

REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING TEAM
CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW
To California State University, Bakersfield

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Reaffirmation of Accreditation

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The evaluation team in conducting its review was able to evaluate the institution under the WASC Commission Standards and the Core Commitment for

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SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution and Visit

Institutional Context

California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB) opened in September 1970 as the 19th member of the 23-campus California State University system. The University is located on a 375-acre site in metropolitan Bakersfield, and its vision is to become the leading campus in the CSU system in terms of faculty and academic excellence and diversity, quality of the student experience, and community engagement.

CSUB is a comprehensive regional university with four academic schools: Business and Public Administration, Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences and Mathematics. The University currently has 36 baccalaureate degrees, 23 master's degrees, 19 certificate programs, and 12 credential programs. Some 7,800 undergraduate and graduate students attend CSUB at either the main campus in Bakersfield or the off-campus center in Antelope Valley.

Accreditation History

The University was initially accredited by WASC in 1970, and has been continuously accredited since then. Its accreditation was most recently reaffirmed in 2000. In addition, CSUB has received approval to offer a variety of bachelor's and master's programs at off-campus locations in Hanford, Lancaster, Porterville, and Santa Clarita. The University also offers three approved distance education programs, and one blended program.

Description of Visit

was provided in advance of the visit, the team also had access to a comprehensive set of written materials in the team room, as well as to additional materials requested by the team.

The visiting team was composed of seven members –five from universities within the WASC region and two from a university outside the WASC region. During the visit, the team met with the President, the Provost, other senior leaders, all of the academic deans, two groups of department chairs, members of the Academic Senate, several faculty committees, student leadership, and a variety of administrators and staff. One of the team members visited the Antelope Valley Center; another reviewed online courses. Reports of those reviews appear in the appendices.

The team would like to acknowledge the hospitality and candor of the people it met with during its visit. The Special Assistant to the Provost, who as Accreditation Liaison Officer coordinated the visit, addressed all of the team’s needs effectively and efficiently.

B. Alignment with the Proposal and Quality and Rigor of the Review and Report

As detailed in CSUB’s Institutional Proposal, the Capacity and Preparatory Review report was framed around two themes: 1) University Alignment: Achieving Educational Effectiveness; and 2) Campus Culture: Achieving Sustainable Excellence.

The original CPR report submitted to the team was missing several key sections, including a response to issues raised in the Commission Action Letter, a section on student success, and a concluding essay. However, when this was brought to the campus’ attention, a revised report containing the missing sections was sent to the team two weeks prior to the visit.

This revised report was complete and thorough and was organized around the two themes. In addition, it was clear that there was broad and meaningful campus engagement in preparation for the review. There was extensive involvement and contributions by administrators, faculty and staff, who attended community forums and served on five working groups organized around

the following themes: Faculty Excellence and Diversity; Academic Program Excellence and Diversity; Integrated Student Academic Support; Vibrant Student Life; Community Engagement; Staff Excellence and Diversity; and Campus Culture. Each of the groups had completed a report by the time of the CPR. The team compliments the work groups on the quality of their work.

The University also provided a comprehensive compendium of evidence for the CPR. It should be noted that while the themes were mapped to the WASC Standards, and the supporting documents were organized around the Standards, there was not an efficient way for the team to locate information or evidence about a particular initiative described under one of the themes, particularly in light of the volume of supporting documentation. Nevertheless, all necessary documents were available to the team.

C. Response to Previous Commission Issues

1. Sustaining Momentum

This issue is related to the University's aim to be a student learning centered institution. The Commission noted that "The idea of being a student learning centered institution needs further discussion and development" and that the "campus needs to be committed to a clear vision."

The institution has made clear progress on this issue. With the hiring of a new President in 2004 and a stable leadership team in place, CSUB has been working to refine and define its vision and mission and strategic direction. The first step was the formal adoption of the University's vision statement; the second was the development of five (5) strategic goals and three (3) objectives for each strategic goal; and the third was the development of a full strategic plan, following extensive campus-wide discussion of the strategic goals and objectives.

The mission statement emphasizes student learning and states that it is enhanced by scholarship, diversity, service, global awareness and life-long learning. The vision is long term,

focused on faculty and academic excellence and diversity, the quality of the student experience, and community engagement.

Additional discussion of this issue, particularly in terms of operationalizing the vision and alignment with budget processes, is addressed in Section IID of this report.

2. Organizing for Learning

The Commission noted that “While the University has areas of excellence and promise in its work on assessment, it also has areas that lag behind... Responsibilities for assessment need to be clearly defined, coordinated, and funded.” It also noted that “the utilization of that data in decision-making and in building program quality is at an early stage and needs to be developed further.”

The visiting team found that there has been considerable effort made in this area, as well as some notable progress. In terms of “areas that lag behind,” the School of Education was recently granted a four-year accreditation from the National Council of Accreditation for Teacher Education (NCATE) and a seven-year accreditation from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC). In addition, the MBA program and the undergraduate business program received full five-year accreditation from AACSB, and the Master’s in Public Administration received full six-year accreditation from NASPAA.

Considerable effort also has been made to clarify policies, roles, and responsibilities related to assessment, and develop infrastructure and resources to support assessment work. There is also work underway or in development related to program review and assessment of general education. It should be noted, however, that much of the work in this area was begun fairly recently and is not yet fully developed. A more in-depth discussion of the University’s progress in this area appears in Sections IIB and IID of this report.

3. Technology as a Means

The Commission noted that the University “has not been consistently clear...how these technology initiatives tie to the emerging mission and strategic vision of the campus or how they connect to the curriculum and student learning goals.”

As noted later in this report, over the past three years the institution has engaged in information technology infrastructure upgrades that will serve its students, faculty and staff well into the future. In addition, CSUB has made efforts in four specific areas – distance learning, classroom technology, support for use of technology in teaching, and Universal Design for Learning. The team observed that the institution has made considerable progress in terms of increasing the number of online, ITV, and hybrid courses, as well as in making technology available in the classroom. However, there is some concern about support for technology-mediated instruction. The CSU Funding Study of the mid-2000s has pointed out that the institution should have at least four instructional designers on staff to assist faculty in online course design, development and assessment. The institution currently has none.

4. Campus Diversity

The Commission Action Letter noted that “The University’s mission is clearly built upon a commitment to diversity.” The Commission also urged CSUB to “expand its efforts on diversity and assessment to ensure that the learning environment is supportive of all student populations.”

The University Strategic Planning process has strengthened the University’s commitment to diversity, with clearly defined goals and objectives that promote learning and engagement within a context of excellence and diversity. Three objectives in particular address this issue. Objective 1.3 states’ “Ensure that academic programs are excellent, offer diverse intellectual perspectives, and advance global awareness”; objective 2.4 states, “Create a vibrant campus life which engages our diverse student body”; and objective 5.1 states, “Promote a civil and collegial

campus environment that values diversity and respect for differing views.” The commitment to diversity is also reflected in the “Marks of a CSUB Student,” namely Unique Learning Characteristic 5.5 – Diversity and Cultural Understanding.

In addition, the University has made progress in diversifying its faculty. Over the past 10 years, the number of non-white faculty has increased by nine percentage points. The University also held a forum in 2009 on “Campus Climate, Civility & Collegiality,” and has made some progress on assessing students’ understanding of diversity. Additional discussion of assessment and faculty recruitment appears later in this report.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY UNDER THE STANDARDS

A. Standard 1

Campus planning and WASC preparation work have yielded mission and vision statements that are sharpening university identity. The mission statement emphasizes student learning and states that it is enhanced by scholarship, diversity, service, global awareness and life-long learning. The vision is long term, focused on faculty and academic excellence and diversity, the quality of the student experience, and community engagement (CFR 1.1).

The University engaged in a strategic planning process that resulted in five strategic goals, themes, research questions and learning outcomes described as “the marks of a CSUB student.” The institution is currently working to determine where learning related to the marks is located and to develop ways to use the marks of a CSUB student to guide departmental curricular planning for the major and general education. However, the team observed that there is still work to be done in assessing achievement of these University learning outcomes (CFR 1.2).

At the program level, academic program scans have been designed to assess the current state of academic programs. This is intended to provide data that supports an institutional approach to

assessing student learning and success; however, at this point the scans do not include actual results of assessment of student learning. In addition, the development of an assessment plan for general education is in the very early stages (CFR 1.2).

In order to be prepared for the Educational Effectiveness review, CSUB needs to develop clear indicators of student achievement at the university level, for general education, and at the program levels (CFR 1.2).

The leadership team is regarded as high performing, responsible and accountable to both the internal campus community and to the larger external community. The president has articulated a clear rationale for community engagement that is understood throughout the university and affirmed by alumni and community leaders. For example, he has participated in setting Vision 2020 for Kern County. Part of that discussion was the role of the university in the community and the community's need to invest in the university (CFR 1.3).

The president and provost's leadership style is collaborative, with identified goals and a transparent budget. The leadership team held town halls and appointed a broad base of

Department chairs are the group most burdened by expected and actual budget cuts as they try to communicate to their departmental colleagues about such issues as increased class size, loss of assigned time for program coordinators, and the need to seek external funding. Although chairs were appreciative of the opportunity to meet regularly with their fellow chairs, they also expressed a strong desire to use that forum to engage in problem-solving and training. The team suggests that CSUB consider appropriate training for department chairs, who play a key role in enabling faculty and academic excellence in a time of budget cuts.

CSUB has a strong commite play e4lato d

CSUB has a number of degree programs that are accredited by external agencies, including NCATE, CCTC, AACSB, NASPAA, CCNE, BRN, and CSWE. These external accreditations address the University's commitment to academic excellence. In addition, each of the external accreditation agencies requires the articulation and assessment of student learning outcomes, as well as demonstration that outcomes are achieved (CFRs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4).

The institution is attempting to improve the alignment between academic and student support program goals with CSUB vision, mission and institutional and student learning goals. To this end, the institution is building a culture of evidence by promoting the understanding and use of assessment across disciplines (CFR 2.3). The President and Provost began this process by engaging the University community in numerous forums and other settings in order to gain a sense of ownership of new assessment approaches. For example, the University's vision was developed in conversation with key college-wide constituents, a process that was facilitated by the president (CFR 2.4).

The institution has begun a university-wide assessment plan with the development of student learning outcomes known as the "Marks of a CSUB Student (CFR 2.3)." These learning outcomes support the CSUB mission and vision of the University. In addition, under the leadership of their department chairs, programs are revisiting their program goals and objectives to better align them with the University learning outcomes (CFR 2.3).

The institution has initiated a review process in the form of academic program scans which

Academic program scans are projected to be linked with program review efforts. Program Reviews were scheduled to start in October 2009, after a moratorium of approximately one year (CFR 2.7). The current Program Review schedule begins with degree programs that are externally accredited. Oversight for this work is provided by the newly developed Committee on Academic Requirements and Standards (CARS). This work will also be supported by the Assessment Fellows (AF) who will facilitate the development of a culture of assessment on campus. To this end, the AFs have developed assessment projects including rubrics for assessment and have worked closely with the development of the academic scans. The plan is for the AFs to host assessment workshops for faculty and other university constituents.

At this point, the focus of the institution's assessment project is at the program evaluation level for most areas where it has been implemented. The Program Review Committee and CARS both indicated that engaging all programs in the assessment project has been a challenge. They estimated departmental involvement at 33% -50%. Although many non-externally accredited programs have learning outcomes listed, most have not developed measures of those outcomes or assessments of the same (CFR 2.4.) An exception is the examination of some embedded questions in exams designed to evaluate some general education outcomes; however, the development of an assessment plan for general education is still in the initial stages (CFR 2.6). The Student Affairs Assessment Fellow has developed projects to develop and assess academic student learning outcomes, such as critical thinking. The goal of this project has been to interface the work of Student Affairs with Academic Affairs (CFR 2.4, 2.11).

The team concluded that the assessment approach being taken by the University is a new initiative that could provide a comprehensive curriculum map for the institution. If fully implemented and subsequently institutionalized, this project could delineate the alignment of

institution, program and course goals and objectives, and assessment procedures including student learning outcomes.

At this point, however, it is a work in progress. The departments are at various stages of implementation and levels of understanding of the process. Data remains to be collected on the assessment of student learning outcomes (CFR 2.6). Both CARS and the Program Review Committee indicated to the team that there are varied levels of buy in and that parts of the assessment project itself are still being thought out. Tools, templates and models are still needed. Greater interfacing and understanding of the new assessment groups, CARS, Assessment Fellows and the newly reconstituted General Education Committee would clarify this project and bring synergy to the efforts of those involved (CFR 2.4). The institution will require time to concretize the plan, implement a plan to actually assess student learning outcomes, use the resulting data to evaluate and provide feedback to the programs, and evaluate and provide feedback for the assessment activities (CFR 2.7). Even if the planning could be completed in one semester, a least one year of data collection would be essential to generating a report on student learning outcomes.

Support for Student Learning and Success

CSUB has goals and objectives related to the student experience and students success. Part of Goal Two of the University’s Strategic Plan is to “enhance the quality of the student experience.” There are six objectives associated with this goal:

- Develop and achieve student learning outcomes within academic programs and university-wide
- Develop and achieve university-wide student development outcomes
- Enhance student opportunities for active learning and participation within the university, regional, and global communities

- Create a vibrant campus life that engages our diverse student body
- Improve student retention and graduation rates
- Reduce existing achievement gaps in first-year retention, baccalaureate degree

Given high attrition rates, the team encourages CSUB to conduct additional analyses to identify reasons why students leave the institution, in order to enhance the institution's ability to develop appropriate interventions (CFR 2.10).

The institution has operationalized its approach to student success in terms of two objectives: 1) promoting student understanding of program requirements and increasing advising and 2) aligning student support services with the needs of students and academic programs. To address these objectives, the institution engaged in the Foundations of Excellence project, a national program that provides benchmarks for institutional self study of first year programming. The institution gave itself as 'C' grade in the overall standards and acknowledges the need to improve the first year experience. A First Year Experience program (FYE) has been developed over the past three years and currently offers a 2-unit seminar to first time freshman students only. This seminar is required for graduation. The requirement is an acknowledgement by the institution of the importance of this program. However, despite this required status, the course is taught solely by volunteers. The individuals who work with this program are keenly committed and admittedly teach the course out of dedication. However, this effort could be improved by sharing information about the Foundations of Excellence Project with the FYE and encouraging the interface of FYE programming with all programs that impact freshman students including orientation, developmental education, advising, and other support services (CFR 2.11, 2.12, 2.13).

improved advising. Students spoke favorably with team members about the positive impact of the SSRC (CFR 2.12).

However, advisement through the SSRC is only formally available for first and second year students. Students who enter the college as juniors are expected to be advised by faculty in the major. Some students report that this is a problem, because they may not know that they need to go to departmental faculty for advising. They state that resolving any resultant mistakes or problems is difficult because staffing has been reduced due to budget constraints. This would be an important area for review given the low rates of persistence and retention for transfer students (CFR 2.14). The team was told that a new program focusing on entering transfer students is attempting to address these issues.

The team observed that considerable efforts had been made to design Student Support Services to meet students' needs, including financial aid, registration, advising, career counseling, and the library and information services (CFR 2.13).

C. Standard 3

CSUB has a well maintained and attractive physical plant that not only provides capacity for its current enrollment, but in many cases for the enrollment target reflected in the campus master plan. This has come about via a well developed five year state and non-state funded capital planning process that is updated each year. Of particular note in recent years has been the completion of Science Building III funded by the State of California which provides new instructional resources in the area of science, mathematics and technology. In addition, the CSUB students have financed a new Recreation Center that opened in spring 2008. The Business Development Center (BDC), was funded entirely with private resources, providing new instructional facilities in addition to much needed space for special events and conferences.

There is evidence that the University maintains the basic administrative and academic functions necessary for a member institution of the California State University system. Various programmatic internal audits have revealed no material weakness in campus operations and, where opportunities for improvement were identified, the campus quickly responded with appropriate corrective actions (CFR 3.1). At the same time, the team found that as the campus experienced budget cuts mandated by the State system, first in the mid 1990s and then again in 2003 and 2004, efforts were undertaken to protect direct instruction with a larger proportion of the reductions being absorbed by the areas of academic support, student services and institutional support. This has resulted in a very lean administration and related support staff, and the team repeatedly observed instances where a single individual was being asked to perform the duties of two or even three positions. The team determined that this practice is not sustainable in the long run if not addressed through transformational or structural reform (CFR 3.1).

CSUB has a cadre of well qualified faculty. For many years, it enjoyed a student faculty ratio better than the CSU average and, while this measure of faculty adequacy has deteriorated somewhat due to the current budget crisis, the team found no evidence of a dramatic increase in the SFR or the ability of the CSUB student in obtaining classes needed for graduation. This fact is noteworthy considering the structural fiscal challenge that CSUB faces, resulting from the change in the CSU budget process from a formula-based approach to a model based on changes in enrollment. The base budget at the time of the change was locked in place and consequently disadvantaged CSUB with a lower funding per full-time equivalent student (FTES) than other campuses of similar size. Because CSUB has not enjoyed significant growth, substantial new resources to the campus have not been plentiful (CFR 3.2). As the campus prepares to implement budget reductions mandated for the 2010-2011, it is unclear whether the institution will be able to continue to shelter the instructional program given the administrative capacity

issues raised above as the plan to reduce enrollment by 6% together with the elimination of employee furloughs that have brought one-time budget relief in the current fiscal year (CFR 3.2).

CSU Bakersfield has made a concerted effort to improve the diversity of the faculty and staff. CSUB is firmly committed to this goal, although there appears to be disagreement among members of the campus community as to whether its efforts have been successful in faculty diversity. In comparison with federal national standards, the institution lags materially only in the percentage of women in instructional, departmental chair and executive or director roles. In comparison with the campus' student population, however, the percentage of nonwhite faculty does not match the student diversity statistics. Although the University does not have funding to hire additional faculty in most cases, those faculty members involved in the recruiting and hiring process indicated their desire to have training to prepare themselves for this service (CFR 3.2, 3.4). The team encourages the campus to increase its efforts and renew its energy in this regard (CFR 3.2).

With respect to faculty promotion and tenure review, there are no university-wide standards, although all departments within each school have written criteria. There appears to be variability across departments and schools in the rigor of the criteria, however, and a new initiative is planned to develop university-wide standards that are aligned with University mission and vision.!!The University employs a rigorous pre-tenure review process addressing teaching, research and service to assist new faculty in their formative years. (CFR 3.3)!

CSUB provides ongoing professional development through the University's Faculty Teaching and Learning Center (FTLC), which offers workshops on a variety of teaching-related issues. The Center coordinates faculty support groups, and offers small grants to support innovative teaching and conference attendance. A three-day new faculty orientation program is also offered through the FTLC, as are workshops on tenure and promotion file preparation. Peer

observation of teaching, including a confidential formative evaluation, is coordinated through the FTLC (CFR 3.4).

The Center is funded primarily from the Provost's office and has remained stable over the past several years. The FTLC is in need of staff to assist faculty with the pedagogy involved in online learning, course design and instructional technology (CFR 3.4). The Center, under new leadership, appears to be an important resource for faculty development in support of the CSUB goals which include developing excellent and diverse faculty. However, faculty described situations where the University does not provide funding for travel to conferences to present papers, even within the state. Deans have control of most faculty development funds, and the dispersal of development funds appears to be inconsistent across the schools (CFR 3.4).

In reviewing the finances of CSUB, the team found that the campus has a long history of financial stability. There has never been a period in which the University has overspent its budget, and its balance sheet suggests that the institution has the assets necessary to ensure long term viability. Independent audits of the University's financial statements always resulted in an unqualified opinion as to the accuracy and reliability of its financial statements – the highest standard of excellence possible in the area of financial reporting (CFR 3.5). The CSUB administration has for many years made each of these audits available to the public either by placing them on reserve in the University library or posting to the web. This practice speaks to

team can confirm that there is general agreement on the centrality of the campus mission and vision, and budget recommendations and decisions are made in accordance with this campus cultural value (CFR3.5).

Regarding library resources, the library's five story building was built in the mid-1990s, and has appropriate technology resources to support both onsite and online library resources, including open computer labs, study group rooms and reading rooms. It provides a 24x7 electronic reference service, some 70 data bases, and the CSU system core collection, accessible onsite and online to faculty, students, and staff. A librarian also is present at the Antelope Valley campus to conduct information literacy courses and assist students there with their library needs (CFR 3.6).

The Marks of a CSUB Student include information literacy, and the library has provided an information literacy program for over 20 years in support of student success. The program includes courses at the undergraduate and graduate level, as well as through the summer programs and camps, the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) and Title V in support of the First Year Experience, special programs for athletes, two general studies 2 unit courses, as well

its programs and services, and it found that students do link their success to library resources. However, while the library courses are evaluated as any course, student satisfaction surveys for the library itself are conducted irregularly. The library is in need of additional funding to support print as well as online materials, and to develop online courses to meet the newly adopted graduation requirements for information literacy (CFR3.6).

Over the past three years, the institution has engaged in information technology infrastructure upgrades that will serve its students, faculty and staff well into the future including:

- Upgraded campus network to current state of the art levels
- Installed wireless in almost all classrooms
- Outfitted 80% of lecture halls as “smart classrooms”
- Refreshed computers so that none used by faculty are over three years old and refreshed student lab computers
- Virtualized data center, including storage and servers

In addition, the institution is active with the CSU Common Management Systems initiative (CMS) which is implementing the PeopleSoft Finance, HR, and Student Administration software product across the CSU System. The campus is actively participating in all meetings associated with the CSU effort to implement a common financial system across the system by July, 2010, the new PeopleSoft absence management self-service system, and a new initiative to upgrade the student system to version 9.0. The administrative systems team also supports an array of third-party software products specific to various departments across campus such as housing, judicial

implementing the iStrategy data warehouse. The upgrades made by the institution to its core information technology infrastructure provide a strong foundation for both current and future capacity requirements (CFR 3.7).

The CIO position plays an important role in strategic planning, academic planning and business planning; however, the Information!Technology Strategic Plan of 2005 has not been revisited. The Information Technology unit appears to be thinly staffed, largely due to the state's budget crisis. Because of the multiple projects being implemented concurrently, both subject matter experts on the functional side and technologists on the IT side often are overworked and less effective in their primary responsibilities." The institution does not have an information security professional and does not participate in system internal security audits. While it has been creative in handling these duties, the team foresees several issues. Increasing governmental regulation concerning information security will require that a long term solution be put in place. In addition, over time, the budget crisis has and will continue to wear away services provided by the unit to the institutional community. The team notes that, in focusing on keeping baseline systems up in a creative way but with fewer staff than other similar CSU campuses, services will suffer. Assistance is needed in security and identity management, CMS support, and the learning

outcomes and community engagement, either in the strategic planning process and/or in the process for constructing the WASC CPR report. In addition, needs both in information technology (e.g., via the new iStrategy) and especially in instructional technology were being addressed. However, absent the adoption of the full strategic plan, with an accompanying implementation plan, it is not clear to the team that these all areas outlined in that plan will inform the budgeting process, particularly when there are competing priorities. In preparation for the Educational Effectiveness Review, CSUB will need to ensure that the mission, vision, strategic plans and initiatives are truly aligned and operationalized into an action plan that guides the setting of priorities and allocation of resources.

The visiting team observed that planning processes, particularly within the schools, have been informed by some key departmental data found in the academic program scans. However, student learning indicators have not been broadly discussed and some key effectiveness measures related to retention have not been collected or, if collected, not disseminated widely. As an example, from interviews with staff devoted to student retention there is only *anecdotal* understanding among stakeholders as to why students leave CSUB prior to graduation and where these students subsequently enroll. The Assistant Vice President of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment (IRPA), however, indicated that data on where leavers from CSUB enroll was provided to the campus administration by her office. The retention staff not only did not have these data but had impressions which were contrary to the findings of IRPA study (CFR 4.3).

Regarding assessment data, interviewees with CARS, the Program Review Committee, and the Assessment Fellows indicated that measures of student learning were not in place in up to one half of the departments, and no measures had been universally established for general education. There was acknowledgement of the need to develop a template to oversee progress of

departments adopting outcome measures in Program Review (CFR 4.3). Notably, the Program Review Committee was uncertain how outcomes from their process would be connected to budget and planning (CFR 4.2).

In addition to its usual institutional research reporting requirements, IRPA is responsible for producing the academic program scans which have been widely accepted and endorsed as valuable by a number of stakeholders. The description of IRPA's responsibilities also includes providing consultation on assessment, including guidance to the Assessment Fellows. However, during the visiting team's interviews with faculty committees (CARS, Program Review, chairs without external accreditation), IRPA was not considered to be a resource for assistance with the assessment of learning. These groups instead had preferred to use the services of the Teaching and Learning Centers and were disappointed that this office's functions in this area had been scaled back since faculty members were still looking for leadership in this area. The Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment indicated that because IRPA was an administrative office, it was not within their charge to assist in the design of learning assessments for academic departments, but rather to provide support to the newly created Assessment Fellows in this endeavor and only provide direct support faculty or departments on an ad hoc basis, upon request (CFR 4.5).

The office also provides data from surveys of students including the NSSE and a graduating senior survey, both of which could be useful in assessment. However, while the office oversees the production of the VSA College Portrait, there is a limited amount of institutional data on student success that is made available to the public, compared to similar CSU peers (CFR 1.2). More importantly, key studies that impact retention and graduation, such as the reasons students leave CSUB have not been conducted. As noted above, IRPA did conduct a study of where CSUB leavers enroll, but the results of this study had not reached the stakeholders responsible for retention who instead reported to the Team contrary findings based on anecdotal evidence (CFR 4.5).

Regarding assessment of learning outcomes, despite the Institutional Research's role in producing the VSA College Portrait, that office does not oversee the administration of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA). The CLA is currently only used for accountability purposes, but it could also be useful in establishing learning outcomes either in general education, or within departmental programs if, for example, embedded in capstone courses (CFR 4.3, 4.5).

University leadership, especially from the President, Provost, the AVP for Academic Programs, and the AVP for Enrollment Management, is fully committed to improvement based on evaluation and assessment, as evidenced by the priority placed on providing appropriate infrastructure and resources to support assessment and evaluation work. Assessments such as NSSE are being used to monitor student engagement. Campus student support services indicated that they have developed direct measures or rubrics for evaluating their programs which have been employed widely. There was a clear expectation by all stakeholders that the results of these evaluations by faculty and staff groups would be incorporated into their ongoing planning processes (CFR 4.6)

However the team observed that ongoing inquiry into the processes of teaching and learning was only in its beginning stages with the Marks of the CSUB Student project, some program-level assessment, the academic program scans, and most importantly, through the budgetary allocations toward activities in this area, e.g., support for the Assessment Fellows, the expansion of Institutional Research to include assessment, and support for instructional technology. As referenced above in conversations with various faculty committees, it was the conclusion of the team that the use of outcomes to change the curriculum, or improvement of evaluation means and methodology was not yet taking place. Moreover, due to the newness of these ideas to a

significant portion of the campus community, it will be a challenge to incorporate these changes in time for the Educational Effectiveness Review (CFR 4.7).

The team observed that there has been significant consultation with community members regarding the effectiveness of its educational programs. This included formal consultation with community stakeholders, where a formal assessment was conducted, along with informal consultation with employers and others in the community. The institution's application for Carnegie voluntary classification for Community Engagement in 2010 is a key ingredient of these efforts. There is a clear commitment to continue this form of consultation in the future as part of its ongoing "community engagement" theme in the CPR report, which was endorsed universally by a number of university stakeholders. In addition, in interviews with community leaders it was clear that there is *strong* support in the community for engaging CSUB in these activities. Employers and external practitioners sometimes provide the opportunity for real world laboratories for CSUB students or serve the University as adjunct instructors which, in turn, potentially connect them to the program assessment process (CFR 4.8).

E. Discussion of Themes

CSUB focused on two themes for its CPR work: 1) University Alignment: Achieving Educational Effectiveness; and 2) Campus Culture: Achieving Sustainable Excellence. Two additional themes (Community Engagement, and Student Learning) will be addressed in the EER.

Theme 1: University Alignment: Achieving Educational Effectiveness

The campus feels that Theme 1 ties in with Strategic Objectives 1.3 and 2.1 in their

campus-wide engagement to review and assess its progress in achieving the vision, mission and strategic goals of the University?

In team meetings with campus constituents, it was apparent that the University leadership has clearly articulated the goal of “excellence” to the wider community. Activities such as defining the “Marks of a CSUB Student” and the development of the academic program scans send a message that the institution is shifting to an evidence-based culture. As mentioned earlier, the responsibilities of the Institutional Research office have been expanded to include assessment, and the university has instituted an Assessment Fellows program to expand faculty and staff engagement with meaningful assessment activities in order to create a cycle of inquiry and improvement.

In terms of promoting campus-wide engagement, the university clearly values national, state, and regional accreditation for its programs (e.g., AACSB, BRN, NASPAA, NCATE, CSWE) as a mark of external, evidence-based confirmation of high quality programs. Members of the campus community that the team met exhibited a passion for community engagement, and were in agreement with the goal of applying for the Carnegie “Community Engagement” classification.

In order to promote a campus culture of excellence, the President and the Provost have both shown a strong commitment to transparency as a basis for building the culture of excellence. To this end, they held two forums on campus in 2009, one on “Foundations of Shared Governance,” and the other on “Campus Climate, Civility & Collegiality.” In addition, the President’s office maintains an “Excellence at CSUB” site, where the campus community can provide comments. Student leaders noted they feel that the President (and his office staff) is very accessible and open. Other individuals and groups who met with team members commented consistently and very positively about the climate of transparency.

SECTION III: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Commendations: The WASC team commends the University for:

1. The leadership team’s involvement of internal and external communities in strategic planning and WASC preparation;
2. The faculty and staff’s extensive involvement and contributions on work groups and as participants in community forums;
3. The establishment of a culture that values input from multiple perspectives;
4. A clear rationale for community engagement that is understood throughout the university and affirmed by alumni and community leaders;
5. Strategic planning and WASC preparation work that yielded a mission and vision statement that is sharpening university identity;
6. A transparent budgeting process, in these difficult economic times, in which information is shared, input is sought, and decisions made on the basis of data and institutional priorities;
7. An institution characterized by financial integrity;
8. A physical plant that reflects foresight and planning to enhance the student experience;
9. Investments in upgrading the information technology infrastructure to serve not only current needs but also those of students, faculty, and staff in the future; and
10. A “campus of care” with faculty and staff dedicated to student success.

Recommendations: The WASC team recommends that the campus, in order to be prepared for the upcoming Educational Effectiveness Review:

1. Ensure that mission, vision, strategic plans and initiatives are truly aligned and operationalized into an action plan that guides the setting of priorities and allocation of resources;
2. Fully develop and implement an institutional assessment plan with particular attention to student learning outcomes;
3. Continue to build leadership for assessment activities;
4. Clarify purposes and goals of student support programs in Student Affairs and Academic Affairs in order to avoid duplication of efforts;
5. Establish a program review process that meets suggested WASC guidelines;
6. Continue to encourage and support efforts to diversify the faculty;
7. Devise a plan for faculty development and support to reach the University's goal of achieving faculty and academic excellence;
8. Consider appropriate training for department chairs, who play a key role in enabling faculty and promoting academic excellence in a time of budget cuts;
9. Conduct an analysis to determine why students leave CSUB and communicate findings of this analysis to appropriate stakeholders in order to improve student persistence;
10. Provide measures of student success to the public (e.g., on the website) consistent with WASC guidelines on transparency and accountability;
11. Provide strong instructional design and development support for faculty teaching online courses, and ensure that these courses meet best practices standards for online learning

SECTION IV: PREPARATION FOR THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

The visiting team determined that the institution has already laid some important groundwork for the EER. It has a clear thematic framework to guide its actions, and the entire community appears to have accepted the framework and found it useful. At the time of the current review and team visit, the themes had effectively framed conversations and interactions around the issues central to the accreditation review.

In particular, much discussion and work has already occurred related to the Community Engagement theme. The current effort to create greater synergy between the campus and the community is reflected in the work of the Career Development Center, newly named Center for Community Engagement and Career Education (CECE) as well as the institutions efforts to secure Carnegie classification on community engagement.

Regarding the Student Learning theme, the team found that there is much more work to be done. The campus has laid some important groundwork through the Marks of a CSUB Student project, some program-level assessment, the academic program scans, the revision and re-initiation of the Program Review process, and most importantly, the budgetary allocations for assessment activities. There is also clear commitment and support among campus leadership for alignment of resources in support of learning, as well as for using evidence to improve student learning. However, most of the above efforts and initiatives are relatively new. As a result, processes for assessing student learning and the disaggregation of data (especially as related to graduation/retention) are at the “emerging” stage of development.

Through its efforts to enhance resources and infrastructure to support the assessment of student learning, the institution has the overall capacity to successfully complete the EER. However, the team has some concerns and wishes to draw attention to three areas noted during the site visit. First, we note that the new program review process is still being finalized and that

the first round of programs to undergo review is just beginning the process. It will be important for the campus to quickly finalize program review guidelines that are consistent with WASC standards and to ensure that the process is fully implemented and supported. At the time of the EER the campus should have several completed program review reports, including results from student learning outcomes assessment.

Second, the team is concerned that the development of methods and processes for assessing student learning at the institutional level, including the assessment of general education, may not progress quickly enough by the time of the EER. Third, the team expects that at the time of the EER the institution will be able to demonstrate that data and evidence have actually been used to improve programs. While the team confirmed that the institution has the capacity to produce such data, it will need to see that the data is being effectively used by the time of the EER.

In all of these areas, the team underscores the conviction that it is important to provide “leadership” in assessment of student learning for the institution to successfully move forward with the full collaboration of faculty and staff

APPENDIX A: OFF-CAMPUS SITE SUMMARY

1. INSTITUTION

Suggested Lines of Inquiry: Please address each of the following. Representative CFRs are noted in each cell below	Observations and Findings	Check (X) here if follow-up is needed
<p><i>Quality of the Learning Site.</i> Is the physical environment and academic infrastructure of the site conducive to the fostering of learning and dialogue between faculty and students? (CFRs 2.1, 2.5, 3.5)</p>	<p>The administrative and student support offices are located at the AVC, along with faculty offices and classrooms. Classrooms include ITV classrooms as well as non-ITV classrooms. The LUC has ITV and non-ITV classrooms; this is a relatively new facility (ca. 5 years old) that is very nice.</p> <p>The Antelope Valley Center is located on the campus of the Antelope Valley College (community college campus). The classrooms are well-equipped; there are several computer labs that are either recently refreshed or soon to be refreshed.</p> <p>Funding is available to construct an additional building that will be located adjacent to the current buildings at the AVC; it is expected that this will be up and running by the Spring 2010 quarter. This new facility will allow re-organization of current space allocation, and will include the expansion of student study space as well as student lounge space.</p>	
<p><i>Student Support Services.</i> What is the site's capacity for providing advisement, counseling, library, computing services and other appropriate student services? (CFRs 2.13, 3.6)</p>	<p>The site is well set up for student support services. There are onsite health services, an Advising Center with a professional staff advisor and student peer advisors, a Title V funded tutoring center, a Student Life Consultant, and a Student Disabilities Resource office. There are instructional computer labs as well as open labs, and a full-time IT support person on site. There is also an office for Associated Students, Inc. (ASI).</p> <p>Financial Aid and Career Services do not have permanent staff at the site, but staff from these areas visit the site on a regular basis. There is a room specifically for their use, and they have posted semester schedules prominently so that it is clear when they will be there.</p> <p>There is a library with a full-time librarian. Electronic resources are immediately available, and books are shipped from the main campus (takes 1-3 days). The</p>	

	<p>librarian also works closely with faculty to provide instruction in information literacy. The librarian reports that library usage has increased significantly; when she started about 5 years ago, about 80 books/quarter were checked out; currently the number is about 1000 books/quarter. The librarian at the AVC reports to the university librarian.</p>	
<p><i>Connection of Students and Faculty to the Institution.</i> How visible and deep is the presence of the home campus (or broader institution) at the off-campus site? (CFR 2.10)</p>	<p>It is clear from the materials at the site, as well as signage, that the AVC is part of CSU Bakersfield. It is also clear that faculty and staff feel very connected to the main campus. They participate fully in campus meetings. Faculty are fully part of their home departments, and the curriculum is managed entirely through the main campus, through the normal curriculum processes.</p>	
<p><i>Relationship of institution's goals for CPR/EER Reviews to off-campus activities.</i> In what ways, if any, do the institution's efforts to build capacity and enhance educational effectiveness through the reaffirmation process on the home campus carry over to activities at this site? (CFRs 4.1, 4.8)</p>	<p>It is clear that the campus is continuing to build the physical campus of the AVC. Since faculty are part of main campus departments, they participate in all of the activities that the campus is undertaking to build capacity (e.g., the Academic Program Scans).</p>	
<p><i>Context of this site in the broader institution.</i> How does the institution conceive of this site relative to its mission, other current and potential remote sites, and administrative structure? How is this operationalized? (CFRs 1.2, 3.1, 3.8)</p>	<p>The institution clearly sees the AVC as closely connected to the main campus. All faculty are part of main campus departments, and curriculum is managed at the main campus. Faculty and staff interviewed at the AVC expressed that they feel strongly and actively supported by the top administration (something they did not feel in the previous administration).</p> <p>The faculty and staff at the AVC also feel strongly connected to the Lancaster community, which fits well with the CSUB focus on community engagement. The AVP who oversees the Antelope Valley Campus has been very involved with the community (he has both a Community Advisory Board as well as a Program Advisory Board).</p>	

	<p>With the AVP also playing another role at this time, he is unable to spend as much time on the Antelope Valley Campus as he has in the past. It is clear that he has been a strong leader for this campus, and they appreciate it.</p>	
<p><i>Educational Effectiveness Preparedness.</i> How has the institution organized itself to address student learning and educational effectiveness at this site? What are the quality and nature of institutional data analysis systems, quality improvement systems and systems to evaluate student learning at this site? (CFRs 4.6, 4.7)</p>	<p>The AVC does not function separately from the main campus in these respects; the systems are those used on the main campus.</p>	

APPENDIX B: Distance Education Summary

1. INSTITUTION: California State University Bakersfield

2.

5.

<p><i>Connection of Faculty to the Institution.</i> In what ways does the institution ensure that distance learning faculty are oriented, supported, and integrated appropriately into the academic life of the institution? How are faculty involved in curriculum development and assessment of student learning? (CFRs 3.1, 3.2)</p>	<p>Distance learning faculty are normally found at the home campus. They are supported through the Faculty Teaching and Learning Center and are involved in all aspects of the teaching/learning process.</p>	
<p><i>Relationship of institution's goals for CPR/EER Reviews to distance learning activities.</i> In what ways, if any, do the institution's efforts to build capacity and enhance educational effectiveness through the reaffirmation process on the home campus carry over to distance learning activities? (CFRs 4.1, 4.8)</p>	<p>The online courses offered at CSUB appear to serve its student population's needs well; for example, many of the students in the courses reviewed revealed in their introductions that they were from the Antelope Valley location and surrounding areas. Several faculty made reference to this in assisting students who are not in Bakersfield, such as providing resources as to where they could obtain their books in their locations.</p>	
<p><i>Context of distance learning to the broader institution.</i> How does the institution conceive of distance learning relative to its mission, other current and potential remote sites, and administrative structure? How is this operationalized? (CFRs 1.2, 3.1, 3.8)</p>	<p>It was not apparent that the institution has committed to a large set of online and/or distance education offerings, although expansion in the Antelope Valley is planned. Online and distance learning offerings appear to have not yet captured the imagination of the entire institution. For example, activities in this area could be increased to assist the institution when it is back in a growth mode. In other words, the University has not yet taken full advantage of this powerful tool.</p>	
<p><i>Educational Effectiveness Preparedness.</i> How has the institution organized itself to address student learning and educational effectiveness for distance learners? What are the quality and nature of institutional data analysis systems, quality improvement systems and systems to evaluate student learning in distance learning courses and programs? (CFRs 4.6, 4.7)</p>	<p>The institution's faculty have in place the course evaluation tools to adequately analyze the effectiveness of courses taught online, through ITV and onsite.</p>	

Additional Findings, Observations or Comments. Please provide any other information that you believe it is pertinent to note. Also, if any of the boxes above are checked, elaborate here. Finally, please include any recommendations you might have for subsequent team members/reviewers concerning distance education courses and programs.

The online courses reviewed followed a general format where the faculty member posted: Syllabus, assignments, readings, tests/quizzes, chat or discussion threads if used, grading rubrics, etc. In reviewing the fourteen courses, it appeared that some schools used a standardized format across the entire school's online offerings. For example, the School of Education always posted the applicable information concerning CTC expectations and the School's candidate qualities. By so doing, students will immediately understand the relationship of the course to their own educational goals. Other schools have not implemented a standard format for online offerings.

Of greater concern, the majority of the courses reviewed were heavily text based. Only one used a Powerpoint that included the faculty member's voice lecturing to the materials, and only one used an interactive virtual simulator for its content with appropriate exercises. Not all faculty used threaded discussions or chats, and if they did make use of these tools, it was not apparent