, and any specifically requested by the Commission during the period of accreditation**

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Chancellor