TEAM ROSTER AND TITLE PAGE

University of California, Irvine
501 Administration
Irvine, CA 92697
(949) 824-4501

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Chief Executive Officer:
Ralph J. Cicerone, Chancellor

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Accreditation Liaison Officer:
Michael P. Clark, Associate Executive Vice Chancellor

WASC Staff:
Gregory M. Scott, Associate Director

WASC Chair:
Sylvia Manning
Chancellor
Office of the Chancellor M/C 102
2833 University Hall
University of Illinois at Chicago
601 South Morgan St.
Chicago, IL 60607-7128
(312) 413-3350
FAX: (312) 413-3393
e-mail: manning@uic.edu

WASC Members:
Ed C. Apodaca
Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management
University of Houston
4800 Calhoun Road, E. Cullen Bldg., Room 136
Houston, TX 77204-2161
(713) 743-9567
FAX: (713) 743-9653
e-mail: hvpsaecca@admin.uh.edu
Trudy W. Banta
Vice Chancellor for Planning & Institutional Improvement
Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis
355 N. Lansing, AO 140
Indianapolis, IN 46202-2896
(317) 274-4111
FAX: (317) 274-4651
e-mail: tbanta@iupui.edu

Francisco J. Hernandez
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
University of California, Santa Cruz
1156 High Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95064
(831) 459-2474
FAX: (831) 459-2760
e-mail: fjh@cats.ucsc.edu

Carolyn G. Jarmon
Associate Director
Center for Academic Transformation
Dean's Suite, Pittsburgh Building
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
110 Eighth St.
Troy, NY 12180-3590
(518) 899-5416
FAX: (518) 899-5416
e-mail: jarmoc@rpi.edu

Dan L. Jones
Interim Provost
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Towson University
8000 York Road
Towson, MD 21252-0001
(410) 830-2125
FAX: (410) 830-3129
e-mail: djones@towson.edu
Patricia Lee MacCorquodale  
Dean, The Honors College  
Prof., Women's Studies & Sociology  
University of Arizona  
Slonaker House, Room 107  
Tucson, AZ 85721  
(520) 621-2848  
FAX: (520) 621-8655  
e-mail: pmac@u.arizona.edu

Jonathan Middlebrook  
Professor of English  
English Department  
San Francisco State University  
1600 Holloway Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94132  
(415) 338-7415  
FAX: (415) 338-1955  
e-mail: nonce@sfsu.edu

Emil Morhardt  
Director  
Roberts Environmental Center  
Claremont McKenna College  
500 E. Ninth Street  
Claremont, CA 91711-6400  
(909) 621-8190  
FAX: (909) 621-8588  
e-mail: emorhardt@mckenna.edu

Michael C. Shapiro  
Professor  
Department of Asian Languages and Literature  
University of Washington, Seattle  
Seattle, WA 98195-2900  
(206) 543-4958  
FAX: (206) 685-4268  
e-mail: hindimcs@u.washington.edu
Karen A. Yoshino
Executive Assistant to the President
for Institutional Research and Assessment
Harvey Mudd College
301 E. 12th Street
Claremont, CA 91711
(909) 621-8340
FAX: (909) 621-8360
e-mail: karen_yoshino@hmc.edu
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities

Visiting Team Report

for

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE

Comprehensive Visit
April 3 – 6, 2001
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CHAPTER ONE

Overview

The Irvine campus of the University of California was established in 1960 and opened in 1965. Today it serves over 20,000 students: approximately 16,000 undergraduates, 3,000 graduates and 1,000 students in the Health Sciences. It awards about 4,200 degrees a year, is a member of the prestigious American Association of Universities and garners close to $200,000,000 in extramural funding, with total revenues approaching $900,000,000. It employs some 8,900 persons on an extraordinary campus of 1,500 acres.

UCI has been fully accredited since its beginnings, with the two most recent comprehensive visits in 1980 and 1991.

The 2001 visit cannot be described as comprehensive. It was designed, and accordingly conducted, under an agreement with WASC that had the institution select three or four fairly narrow topics for self-study and the visiting team review those topics in depth, with much briefer attention to the nine standards. The assumption, which the visiting team found no reason to question, was that an institution like UC Irvine would be able to produce ample evidence of its strengths with regard to the minimum standards and would therefore be better served with an opportunity to focus on topics of particular interest to itself.

The time when the topics were identified, however, was 1999. The visit was postponed from its original date of spring 2000, and in consequence the visit took place some two years after the topics were selected. Much happened in California and at UC
Irvine in those two years, with the result that the topics, by 2001, were perhaps not the most pressing.

After some discussion, three topics were agreed to between UCI and WASC: Assessment of Undergraduate Education, Improving Communication Skills, and Undergraduate Research Opportunities at a Research I University. These areas are important, but it is also evident that by far the largest challenge facing the campus is its projected growth by 10,000-11,000 students over the next ten years. Fortunately, the campus decided to add another chapter to its self-study, “Challenges Facing UCI,” where that challenge of growth and its management could be recognized.

Nonetheless, although the self-study and the visiting team’s review did address the over-riding issue of growth, the team finds it important to note that its review has not been comprehensive. Although the team was provided materials for an abbreviated review of the nine standards, neither the self-study nor the structure of the team allowed for any significant attention to such major parts of UCI as its health sciences. While these boundaries were fully intentional and fully agreed to by all parties, the team takes note of them—without wishing to imply that a traditional input-oriented nine-standards review would have been better. It seems that an answer to the challenge of making regional accreditation exercises useful for mature, top-quality institutions has yet to be found.

In addition to the vast difference in scope between UCI’s activities and the re-accreditation self-study, there is a great disparity between the quality of those activities and the quality of UCI’s self-study. While different observers may criticize some aspect or another of UCI, few would dispute its standing as an excellent example of an
American research university. UCI’s self-study, in contrast, cannot lay claim to any sort of excellence.

In the later sections of this report readers will find further discussion of the inadequacies of the self-study. Their general effect was to cause the visitors to remark repeatedly during the visit on the superiority of the institution’s performance in regard to the various subjects of the self-study to what the study had led them to expect. The self-study did not do UCI proud, and UCI has much to be proud of.

The team’s dissatisfaction in considerable part had to do with a tendency towards description rather than analysis. In 1991 the visiting team reported to WASC as follows:

This is a data-rich place with very uneven use of what is available to inform decisions. We noted throughout our visit an ambivalence towards objective information critically used. The self-study contained little that was analytical.

The Executive Director of WASC commented in his letter to the Chancellor:

While the team expected the self-study to be different from most because of the special arrangements approved for this visit, any self-study document should be more analytical than descriptive. UCI’s self-study documents for the last two visits have been largely descriptive.

Make that three. The 2001 self-study makes plenty of assertions, but provides little analysis to support its somewhat perfunctory conclusions. The final chapter is called “Conclusion,” but it is really a summary, concluding only in the sense that it constitutes the end of the document. Yet it could hardly do otherwise, there being no thread of argument or analysis from which conclusions might be drawn.

When the self-study document’s failure to make clear its own purposes became evident during the preliminary visit (discussed below), the Associate Executive Vice Chancellor wrote a supplementary letter (28 March 2001) to the visiting team. That letter
became central to the team’s better understanding of how the self-study process had been intended and managed, and its usefulness was supplemented by the interviews conducted during the visit. The self-study remains, however, the outcome of a project that appears to have lacked serious and attentive direction.

**Conduct of the Visit**

The visiting team originally was composed of ten people. At the request of UCI, two more were added, but when the time for the visit arrived one member was ill, leaving a final team of eleven. The team divided itself into four groups, one for each of the three designated themes and one for the chapter on challenges.

In preparation for the visit, members of the team were sent copies of the self-study report, “Planning for the New Millennium,” and given access to a web site created for the accreditation process, which permitted ready electronic access to much supplementary material. In late January, the team chair, the WASC Associate Director and the leaders of the four groups spent a day and a half at the UCI campus meeting with senior administrators as well as members of the re-accreditation steering committee. This preliminary visit enabled the group leaders to form some initial impressions, to determine what further materials they would need and to organize their requests for meetings during the full visit in April. At that time the group leaders and the chair also ensured that at least one member of the team was assigned to review each of the nine WASC standards. The additional materials were then sent to the various groups as requested and the schedule for the visit on April 3-6 arranged.
During the April visit the team's meetings ranged from the full team to a single member. The group as a whole met with the Executive Vice Chancellor, the Associate Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Planning, five members of the Academic Senate Cabinet, twelve or so members of the Academic Planning Group / Council on Planning and Budget, and eight deans. All told, there were 17 hours of scheduled interviews with approximately 120 faculty, staff and students, and a general reception that added a few to the count of individuals who talked with one or more members of the team. Groups then pooled information and the group leaders took on the task of primary authors for their chapters. The entire self-study, however, was reviewed by all members of the team and the conclusions of this report represent discussions among all members of the team.

**UCI Response to the 1991 Report**

The UCI response to the 1991 re-accreditation report addresses each of that report's major recommendations.

**Recommendation 1 – Planning, Goals, and Resources**

The essence of this recommendation was that whereas UCI's policies and practices in many areas had served it well in its early years, they might be inadequate for the "budget realities of the future," and a "genuinely strategic vision" was urged. UCI's response is curiously twofold.

On the one hand, UCI responded in 2001 that whereas the visitors' forecast of a future constrained by budget had proved true, UCI in fact had "weathered the storm"
better than the reviewers feared . . . in part because of the same decentralized, local planning by units that had caused the reviewers concern.” On the other hand, recently UCI has recognized a need to plan more centrally and more systematically, as evidenced in matters ranging from the titling of the self-study to the creation of two new associate vice chancellor positions dedicated to planning. Joining the Academic Planning Group with the Senate’s Council on Planning and Budget was another step.

With the anticipated growth of UCI, planning may be the most important thing the campus does. Yet the growth may occur so rapidly that time for planning will be difficult to find. It is not clear that the interdependence of the highly complex system that constitutes the university is appreciated in the planning process, which appears to be characterized by multiple, pervasive and frequent conversations that may yet fail to connect sufficiently with each other.

*Recommendation 1a: UCI should continue to improve its capacity to plan with scope and articulation appropriate to the magnitude of the growth it anticipates.*

It is also the case that some of the planning required is not entirely in UCI’s control. The increase in the number of students will require multiple new facilities. UCI by itself cannot ensure that those two elements – student body and facilities – are synchronized, because although the campuses may plan, the University of California system decides and the State of California funds.

*Recommendation 2 – Undergraduate Education*
UCI has done much in the intervening decade to address the specific problems in undergraduate education cited in the 1991 report, including such matters as course availability and the growth of its campus-wide honors program. The 2001 self-study also addresses the challenge in the 1991 report to define “greatness” in undergraduate education. That challenge arose because the 1991 team was confronted with the assertion that UCI knew what greatness was and had it, even though it could not define it. In 2001 the response not only selects some hallmarks of excellence but identifies UCI’s relationship to greatness more modestly, as an aspiration rather than an accomplishment. In both regards, the response is valuable, although members of the team who asked specifically about greatness during interviews did not receive answers consistent with each other or with the self-study.

Recommendation 3 – Diversity

The campus claims national prominence in regard to the diversity of its students, and the claim is valid so long as one understands “diversity” literally and not as a term meant to indicate the presence of historically under-represented minorities. This issue is addressed again later in this report. That aside, the response appears judicious and indicates some progress and considerable effort.

Recommendation 4 – Information, Assessment and Review

Recommendation 4 in 1991 doubled back upon Recommendation 1, a feature that the response in 2001 noted. The visitors asked that UCI’s “considerable but
scattered institutional data and procedures for appraising institutional effectiveness” be integrated “more usefully into planning and operations.”

UCI’s response is one of dogged allegiance to its principle of decentralization. The response also blends the issues of planning and of data collection, whereas it may be useful to distinguish them. It is arguable, for example, that in a large and diverse institution planning can best proceed with local initiative under an over-arching framework. A thoroughly decentralized collection of information, in contrast, may produce sufficient inconsistency, redundancy and crossings of purpose to offset any advantage. These issues will be addressed again later in this report in the chapter on Assessment of Undergraduate Education.

Recommendation 5 – Self-Study

This recommendation is quoted and addressed above with regard to the descriptive nature of the self-study. Despite the UCI response, the team found the 2001 self-study also more descriptive than analytic.

Review of the Nine Standards

The team reviewed briefly the materials available with regard to each of the nine standards. The team noted no concerns with the following standards: (1) Institutional Integrity; (3) Governance and Administration; (4) Educational Programs; (6)
Library, Computing, and Other Information and Learning Resources; (7) Student Services and the Co-Curricular Learning Environment; and (8) Physical Resources. The team noted minor concerns in relation to standards (2), (5) and (9).

Standard 2: Institutional Purposes, Planning and Effectiveness

Section 2A, Clarity of Purpose: The team asked central administrators, deans and faculty for a statement of mission and purposes for UCI. Despite the statement from several that the mission could be found in the catalog, the team was unable to find it there. One member of the team was given a mission statement, but it was for the University of California—not UCI. UCI has not defined the “constituencies it needs to serve” nor “the parameters under which educational programs can be offered and resources allocated” (WASC Handbook of Accreditation, 1988).

Both planning and assessment are topics of the self-study and are addressed at length in the chapters that follow.

Standard 5: Faculty and Staff

The team noted concern among staff for unevenness in different units’ work environment, ranging from amenities such as coffee to training or development programs and career paths. There is complaint about communications ranging from difficulty in finding out what the multitudinous policies are that staff must follow to an unsatisfied desire for guidance as to mission and vision. For professional staff, the HR function of the campus seems underdeveloped.
Standard 9: Financial Resources

Auditors' comments to management suggest that UCI pursue a rigorous plan for correcting practices out of line with standard accounting practices.
Chapter 2

Assessment

The team conducted an examination of student outcomes assessment at UCI in the spirit of WASC Standard Two, which calls for clarity of purposes, institutional planning grounded in institutional purposes, and evaluations designed to reveal how well the institution’s purposes are served by its planning. The team notes that extensive and intensive tactical planning is a part of the ethos of the administrative operations at UCI. No action is undertaken lightly, and tactical planning activities are informed by regularly collected data contained in the Systemwide Policy and Data Portfolio. Moreover, there is a strong tradition of thoughtful committee work on the part of faculty, with each committee developing its own set of guiding principles. If one looks for them, such principles provide a useful context within which tactical planning and other activities take place. It is the team’s observation, however, that mission statements or statements of purposes are not to be found in the culture of the institution at levels where students, their parents, staff, faculty, or community constituents might expect to find them. For example, the institution’s mission statement cannot be found in the General Catalog. Similarly, systematic ongoing evaluation of components of the academic mission is missing in the culture of the institution.

The team learned from members of the Academic Planning Group (APG) and from staff representatives that they feel the need for a statement of institutional purposes or guiding principles to anchor a strategic plan for the campus. The APG has begun work
on a vision statement that may provide some of the context that will help guide a strategic planning and decision-making process. Other evidence of principles that guide the work of the campus was noted during the visit. One example is the Executive Vice Chancellor’s *Call for Proposals*, which suggests that guiding principles for new academic programs include internal intellectual and external social benefits, valuing diversity, and valuing undergraduate education. Another example is the preamble to the breadth requirement contained in the *General Catalog*, which refers to developing students’ historical consciousness, awareness of thinking different from their own, self-awareness, broad understanding of contemporary problems, and understanding of the relationships among and across disciplines – the components of “an intellectual community” (*Catalog, p. 56*).

The team’s interactions with faculty and staff while on campus confirm that systematic peer reviews are well integrated into the institutional culture. These reflective exercises include program review, academic personnel reviews, external accreditation reviews, and course evaluations. The presence of course evaluations and faculty review cycles (two years for junior faculty, three years for most faculty, and five years for the most advanced full professors), combined with the availability of the Instructional Resource Center for faculty development, are indications that ongoing means of maintaining excellence in undergraduate instruction are well established.

The team acknowledges that new students and enrolled students are placed, and their enrollment, academic progress, and graduation are tracked in a conscientious and reasonable manner. From time to time surveys of enrolled students, alumni, and even students making an early exit from UCI have been conducted.
The team also inquired whether co-curricular programs were assessed for effectiveness on the basis of outcomes. The team was advised that no such outcomes assessments were conducted.

The team was unable to find systematic and campus-wide use of assessing student learning "to assure institutional and program quality and effectiveness" (*WASC Resource Manual*, April 1992).

This is not to say that assessment of student learning does not exist. The Division of Undergraduate Education (DUE) Office of Research, Evaluation and Grants and the Office of Analytical Studies and Information Management (OASIM) have been asked to provide help, for example, with assessing new pedagogies, such as on-line courses and problem-based learning. These efforts, as relayed to the team, provide excellent examples of using the assessment cycle for maximum benefit. In this case the characteristic questions that guide evaluative research -- What is the goal? What is the expected outcome? Did it work? -- were used to inform the decision about the effectiveness of introducing web-based and problem-based learning into the collective teaching and learning portfolio. And in the Humanities Core faculty are beginning to look at student work in the aggregate to see where groups of students are having difficulty and thus where re-teaching or new instructional approaches may be needed.

Such examples seem not to be the mode in the institution, however. Several groups were asked: Is there a conversation about defining a constellation of generic learning expectations that define a UCI graduate, or a graduate in "X" major? The answer consistently found (above the department level) was "no." Two notable exceptions were identified. In physics, curriculum innovation and revision were initiated.
to meet the need for analytic problem solvers. These efforts were motivated by information from student focus groups, an alumni survey, and feedback to undergraduate advisors. This example is powerful in demonstrating how asking a series of useful questions (who are our students, what do students wish they had learned, where are they headed upon graduation, how could they be better prepared and what skills do employers want?) can provide evidence for planning and decision-making. For the faculty in physics involved in this assessment and curricular revision, there was a transformation to the culture of evidence described in the WASC standards on achieving institutional effectiveness through assessment. The second exception, found in the School of Engineering, provided the team another encouraging indication that the awareness of how to use program assessment lives on the campus. In most instances, however, the team found a tendency to interpret assessment as either faculty performance or student performance rather than program performance, a perspective reinforced by the statement on student learning in Section VII of the UC Systemwide Policy & Data Portfolio.

The university’s self-study document asserts that assessment occurs at all of the critical junctures – teaching, courses, majors, minors – and most importantly that “assessment of student learning takes place in every classroom and with each capstone experience.” Nonetheless, the report itself goes on to conclude that assessment could be more systematic and coordinated, and recommends that the university: 1. Consider forming a campus-wide task force or committee to continue the discussion regarding assessment of undergraduate education; 2. Consider conducting regular, periodic surveys of entering, continuing and graduating students; and 3. Consider disseminating results of effective practices more widely. The team cannot agree with the assertions about
assessment of student learning contained in the self-study, and supports further institutional efforts as described in more detail in the following section.

**Recommendation 2a:** A campus-wide task force on assessment of undergraduate education should be formed. Furthermore, the team suggests that the task force be widely representative of the total undergraduate student experience (DUE, Student Affairs, schools) and also include technical support offices such as OASIM, and the Office of Research, Evaluation & Grants.

It should be noted that launching this effort will intensify the need for creating a central source of campus-based research information and assistance that is much more systematic and coordinated than what currently exists.

Existing structures and processes for campus-based institutional research planning should be continued and promoted. Special interest groups such as alumni relations, career services, institutional diversity, and others might also be included in those conversations.

The team suggests further that critical components of the student outcomes assessment paradigm are in place, providing many rich opportunities for meaningful and useful assessment to occur. Expected outcomes such as analytical skills, cultural competence, and problem solving are found in program review documents, often stated as goals, objectives, or statements of purpose. The technique of "a second look" (analysis of group performance independent of assigning individual grades for student performance) can easily be used to determine whether such learning goals are achieved.
Examples of existing opportunities include performances, capstone work, research papers and presentations, and honors theses.

**Recommendation 2b:** UCI should conduct regular, periodic surveys of entering, continuing and graduating students as a basis for assessment.

The team recommends that an assessment task force coordinate the systematic and regular administration of surveys. This coordination is essential to insure that response rates are adequate and that respondents are not asked about similar issues multiple times. It is noted that a survey on campus climate for faculty and staff prepared by the diversity office is so long as to risk being ignored by the target population. Likely groups to survey include new, continuing and graduating students, alumni, and employers. Survey instruments can be collected from other universities and testing agencies (such as ACT and ETS) and decisions made about which survey instruments to use. The selection of survey instruments should include an awareness of their comprehensiveness in assessing the whole student, capturing academic and co-curricular experiences, and reflecting the diversity of the student body. Using a set of instruments over time at regular intervals will enable the university to examine changes over time. Periodic assessments of the campus climate should be conducted in order to provide information about the experiences of different groups of students. UCI is a very diverse campus and is likely to become more so in the future. That the team found so little consciousness about and sensitivity to the needs of multiple, diverse groups at UCI, indicates that this lack of awareness is a condition that needs correcting. Assessment is a way to raise awareness and improve this
shortcoming. Data on the achievements of graduating students on the graduate and professional examinations and placement can also be gathered.

In addition to coordinating the administration of surveys, the assessment taskforce should work to insure that data are shared so that the information gathered can serve multiple purposes and constituencies. Data sets need to be large enough to permit analyses that will reveal differences between groups of students. Finally, the assessment taskforce should be responsible for guiding and educating users in the interpretation of evidence gathered in the assessment process.

**Recommendation 2c:** UCI should disseminate results widely and give special recognition to best practices of assessment.

To encourage the growth of the ongoing conversations about assessment occurring at the instructional level and to keep those at the grass roots level from having to re-invent assessment techniques, the university should establish a method for widely disseminating results of assessment efforts. The dissemination of student teaching evaluations may serve as a model for how information about the university, colleges or schools can be made accessible on the web with comparative data provided to departments, programs and student services. Whenever possible, assessment results should provide direct feedback to participating students, alumni, or other groups surveyed. Assessment results that can be linked to changes in curriculum, pedagogy, or student services can serve as the basis for faculty development programs and activities. Assessments that are tied to the allocation of resources (teaching innovation grants,
establishment of new programs) can be linked into strategic planning and program reviews. Efforts to disseminate assessment results will be crucial to building a culture of evidence where there is a sensitivity and commitment to assessment issues.

_Recommendation 2d: UCI should incorporate assessment into academic program review._

As indicated previously, UCI values the peer review process and, commendably, uses it to assess the quality of breadth requirements as well as academic departments and schools. In keeping with the traditional practices of many universities, UCI has tended to place most emphasis in these reviews on inputs, or resources, i.e., how many students are served and how well prepared are they; and how well prepared, experienced, and productive are the faculty?

With some simple additions to the self-study guidelines and the instructions for reviewers, the respected process of peer review can become a powerful vehicle for turning the attention of faculty and administrators to the evaluative process of assessing student learning outcomes. The guidelines for self-study might ask, simply, what knowledge and skills should every major master by the time of graduation, i.e., what should every student know and be able to do? And what evidence can you cite that students have mastered this knowledge and these skills? Data from surveys, interviews, and focus groups conducted with enrolled students, alumni, and/or field experience supervisors could supplement direct measures of student learning.

Then reviewers might be asked to review the data from surveys and the like, as well as samples of student work (e.g., graded research projects, honors theses, capstone
projects) and to render judgments in their concluding reports about the quality of student achievements. In the tradition of British external examiners, the peer reviewers might also ask some questions of students in interview settings that would yield additional information about student mastery of faculty-identified outcomes.
Chapter 3

Undergraduate Research

The WASC team members charged with primary responsibility for investigation of the theme entitled Undergraduate Research at UCI consulted a range of materials and resources provided by UCI. In addition to reading the appropriate chapter in the Self Study, team members reviewed the supplementary materials provided including: volume II of the UCI Undergraduate Research Journal, the program for the Seventh Annual UCI Undergraduate Research Symposium held May 13, 2000, the Humanities Core Course materials, and a compendium prepared by UCI of the solicitations and other materials used in the selection of students for the multiple organized undergraduate research opportunities.

During the visit, team members met with a wide range of faculty and students involved in one or another aspect of undergraduate research. These people included the Dean for Undergraduate Studies and program directors of the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP), the Campus Honors Program and departmental honors programs in eight departments (Economics, Chemistry, Biology, Computer Science, International Programs, Sociology, Political Science and Physics). Team members also met with students in each of these program formats from a range of departments, including Physics, Political Science, English, Humanities, Mechanical Engineering, Social Science, Biology, Psychology and Social Behavior, and Social Ecology. During
the campus visit, the sub-team also saw posters used during the UC Day for Undergraduate Research held in Sacramento in March 2001.

The self-study report provides an excellent descriptive account of the range of undergraduate research opportunities available at UCI. These include those offered under the aegis of the Campus Honors Program, departmental (and divisional) honors programs, and the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program. In addition the report describes many other programs and structures within which research related opportunities are provided. It also details the existence of some majors (e.g. physics, social ecology) for which the completion of a substantial research project is a graduation requirement for all students. There is evidence at all levels of UCI of a commitment to expanding the number of undergraduate students who participate in research opportunities.

Despite the useful descriptive information provided, the Self-Study chapter on Undergraduate Research was somewhat difficult to read. There seemed to be some confusion between the working definition of research in the context of the undergraduate experience and the pedagogical technique of problem-based learning. It was not immediately clear whether or not the authors understood the differences or whether they made any distinctions between the two concepts. However, during the January 2001 pre-visit to campus, the group leader met with a subgroup of faculty who had had major input into this chapter. As a result of this meeting, other written materials were provided that helped alleviate this confusion.

Conversations with both faculty and students supported the conclusion that opportunities for undergraduate research at UCI are both varied and valued by all involved. Those students who have participated in some aspect of these programs are
excited by the experience and see it as beneficial to their futures. One student indicated he felt like a “peer among the post docs and grad students.” Another said it was “exciting and had opened doors to future opportunities” for her career.

Although there is ample evidence of student participation in and satisfaction with undergraduate research opportunities, there is less evidence regarding the reasons for non-participation in these opportunities. When asked why some of their peers did not engage in research projects, students had several responses. They said that some students believe research is primarily for undergraduate science majors and that it takes a degree of initiative that may be hard for some undergraduates. One student indicated that for some, it is daunting to approach a faculty member, while other students indicated they have found the atmosphere at UCI open and that most faculty are pleased to talk with students who evidence interest in areas in common with the faculty. Students interviewed indicated they found the undergraduate research opportunities well advertised on campus and the offices willing to work with them in applying for various research experiences.

Although the sub-team substantiated the high overall degree of effectiveness of UCI efforts in undergraduate research, some issues emerged for which additional consideration is needed.

1) There seems to be a wide continuum of definitions related to what constitutes research, ranging from problem-based learning experiences to pure laboratory experimentation. In addition, the term “research” has clearly been used in an overly general manner, subsuming such different activities as laboratory
investigation, presentations, exhibitions, or performances in the arts, and the writing of extensive papers. It would be preferable if these activities could be broken down and described in terms that would be more appropriate (and perhaps acceptable) to the different areas and cultures of a broad and diverse campus.

2) Related to the first issue, the second concern relates to data collection and tracking of students involved in the Honors Programs. Because many of the opportunities occur through departmental honors programs or other departmental research options, it seems difficult for UCI to identify and count the students involved. By the end of the visit, it was clear that there is a significant overlap between the departmental honors program students and those involved in the Campus Honors Program. However, because it seemed difficult to determine exact numbers of students engaged in the various opportunities, it was not totally clear what percentage of students at UCI are engaging in undergraduate research. While there is sufficient evidence that the claim of greatness is certainly related to participation, the sub-team received conflicting reports as to how many undergraduates actually have this opportunity. Some data in the Self Study would lead a reader to believe that as few as 5% of students participate, while other estimates go as high as half of graduating students in any particular year. Clearly, more sophisticated criteria, generating more accurate data, are needed.

3) Although the aim of expanding widely the franchise of undergraduate research is admirable, there may be obstacles to accomplishing this in the foreseeable future.
The Campus Honors Program is intended by design to be an elite unit and not to be available to the totality of the undergraduate population at UCI. The same holds for departmental and divisional honors programs, which incorporate research components, but which have highly selective admission requirements. Although the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program is open to all undergraduate students, some administrators cite impediments to wider participation in the program. These include reluctance of some faculty to serve as advisors for research projects, a lack of structural incentives for faculty to serve as advisors, and the preference of many students to pursue external internships and employment instead of research opportunities. A concern was raised by some faculty and administrators that the work of supervising undergraduate research projects is unevenly distributed, with a small number of supportive faculty supervising a disproportionately large share of research projects.

4) A fourth issue that arose in the discussions of this theme related to interdisciplinary programs. Among the initiatives under consideration in the context of expectations for growth in the student body over the next decade, development of new interdisciplinary programs is seen as a potential area for expansion. However, the current, large interdisciplinary programs such as International Studies have a significant problem promoting their departmental honors program. This challenge arises out of the lack of faculty specifically assigned to this program and the growing number of qualified students who select International Studies as a major. As more interdisciplinary programs are
established, the desire of the campus to preserve the undergraduate research
opportunity will require focused consideration of how such opportunities will be
staffed so that these options are not lost to students seeking interdisciplinary
majors.

5) The final issue became a refrain in each meeting: the need for incentives for
faculty to continue to participate in working with undergraduates in a research
environment. We have been informed that these activities are required to be
reported in every merit and promotion review and are a formal part of the
materials submitted and reviewed as teaching activity. Nonetheless, we were also
told in interviews that the current incentives are primarily found in the personal
and professional satisfaction that faculty feel because of their involvement and
that for many departments, there is no other recognition. Contradictions like this
are not unknown in academe, and the apparent consequence of the belief that this
activity garners little recognition is that some faculty are increasingly reluctant to
include it in their workload, as the demands for teaching and research consume
their time. The variation among departments is significant and for some in the
sciences, incorporating undergraduates in their lab is more easily accomplished
than in the research efforts of the social sciences and humanities.

UCI should be commended for making available to its undergraduates diverse and
appropriate research opportunities. In particular we should cite the UROP and the
Campus Honors Program for developing imaginative and challenging options. UCI
should be commended as well for supporting a cadre of enthusiastic faculty who have
shouldered a heavy burden of promoting and mentoring undergraduate research across
the campus.

**Recommendation 3a:** UCI should develop more consistent and regular tracking
mechanisms for programs supporting undergraduate research. These should use
consistent definitions of research and collect the data on an annual basis.

**Recommendation 3b:** UCI administration will need to pay careful attention to the
impact that anticipated growth will have on the ability of programs and units to
promote and supervise undergraduate research at the current levels of quality and
engagement.

**Recommendation 3c:** UCI should consider a variety of ways to reward faculty who
are actively engaged in working with undergraduates on research and other original
projects and creative activities. As UCI responds to the growth imperative, it should
consider the particular needs of faculty participating in interdisciplinary programs as
they strive to work with students doing research and other original projects at the
undergraduate level.
Chapter 4

Improving Communication Skills at UCI

In the course of many centuries a few labor-saving devices have been introduced into the mental kitchen—alcohol, coffee, Benzedrine, etc.—but these are very crude, constantly breaking down, and liable to injure the cook. Literary composition in the twentieth century A.D. is pretty much what it was in the twentieth century B.C.: nearly everything has to be done by hand.¹

A candid response to the thoroughly engaging narrative in Chapter Four of the Self Study is that the story Chapter Four tells obscures the solid accomplishments of the UCI writing directors, coordinators and staff. Received and read without additional documents or supporting materials to establish a counter-narrative, the chapter seems to highlight problems that remain in need of strong remedy: a debate concerning standard English appears to prevent consensus on the goals and standards of the freshman writing sequences; the aims of the upper-level writing requirement remain unclear; continuing issues about coordination and support have been deferred to and subsumed into the decision to create a new tenure-track appointment for a writing coordinator.

That story, however, was rewritten by the site visit, which gave clear evidence of how program review at UCI has led to swift, cogent, and extensive redesign of the university’s undergraduate writing courses.

Supplementary written materials received by the team assigned to address Chapter Four helped to determine that serious and active attention was being paid to strengthening
the quality of all the writing courses filling requirements. The site visit, however, was essential for validating that active and continuous improvement of the writing curriculum occurs on campus, that there is a “culture of writing” in the Humanities Core Course, the W39A-C sequence, and perhaps in other places in the curriculum at the university. Not surprisingly, UCI’s over-arching, laudable goal of a curriculum-wide “culture of writing” remains a castle in the air. Still, as Thoreau says, there’s no reason not to build castles in the air—that’s where they should be. The task is to put foundations under them.

Enough of declamation.

UCI prides itself on being a premier or Research I institution. If one chats with a tenure-track faculty member or spends a quality 75 minutes, as the WASC team did, with the academic deans, one will hear a variation of this theme from each one of them. Yet, even in this time of unprecedented and funded growth for UCI, one can easily also hear heartfelt worry: “Faculty are worried that we’re going to become an undergraduate-dominated campus and lose our graduate . . . character,” says one campus representative. A senior administrator, given the chance to pick a self-study theme in 2001, says “It’s managing an enrollment upsurge while keeping the essential character of UCI as a Research I institution.” In a variation on the theme, a dean will lament that UCI has difficulty competing for top graduate students, because UCI’s graduate student support comes largely in the form of TAships rather than fellowships. Conversely, an Associate Dean worries that there are already not enough Humanities graduate students to staff both humanities discussion sections and writing sections. Clearly, given the projected huge increase in UCI undergraduate enrollment, there will not be enough TAs to staff the required writing courses.

So our assumption is that UCI graduate students will have to teach writing, just like graduate students at other public universities. Some faculty and deans are not happy with that requirement, even as they express a consensus view that they wish to make the ratio of graduate to undergraduate students 1:5.

When considering such attitudes, one is justified in having some concern for the overall writing program at UCI, despite the fact that the UCI General Catalogue proclaims “the University is committed to developing the writing skills of its students at all levels and in all areas.” This self-imposed commitment to writing, on a campus with approximately 60% non-native speakers of English as its undergraduate student body, dovetails with (then) Chancellor Laurel Wilkening’s 1994 Vision Statement, which says (in part): “Communications skills, both oral and written, should be integrated into every course and major on the campus.” That is, over time and beyond individual campus leaders, UCI, perhaps more strongly than other UC campuses, has made an unusually clear commitment in a particularly challenging area of university education.

Yet there remain those attitudinal reservations we’ve just reported. So a sub-group of the WASC team turned its attention to the UCI undergraduate writing program. It consists of (1) a first-year writing requirement (W39A,B,C), or an alternative Humanities Core Course, a year-long “double course” which also satisfies some General Education breadth requirements, (2) a relatively small ESL program (Humanities 20), and (3) an upper-division writing requirement, which students meet with W139 or with various departmental W courses.
Both the W39 sequence and the Humanities Core courses are superbly conceived, university-wide and Humanities-housed courses. Especially the Humanities Core Course, completely redesigned in response to UCI's (1997) external review of undergraduate writing, combines carefully sequenced writing instruction with a sophisticated (if traditional) reading list. The result, for students, is a sustained, supervised voyage of discovery into the realm of academic discourse: they are given the opportunity to learn both the form of academic writing, and that the form itself is investigation of significant, even existential human matters. UCI can congratulate itself on creating, within this sequence, an actual "culture of writing." Certainly we congratulate them. A striking aspect of this course sequence is that, by design, it self-destructs every three years. The course coordinator serves a three-year term. When s/he departs, her replacement redesigns the course content, while retaining its writing goals.

Similarly, the W39 sequence, which has the reputation among students of being the less rigorous choice for first-year writing, strikes us as equally well designed and delivered by a remarkably dedicated staff, led by a savvy director and course coordinators. The course coordinators and staff develop revised materials (A Student Guide to Writing at UCI) or new course reader (this year titled The Anteater Reader) each year. An entirely random selection of 5 students had all taken 39C and each referred gratefully if not entirely fondly to a course that had helped them develop transferable research skills.

The sub-team is confident that 39A-C delivers as promised, and suspects that the course sequence, as well as the Humanities Core Course, will soon feel pressure for
formalized, outcomes assessment, as that term is understood on most university campuses. We suggest that the staff get ready.

ESL Program

Chapter Four of the Self-study and a few of the individuals interviewed on campus seem concerned that ESL students present language problems that cannot be redressed by any of the writing programs at the university. However, discussion with the ESL coordinator and a number of writing instructors tended to indicate that the ESL programs and additional support services bring students to a standard of writing proficiency, without sacrificing realistic competency expectations. The university should be commended for having so ably addressed the very difficult problems non-native speakers demonstrate in their written communication.

Upper-Division Writing Requirement

The UCI upper-division writing requirement is somewhat more difficult to describe than the first-year writing requirement, simply because the university has, indeed, begun the process of discipline-based writing instruction. UCI is to be commended for establishing a discipline-centered upper-level writing requirement as a major step toward the goal of a “culture of writing” across the campus. Such a requirement tends to be the exception rather than the norm among Research I universities. Interviews with instructors and teaching assistants engaged in teaching the upper-level courses in six of the university’s programs (cognitive science, political science,
engineering, biology, sociology, computer science), confirm the self study’s assertion that program review had led to integrating writing more thoroughly and extensively into those courses approved to fulfill the requirement. The interviews also revealed strong commitment to engaging students in a thoughtful assessment of their writing process, improving their basic skills, and to helping them understand how to model their discourse to a specific purpose.

Perhaps quite understandably on a campus where English may not be the native or primary language of the students, greater attention seems to be directed toward making sure students master clear and technically correct general academic writing than to guiding them through writing within the more specialized models used by the different disciplines. Whether undergraduates should be instructed in specific disciplinary discourse models might be a question for further exploration if the goals for the advanced writing course are to be further defined.

Writing instructors expressed ready support for appointing an undergraduate writing coordinator, with special anticipation that the coordinator will make available workshops addressing common problems in the advanced writing courses, special instructional resources, and specific advice to help them address the range of writing problems their students reveal. The self-study indicates that many continuing issues with coordinating both the freshman and upper-level writing programs will receive specific address by the coordinator. So much is expected from a single appointment that some skepticism surfaced that one person could address so many needs and issues, but it was clear that there is a recognized need and an abiding respect for the position. Discussion with members of the search committee selecting the coordinator clarified that the
coordinator's role, skills, and needs are clearly understood, and especially that basic and
continuing support for the position, both in initial funding for activities and continued
funding, must become administrative habit, rather than one-time enticement.

So we come to the question of staffing the additional sections themselves. We've
already mentioned the administrative worry that there will be neither TAs nor resources
available for these sections. One imaginative suggestion to alleviate this worry proposes
that graduate students from other disciplines be trained as W39 TAs, and perhaps be
given academic credit for their training. An unintended consequence of such activity
would be the advancement of a true "culture of writing" at UCI, by spreading
responsibility for lower-division writing instruction across the campus. Another
consequence would be the training of future Ph.D.s from disciplines other than English
and Comparative Literature in good teaching-of-writing practice, a worthwhile job skill.
Additionally, a decision to staff W39 from outside the English and Comparative
Literature Ph.D. program would lessen the temptation to admit more Ph.D. candidates
without tenure-track job possibilities, simply to staff writing courses.

While we recommend that UCI follow the above suggestion, we are aware that
others may favor hiring part-time lecturers to staff additional W39 courses. We suggest
that UCI consider the more complex solution, a cross-disciplinary approach to staffing
writing courses.

**Recommendation 4a:** UCI should consider training writing TAs drawn from
disciplines other than English and Comparative Literature, for the combined
purposes of meeting the needs of an expanded undergraduate student body, of
practically fostering a "culture of writing," and of not contributing to the glut of

Ph.D.s in the emptying English Department hiring hall.
Chapter Five

Challenges Facing UCI

According to the information provided by the UCI campus, California's college-age population is expected to grow at an unprecedented rate in the next ten years, exceeding in numbers all prior projections. Under the California Master Plan for Higher Education, the UC system is expected to serve the top 12.5 percent of the state's high school graduating class each year. To address the projected growth of the college-age population, legislative leaders have asked all public colleges and universities to increase their enrollment. The University of California has agreed to accommodate 63,000 additional students within the next ten years and each UC campus has upped their enrollment targets. The Irvine campus plans to increase its enrollment from 16,800 students to 27,600, growing by 1,000 to 1,200 students per year for the next ten years.¹

The challenges facing UCI are due primarily to the projected enrollment growth. While we do not feel that the self-study documented the issues well, it is clear by the concerns expressed during our visit that the campus is aware that the future of UCI will be determined by how these challenges are handled. The academic planning groups, deans, and key administrators appear to see the challenges as opportunities for adding new academic disciplines such as law, pharmacy, design, and public health, as well as an

¹ Numbers we have received for anticipated growth are not consistent in their baselines. The chart on page 134 of the self-study begins from a 2000-01 baseline of 15,700 and shows 16,800 for 2001-02. These numbers appear to be taken from the UC "Suggested Campus Enrollment Targets / General campus budgeted FTE" that appears at www.ucop.edu and is accessible through the UCI accreditation web site. FTE enrollment for Fall 2000, on the other hand, was 19,602, excluding the Health Sciences (www.oas.uci.edu/scs/2000-01fall/tot.htm). The latter numbers are consistent with those cited on page 1 of this report and those cited in round figures in the letter to the visiting team from the Associate Executive Vice Chancellor (28 March 2001). These differences, however, are not significant to the point we are making in this chapter. By either measure, the anticipated growth is extraordinary.
opportunity to expand existing or related graduate programs. Unfortunately, the Academic Planning Group seems less concerned about undergraduate students, student life support services or campus infrastructure needs. However, from meetings with representatives from the student affairs and various enrollment management offices it was evident that they are aware of the demands and expectations the increased student enrollment will bring and are aggressively seeking ways to address those needs. Nonetheless, we do have concerns that the support and level of commitment to undergraduate students may decline as enrollment increases and student demands change and grow.

Enrollment Management

UCI expects to accommodate most of the projected growth through the recruitment and enrollment of undergraduate students. Additional growth will be accommodated through an increase in the number of graduate and professional students, an increase in the number of students completing summer instruction, and an increase in the number of students who attend off-campus programs in the U.S. and other countries.

UCI has established strong planning processes to address outreach, recruitment, and enrollment issues related to undergraduates. The campus has a set of early outreach programs that can serve as a national model. The campus should be commended for the breadth and scope of these programs as well as for the innovative approaches found in them. The visiting team notes that these outreach programs will assist the campus to meet its enrollment goals by attracting a diverse pool of excellent applicants for admission. UCI has a comprehensive set of activities to recruit applicants of the highest quality. The
campus is in direct contact with many California residents in order to create a good applicant pool. In turn the campus admits students in a timely way and ensures that the students are well informed during the time they are deciding whether to accept the offer of admission.

At the undergraduate level, the campus has plans to meet enrollment targets and maintain progress toward meeting the growth goals. The same solid planning and action are evident for admission at the freshman and transfer level. The team wishes to make special mention of the extra efforts to increase the diversity of the undergraduate students. UCI is meeting its goals for diversity as witnessed by a 48% increase in the admission of underrepresented minority students for the Fall 2001 class.

A related enrollment management issue is the accommodation of students within their selected majors. The current campus efforts to manage major assignment and selection will yield results for the near future. The team suggests that the campus make this issue one of major concern for the revived Enrollment Management Council. The team further suggests that the Academic Planning Group make accommodation of majors one of its criteria for short-term and long-term academic funding. We make this suggestion in light of the statement in the self-study that acknowledges major difficulty in creating new majors.

**Recommendation 5a:** UCI should ensure that student affairs concerns are fully addressed by the Academic Planning Group.
We raise this issue because many of the “21st Century” majors desired by the new students will cross academic boundaries. These new majors will need special attention to be ready for the incoming classes. New majors designed to meet the needs of a diverse student body should follow the example of the East Asian program in its design and implementation. The team further suggests that UCI consider adding student affairs to the deliberations of the Academic Planning Group. We make this suggestion in order to more effectively plan for the co-curriculum along with the curriculum planning. For example, a major or program may benefit from a unifying residential experience for the students. The campus can consider a language program and a language theme house as associated planning items.

The campus has a well-run housing operation. Faculty, staff and students benefit greatly from various housing options available on or near the campus. UCI is building housing for undergraduates and graduates, and has plans for additional housing for students and faculty. The campus is developing plans for increasing the number of students enrolling in education abroad and summer session in order to accommodate growth.

The team is concerned about the planning process in one area. Planning is proceeding without the benefit of analytical studies that provide information in the areas of campus climate and student satisfaction. The last student satisfaction survey available to the committee was completed in 1997. The committee found no surveys on campus climate. An analysis of the campus climate is important as the campus seeks to serve student needs. The team recommends the development of a campus climate survey for
faculty and staff. The results of this survey will assist the campus to better meet the needs of faculty and staff, and detail the issues faced by minority faculty and staff.

UCI has an impressive set of programs and activities to meet the needs of undergraduates related to their interests in pursuing graduate and professional education. The campus has several programs for minority students that have delivered impressive results. Many minority graduates from UCI go to other institutions to complete their graduate and professional degrees.

The team is concerned that the same level of activity is not found in attempts to enroll minority students to the graduate and professional schools on the UCI campus. The campus does not have a plan or goals or timetables to increase the number of minority graduate students.

Recommendation 5b: UCI should develop a plan for increasing the number of minority students at the graduate level. That plan should include goals by school and a set of activities or programs to achieve those goals.

At the same time, the team commends the campus for including diversity goals in the criteria for the expansion of the undergraduate academic programs. As the campus grows, it will be important to consider seriously an academic culture that supports, encourages, and benefits from diversity. The academic planning groups rarely mentioned concern about the lack of student diversity at the graduate level and plans for addressing the diversity problem at the graduate level were not clear. One of the UCI representatives indicated that the minority students themselves caused the problem by participating in
programs and activities that segregated them into small ethnic groups. The team was also surprised by comments from a planning group member that the campus did not expect any significant changes in the campus student mix or in the needs of students in the next ten years. This appears to be inconsistent with the student population growth projected by the state and the changes reported in the K-12 population currently enrolled in Los Angeles and Orange counties, which are listed as UCI feeder areas. During the visit, UCI was acknowledged in the newspaper for achieving a 42.5% increase in the numbers of underrepresented minority freshman students.

The sub-group reviewing challenges selected two additional areas of student service for review. These areas were not addressed in the self-study and for that reason provided an alternate view into UCI's current and planned student services.

Transfer Students

Approximately 1,100 community college students transfer to UCI annually, and the numbers are expected to grow. The outreach programs, transfer admission and support services offered to community college students are the combined responsibilities of the UCI Registrar, the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education in Academic Affairs and the Office of Student Affairs. A website, with appropriate links, has been developed at UCI exclusively for transfer students that offers a host of useful information. There are two dorms set aside exclusively for transfer student housing, and plans are under way to create an upper-division honors society (TAU) for transfer students. Like most other universities accepting community college transfer students,
UCI offers a transfer orientation program to acquaint the transfer student with UCI and its various academic programs and support services.

A newly developed Transfer Services Counseling Program (highlighted on the web site) links potential transfer students to academic counselors in each of UCI’s nine schools. While students can transfer to UCI and later select a major, the normal situation is for such students to transfer into majors; thus, they must plan early and take the appropriate courses at their community colleges. The campus self-study suggests that UCI wishes to increase the number of transfer students it admits. Part of that increase will come as a result of the campus efforts at early identification of prospective students and faculty-to-faculty course articulation. Other transfer students may come as a result of new admissions programs proposed for the entire UC system. A portion of UCI’s growth in the next 10 years will come from an increasing number of qualified community college transfer students. Many of these students are older, have families and have more or less full-time employment. Some are single parents. UCI will have to be attentive to providing the support services needed to ensure their opportunity for academic success.

A meeting was held to discuss transfer students and the transfer process. There appear to be no real problems with the transfer process and the UCI transfer efforts are to be commended for the attentive fashion in which they have provided information and support services to community college transfer students. UCI will have to maintain vigilance in finding ever more creative ways to get information to transfer students before they transfer. Creating useful information and getting it to the users are two totally separate issues, the latter of which typically is the harder to accomplish.
Recommendation 5c: The offices associated with transfer students should consider adding various materials to their web site to guide the transfer student.

We suggest the following:

- the transfer scholarship application form(s) and guidelines for submission
- a brochure akin to “choosing a major” which presents UCI’s majors not as catalog information but as career choices.
- A brochure called something like “passport to transfer” that is small, pocket-sized and practical, a guide to major options and the transfer process itself at UCI. Such practical guides tend to be read and used and to create an attitude that universities care about transfer students.
Intercollegiate Athletics

Student-athletes are students and, as such, must be integrated into UCI through the admissions, counseling and curricula associated with all undergraduate students. They must meet the same graduation requirements as all students, including breadth requirements. However, their progress toward graduation is gauged not only by UCI, but also by the NCAA and its standards for progress toward graduation. Unlike other parts of UCI, the athletic programs are under NCAA mandate to demonstrate university governance of athletics. Thus, how well athletes and athletic decisions are integrated into the university as a whole becomes important in accrediting UCI. The obligations of scholarship athletes for practice and competition schedules make them somewhat unique among undergraduates.

Like most Division I institutions (UCI competes in Division IAA), UCI has developed an Office of Student Life (OSL). Therein, student athletes are offered the national Champs Life Skills Program that prepares them for life after undergraduate studies and competitions, including job fairs and community service and internship opportunities. Three counselors are employed by OSL and are available to student athletes for academic and career counseling. OSL is only eight years old and has yet to fully develop its maximum potential. With over 450 athletes competing in 21 NCAA sports, there is room for expansion of OSL activities; however, funding is an issue. Without the economic generator of football, which funds most OSL activities at Division I universities, OSL will likely take a slower path to full maturity.
Integration with the academic faculty and university governance structure is crucial for Division I athletics programs to maintain academic performance and graduation as high priorities for student athletes. At UCI, the Athletic Director sits on the Chancellor’s Executive Committee and has ample opportunity to report on athletics programs and athlete progress, as well as on infrastructure development of athletic facilities and budget priorities. Both the Associate and Assistant Athletic Directors continue to be asked to serve on a host of university committees on which academic faculty also serve.

A key committee for athletic issues at most Division I universities is what most call an “Intercollegiate Athletics Committee.” UCI terms this group the Chancellor’s Advisory Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics (CACIA), and it is the key committee that links the academic part of UCI with its athletic counterpart. Interestingly, UCI faculty have apparently been somewhat reluctant to serve on the CACIA for reasons that remain unclear. Recent change in the Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR) has resulted in a more concerted campaign to educate UCI faculty to the important role of the CACIA, and increased faculty participation is expected. UCI recently underwent NCAA certification (which must be done every 10 years), and many faculty were heavily engaged in that process.

UCI would appear to have the interest and the infrastructure to integrate athletics and academics in the most desirable fashion. Of important note is that UCI, unlike many Division I universities, insists that student athletes receive their academic counseling from counselors based in the nine schools of UCI. The three athletic association counselors found in OSL are considered extras, but have a history of referring student
athletes to their appropriate academic advisors. This speaks well for how UCI is avoiding issues that plague other institutions – issues like athletic association counselors who advise more to ensure eligibility than to ensure graduation. UCI appears to take the student part of student-athlete quite seriously, and that speaks volumes for the integration of athletes into the general student body.

The team believes that the Associate Athletic Director associated with OSL and the monitoring of athlete academic progress should make a concerted effort to find time once per year to get on the Faculty Senate agenda and report on the state of athletics at UCI. The team also suggests that the Associate and Assistant Athletic Directors consider creating something like a student-to-student athlete forum. The idea is to permit the existing Student Athlete Advisory Group to select athletes from all sports to meet in a relaxed setting with general students who are not athletes. The idea is to break down stereotypes by allowing students to discuss issues with other students.

The team did not find any problems with athletics at UCI and, in fact, is quite complimentary of the caring environment that exists.
Chapter 6

Summary

Despite its criticisms of the self-study in the foregoing chapters, the visiting team found the University of California at Irvine a campus of remarkable accomplishments, with much to commend within the scope of its investigations. Our major recommendations are summarized as follows:

Recommendation 1: Planning

UCI should continue to improve its capacity to plan with scope and articulation appropriate to the magnitude of the growth it anticipates. It should ensure that student affairs concerns are fully addressed in that planning process.

Recommendation 2: Assessment

UCI should continue efforts to improve its assessment capacity. A campus-wide, widely representative task force on assessment of undergraduate education should be formed. UCI should conduct regular, periodic surveys of entering, continuing and graduating students as a basis for assessment. UCI should disseminate assessment results widely, give special recognition to best practices of assessment, and incorporate assessment into academic program review.

Recommendation 3: Undergraduate Research

UCI should develop more consistent and regular tracking mechanisms for programs supporting undergraduate research; anticipate the impact that expected growth will have on undergraduate research; and consider a variety of ways to
reward faculty who are actively engaged in working with undergraduates on research and other original projects and creative activities.

**Recommendation 4: Communication Skills**

UCI should consider training writing TAs drawn from disciplines other than English and Comparative Literature.

**Recommendation 5: Minority Students**

UCI should develop a plan for increasing the number of minority students at the graduate level.