



REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING TEAM

SPECIAL VISIT

To

Sonoma State University

March 24-26, 2004

Team Roster

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The evaluation team in conducting its review was able to evaluate the institution according to Commission Standards and therefore submits this Report to the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges for action and to the institution for consideration.

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THE INSTITUTION

Institutional and Visit Context

Sonoma State University, one of 23 campuses in the California State University, was established as a college in 1960 with an enrollment of 265 upper-division students. Its primary academic programs were elementary education, psychology and counseling. As the college grew, it developed academic programs in the liberal arts and sciences as well as career and professional programs. In all programs it has emphasized close student-faculty interaction. Although new facilities were built in 1966, over the years, there has been extensive landscaping and remodeling, along with new construction. The addition of new residence halls has expanded Sonoma State's ability to attract students from around the state which has enhanced the diversity of the student population. In the fall of 2004 the building of the Green Center, a fine arts and performance structure, will begin. The university now enrolls approximately 8,000 students and offers 41 bachelor's degrees, 14 master's degrees and 9 teaching, specialist and service credentials.

Accreditation History

Sonoma State University has been fully accredited by WASC since 1975. The most recent WASC re-accreditation visit occurred in the spring of 1999. After considering the report of the evaluation team and the materials prepared by the University for the team visit, in June 1999 the Accrediting Commission recommended that a Special Visit be conducted in the spring of 2004. The commission commended the University for pursuing a new approach to accreditation and for its selection of "Assessing the Effectiveness of a SSU Undergraduate Education" and "Supporting Student Learning" as its themes. The campus prepared an extensive web-based data portfolio, which was significantly augmented at the request of the team, culminating in a several hundred page compliance report under the nine accreditation standards. Since the report and the visit were conducted during a "transitional period" for WASC, Sonoma State University was recognized for its efforts in meeting the expectations for experimental visits. The University was commended for its many accomplishments, especially in light of years of budget decline in the past decade.

At the same time, however, the evaluation team did raise a number of issues regarding planning, evaluation and assessment that are connected both to Commission Standards and the topics identified by the University in its thematic Self Study. After a careful consideration of the evaluation team's report, the University's Self Study, its standards-orientated web-site and compliance document, and WASC accreditation standards, the Commission acted to reaffirm the accreditation of Sonoma State University but expressed concerns about the four areas noted below. They scheduled a Fifth-year visit in the spring of 2004 on the issues identified in their letter and the team report. The Commission at that time wished the 2004 team to review the University's progress relative to the following four areas:

- Alignment of Institutional Priorities with Mission
- Assessment of Educational Effectiveness
- Improving the Climate for Diversity
- Institutional Commitment to Sustained Follow Up

Even though the University had clarified its mission and attempted to organize around the goal of being a small, high quality liberal arts university, there remained a need to connect the mission to institutional activities such as faculty recruitment, curricular development, program review and assessment, and retention and graduation rates. In short, there was a need to align the mission with institutional priorities and processes.

It was also recommended that the University needed to build a broader and more sustainable infrastructure for assessment of program quality and student learning in both general education and the major. Program reviews needed to be strengthened significantly and linked more effectively in campus discussions of quality. Data collected through the self study suggested a serious need to address the purposes of general education, their alignment with the mission and the means of assessing whether the goals are being accomplished. In general, it was concluded that the campus needed to define learning objectives in many departments and overcome the reluctance and misunderstandings of many faculty about determining the effectiveness of educational programs (beyond courses).

At the time of the 1999 review, the University was found to have had strong policies on diversity and an evident commitment to the practice of tolerance and understanding. Because the University Campus Climate Committee had documented a number of instances of intolerance and hostility in its annual reports, the Commission urged that additional steps be taken to address these issues expressing confidence that the University's leadership had the understanding and expertise to address this issue in appropriate ways.

Concerns were expressed regarding institutional commitment to sustained follow up and it was concluded that little attention was given to these issues and consequently, little progress was made prior to the initiation of the self study. In sum, the Commission found that the self-study themes reflected a significant effort on the part of the campus to address important issues of assessment and effectiveness but concluded that significant steps remain to be put into place to enable the campus to accomplish its stated mission.

SPECIAL VISIT: QUALITY OF INSTITUTIONAL REPORT AND SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The Special Report was written primarily by three individuals: Rose Bruce, Associate Vice President of Analytical Studies and Planning; Carlos Benito, Professor of Economics and Faculty Assessment Coordinator, and Elaine Sundberg, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Programs and WASC Accreditation Liaison Officer. However, a number of individuals and Academic Senate Committees were involved as appropriate in

providing to the topics being addressed in the report. Each section of the report was reviewed by the appropriate Academic Senate Committee, including the Academic Planning Committee, the Educational Policies Committee, and the General Education Subcommittee; the Campus Climate Committee; the Provost's Academic Affairs Council; the Provost; and the President. The Fifth Year Report was well organized, addressed each WASC comment under each category, and provided a clear institutional response.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIAL VISIT TEAM REVIEW PROCESS

The Special Visit Review Team was composed of three members: Mary Kay Tetreault, Cecilia Gray, and Terry Wildman. The team reviewed the Fifth Year Special Visit Report, other institutional documents, met with committees and conducted interviews to ascertain whether Sonoma State University appeared to meet the broad intent of the WASC Accreditation Standards in its policies and practices. This review was necessarily conducted in a more summary fashion than would be true with conventional visits, because this was a Special Fifth Year Visit and the team's principal obligation was to respond to the Commission's concerns. The team's visit was organized around the same four areas of concern: Alignment of Institutional Priorities with Mission; Assessment of Educational Effectiveness; Improving the Climate for Diversity; and Institutional Commitment to Sustained Follow Up.

2004 TEAM FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Alignment of Institutional Priorities with Mission

Findings:

The team found a faculty and administration that is sincerely committed to Sonoma State University's future. Collaborative planning efforts in Academic Affairs have resulted in a Mission and Vision statement that has promise for guiding resource allocations. The Strategic Planning Committee had positive regard for the Provost's leadership in the current planning initiative. In addition, we learned of successful planning initiatives at the school level, including the Library. Further, those units with professionally accredited programs are required to demonstrate and assess their own planning activities. We noted also that members of the Academic Affairs Council agreed to consider university priorities as well as school priorities as decisions were made to search for replacements for retiring faculty members.

To plan or not to plan has been an issue at Sonoma State for more than a decade. The formation of the Academic Senate Academic Planning Committee in the mid 1990s to coordinate academic and fiscal planning combines with the 1999 WASC letter to suggest that planning has been part of the campus discourse but has not been one of the "marks" of the university. The majority of those we talked to in Academic Affairs expressed both an awareness of the benefits of planning, and a distinct receptivity to this activity. In various meetings we heard that aligning institutional priorities with the mission of the

institution through strategic planning would address a felt need in the community. Specifically, we heard in various meetings that there needs to be a planning process in place in a time of budget cuts, that decisions impacting academic programs have been made in the past without consultation with faculty committees, and that communication could be improved regarding decisions that impact the entire community.

The six months previous to our on-site visit have been ones of extensive planning in Academic Affairs. This recent increased activity coincided with the arrival of the new provost approximately six months ago. As a member of Academic Affairs Council said “Planning was not cohesive until Provost Ochoa brought his experience to the task.” Coming with considerable previous success with planning, the Provost established a planning process in Academic Affairs. The planning process included open meetings for the entire campus and the appointment of an ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee of 39 members including representatives from the administration, faculty, staff, students, and the community. Our meeting with selected members of the Strategic Planning Committee confirmed that members felt empowered to think about the big picture, saw a shift in focus from school-based thinking to division-wide considerations, were experiencing the opportunity to provide input from the bottom up, and were engaged in recommending future directions for the University.

According to the Provost, planning is central to the way they do business in the division. The purposes of planning, which include collaboration with the faculty, are to:

- Guide budget decisions that maximize the use of scarce resources.
- Improve the management of resources in Academic Affairs and move away from ad hoc and expedient budget decisions.

At the time of the on-site visit, the planning committee had drafted mission and vision statements for Academic Affairs that emphasize the institution’s capacity for distinction by achieving excellence in public liberal arts and sciences education. It is anticipated that the next steps will include the development of initiatives to achieve the mission and vision. Implementation of planning will reside in the Vice President’s Budget Advisory Committee (VPBAC) composed of deans, Academic Senate representatives, and faculty. We found wide-spread support in Academic Affairs for the Provost’s planning initiative and were impressed with its progress to date. A legitimate question for the team was: Will this planning effort in Academic Affairs be sustained and be of value to the division? The Provost assured us that this planning work in Academic Affairs will succeed because of his proven track record, his commitment to planning, and his belief that planning needs to not only be tied to measurable outcomes, but used to guide resource allocations and reallocations.

Concerns:

Planning was an area of special concern in 1999 and while progress has been made on renewing the planning process in Academic Affairs, it does not appear that much progress had been made with regard to institution-wide planning. Some of the concerns and recommendations made in 1999 seem relevant today. One principal question remains—will Sonoma State engage in ongoing institution-wide planning and devise ways to measure effectiveness in fulfilling its planning goals? It is too early to predict if the Provost’s planning goals will be achieved, if planning will be sustained over time, and if there will be progress on broader institutional planning at the time of the next WASC visit in spring 2009.

The team appreciates the need for institutions to be entrepreneurial if they are to succeed and thrive. The President has been one of the most successful in the CSU system in bringing resources to campus by recognizing opportunities that most often require quick action. However, we heard from many segments of the campus that systematic and inclusive planning needs to be done even within a responsive, entrepreneurial culture.

There is a need for greater institutional communication and coordination among various planning activities. The Senate Academic Planning Committee has continued to plan as the Strategic Planning Committee proceeded with its work this academic year. It is not clear how planning in Academic Affairs will interface with other planning, such as the campus master planning, nor impact the way institutional budgetary allocations are made.

Finally, we noted that while scholarly inquiry is mentioned in the Mission Statement, there is no apparent reference to the institution’s expectations with regard to faculty scholarship and creative activities.

Recommendations:

Clarify the intention that is articulated in the University’s vision of being a distinctive public liberal arts and sciences institution and determine implications for students’ education, especially general education, and faculty hiring. Consider articulating the “marks” of a Sonoma State University graduate.

In consideration of the WASC requirement for institutional planning, the Visiting Team strongly recommends the development of an institution-wide plan that employs a method that is consistent with the President’s leadership style and the culture of the campus with clear agreements about how mission, vision and priorities will guide budget decisions.

Determine ways to better coordinate planning activities throughout the campus and to avoid duplication.

Once the Strategic Planning Committee has articulated priorities and Senate approval has been achieved, develop a plan for assessing the progress made in achieving priorities, especially as they guide budgetary decisions. Ensure that there is an oversight committee, for example the VPBAC, to evaluate whether the institution is doing what it agreed to do in the area of budget and planning.

Consider the place of faculty scholarly and creative activities in the Mission, Vision and Strategies Statements.

Assessment of Educational Effectiveness

In order to determine to what extent progress has been made to assess educational effectiveness at Sonoma State University, the team reviewed the 5th Year Special Visit Self Study, the Sonoma State web-site, interim program review reports and other documents available in the team room. Members also met with various administrators, the faculty assessment coordinator, and Academic Senate Committees, and individual departments.

Findings:

Through the Interim Program Review process the faculty have developed, and are beginning to implement, academic program assessment. The Educational Policies Committee has reviewed the plans and provided guidance to the departments.

The team believes that the faculty at Sonoma State University has appropriately responded to the previous WASC recommendation that departments develop and implement plans to assess student learning in their academic programs. Several years ago a Faculty Assessment Coordinator was appointed to educate and support the faculty as plans were developed. The plans were described in Interim Program Review Reports and were submitted to the Educational Policies Committee of the Academic Senate for review and comment. Although departments were given autonomy in selecting assessment strategies, a specific protocol was followed that included identifying learning objectives, developing a curriculum matrix linked to the objectives, selecting assessment strategies, and proposing an implementation plan. According to the Faculty Assessment Coordinator approximately 60% of the departments have implemented some assessment strategy (mostly indirect measures of student learning, i.e. surveys, focus groups). Most departments are now engaged in discussion of how to approach the direct assessment of student learning in an effective, yet efficient manner. They are concerned about the time involved in implementing good assessment plans (like that of the Hutchins School for Liberal Studies). Faculty acknowledged in meetings attended by the Special Visit Review Team that the development of the Interim Program Review Reports and subsequent discussions of their plans with the Educational Policies Committee have resulted in valuable dialogue about teaching and learning at Sonoma State.

A Task Force has been established to develop a regular process and a schedule for Program Review. Their recommendations will be presented to the Academic Senate in the Fall of 2004. We were told by the Faculty Assessment Coordinator that he will be leaving his post and that his duties will be temporarily assumed by the Associate Vice Provost for Academic Programs. Annual reports on assessment activities are submitted to Academic Affairs and all plans are posted on the University's website, along with assessment resources.

Concerns and recommendations:

To sustain the assessment process, the results and actions taken need to become an integral part of the Program Review process currently being developed by an Educational Policies Committee Task Force on Program Review.

Specifically, the Educational Policies Committee, in conjunction with departments, might articulate patterns of assessment methodologies and outcomes, and look for opportunities within the reports and departmental conversations to better understand Sonoma State's present "culture of learning." The Review Team particularly encourages planners to explore how departments are moving toward conceptual frameworks for understanding student learning processes in their respective disciplines. We noted that there has been in recent years an extensive amount of evidence about student learning published in leading journals in higher education, and that conference programs in higher education organizations have been extensively preoccupied with the need for greater consideration of learning research in program and curriculum reform. Indeed, virtually all the organizations associated with science, mathematics, engineering and technology are requiring in education related grant proposals not only responsiveness to learning research, but assessment specifically related to learning outcomes.

In preparation for their next WASC accreditation review, departments will need to demonstrate that they are appropriately responding to assessment results with a focus on improving student learning.

The results of assessment and recommendations for action need to be integrated into department, school and university planning efforts where appropriate.

To sustain current assessment efforts and ensure that results lead to improvement in student learning the current infrastructure, the faculty assessment coordinator position should be maintained. We strongly recommend the Center for Teaching and Professional Development, or a comparable unit, be supported and charged with the responsibility for supporting faculty in their efforts to improve student learning.

Assessment and General Education

Findings:

Over the past five years Sonoma State University has focused its attention on assessing its General Education program by collecting and reflecting upon data from students and alumni using data from the CSEQ (NSSE) and ACT-AOS surveys. In addition, attempts have been made to develop learning goals and assessment strategies for two areas of the General Education Program (Foundation Courses and Natural Sciences and Mathematics). In 2001 a team of faculty, primarily from the sciences, went to the Asheville Institute on General Education. The team returned to Sonoma State committed to approaching General Education in a new way. Assessment of student learning

outcomes in Sonoma's distributed model of General Education was set aside in favor of focusing on developing a "new" General Education program.

A Task Force was established by the Academic Senate to review General Education assessment survey data, WASC's concerns about General Education and to present to the faculty alternate scenarios for General Education. In the spring of 2003 a new mission statement, goals and learning objectives were approved by the Academic Senate. A "blueprint" for substantive changes to the current program was also presented. Since then the GE Subcommittee of the Educational Policies Committee has been discussing the overall structure of the program, implementation issues, including resources, and assessment strategies.

While the Special Visit WASC Team is seriously concerned about the lack of evidence that student learning outcomes in General Education are being assessed, it agreed that Sonoma State University should focus its attention on a future GE program, rather than develop an assessment plan for its current program. It should be noted that the faculty and staff have done an excellent job in developing the Educational Mentoring Team Program (EMT), Freshman Interest Groups (FIGS) and the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) Academy which support learning in the General Education program for entering students.

Concerns and recommendations:

As the new General Education "blueprint" evolves, the development of learning outcomes AND assessment strategies must be central and integral to the planning process.

The "blueprint" would benefit from a strong conceptual framework that explains the connection between various components, i.e. the Educational Mentoring Teams, the Freshman Interest Groups, the "pathway" distribution requirements, initiatives to support writing, and the capstone requirement. As currently reported, the team had difficulty seeing a "whole" from the description of the parts. Again, some reference to the research on student learning and student development might provide the conceptual frames needed to make a more compelling case for the "blueprint".

In order to implement the new program effectively the administration and faculty should consider appointing a Faculty Director of General Education reporting to Academic Affairs with responsibility for implementing the approach to assessing student learning.

Initial funding should support the development of a strong first year curriculum as a collaborative effort between faculty and student support services, incorporating the existing first year programs, i.e. EMT, FIGS and EOP Academy..

Improving the Climate for Diversity

Findings:

Sonoma State University has been working on a number of fronts to address diversity concerns and issues that have been identified through internal monitoring as well as the WASC Commission report in 1999. The report prepared for this special 5th year visit was thorough in its documentation of actions taken, and convincing in providing a sense of commitment to diversity in all precincts of the University. This concern for and commitment to diversity was evident in discussions with the faculty and administration during the special visit.

Since 1999 Sonoma State has engaged in university-wide discussions and retreats devoted to diversity issues and has adopted a specific vision statement addressing the values, commitments and goals of the University with respect to creating a welcoming and inclusive community. There is ongoing programmatic effort related to recruitment and retention of underrepresented students. We have particularly noted the good work of the Enrollment and Student Academic Services (ESAS) offices. Specifically, the EMT and EOP programs stand out in terms of creativity and effectiveness in working toward a more diverse campus community.

Sonoma State has also entered into partnerships with schools and communities that may be key to ongoing efforts to recruit increasing numbers of minority students. The model partnership with the Elsie Allen High School is one such example. We noted additional outreach efforts in southern California and the East Bay region. The University seems poised to continue these efforts and there appears to be support at the top levels of the institution.

Finally, with regard to the earlier WASC concerns about continuing instances of intolerance and hostility both on campus and in the local community, Sonoma State appears to have addressed these issues by instituting educational programs and quick response mechanisms. There is no expectation that such instances will totally disappear, but the institution seems alert to the problem and very sensitive to how it responds.

Concerns:

Sonoma State, despite noteworthy efforts to recruit and retain students of color and a more diverse faculty, remains an institution that is very much swimming upstream in its efforts to bring diversity to this rural community. For students, even with success in recruitment, the challenges of retention are still daunting in this particular environment. For faculty, the same cultural issues apply, and the University must also deal with challenges such as affordable housing.

In our conversations with members of the University community, we noted that there seemed to be a continuing struggle to come to grips with the fairly recent transition to a largely residential campus. These concerns show up in other sections of the report, such as the increased pressure on general education in a largely residential campus that must now take sole responsibility for educating its students for the entire four years. With

respect to diversity, the question of how to adequately support underrepresented students in their overall campus life experience as well as in the classroom does not appear to have reached a level of real comfort.

We noticed what may be a disconnect between the support offered within particular campus centers, such as the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questions), and the broader campus community. In discussions with students in particular the question was raised as to whether discrete programs such as EMT and LGBTQ are really islands of support in a campus that is only modestly engaged in the pursuit of inclusion and active support of diversity and underrepresented students. Given the way energy concentrates around such programs it would not be unusual to see a rather steep dissipation of energy and its effects beyond the walls of the program or specific community.

Finally, we became interested in looking for evidence that the University's attention to diversity extends to the educational process itself. To what extent are faculty prepared to teach in such a way that students, who may be only remotely connected to diverse others on a day to day basis, are attuned to the ways their life will be impacted by a world that is very different from this local community? In other words, we question whether the exemplary efforts of the University in recruitment, and overall campus posture toward diversity, has had much effect on the curriculum itself.

Recommendations:

Clearly the University must continue its efforts to work on the problem of diversity on all fronts. We have mentioned before the entrepreneurial efforts and successes of the President to envision and create a campus infrastructure that is capable of sustaining continued growth in students, faculty and programs. That same spirit must extend beyond the president's office, perhaps within the more complete planning process we have recommended, so that faculty and students are fully involved with and committed to the evolution of Sonoma State University that lies ahead. The stakes with regard to diversity seem particularly high, given there are enough barriers that could lead to the rationalization that significant change and continued progress is simply not possible.

More specifically, we recommend that the University upgrade its approach and support for faculty development. There still appears to be a learning curve to be negotiated with regard to teaching and curriculum development, where faculty become increasingly comfortable with and adept in teaching diverse populations of students. For example, this development process might address the idea that diversity is more than just a topic in classrooms—it also entails a process where issues of empowerment could easily challenge traditional models of teaching. We certainly do not have prescriptions for how such change might occur, but it does seem time to open the door wider for such exploration into classroom processes.

We encourage the campus community to carefully examine the reasons for student attrition, and to take appropriate action in areas over which there is possibility for control.

One strategy may be to examine programs that have been successful, and commit to expanding support for such programs when discretionary funds become available.

Finally, it was difficult to discern in our brief visit the character of students' experiences at Sonoma State. While there have been studies involving students in programs like EOP, there seems to be less detail available for the general population. Some of the broad surveys that have been done tend to paint a less than optimum picture of student engagement in academics, and while this may not relate precisely to the diversity questions that have been raised, the possibility of student apathy with regard to their education in general would be troubling. So, a finer grained look at student experience would be potentially helpful.

Institutional Commitment to Sustained Follow Up

The administration and faculty at Sonoma State University prepared well for the "Special 5th Year Visit," and have demonstrated considerable progress in responding to the concerns raised in the WASC Commission letter of July 6, 1999. The faculty are strongly committed to the institution and have been active participants in the overall preparation for this visit as well as related planning activities designed to clarify and articulate the mission and vision of the University. With the new Provost on board, the University is productively engaged in planning related to the academic mission. The team enjoyed productive discussions with both the Provost and President regarding the future direction of the University. Without naming specific individuals, there appears to be heroic efforts in various segments of the University to serve students, solve persistent concerns, and compensate for the funding issues that have clearly eroded the capacity to do everything that needs to be done.

Major Recommendations and Summary of Findings

The findings and recommendations that flow from this visit do point to some issues that have not been fully resolved. The team voices these findings with the hope that they will be useful as Sonoma State looks ahead to its next self study keyed to the current WASC standards. First among the several recommendations is a repeated call for a visible institution-wide planning process which should provide a variety of benefits, including the following:

- greater transparency for the entire community about the direction of Sonoma State, including the ways in which the missions of academic and student affairs dovetail with budget and infrastructure planning
- better coordination, and perhaps efficiency, across the various planning activities organized within sub-units of the University
- a clearer view for all participants as to how the balance among different mission elements (e.g., teaching, and the realization of distinctiveness in liberal education, compared with scholarship and creative endeavors) should be enacted and supported

The team agrees that explicit and inclusive planning at the institution level is not a panacea for institutional growth and wellbeing, but lack of such planning raises questions about coordination of mission, resources, staffing, facilities and other variables. Such questions can be troubling within the institution and beyond when not resolved.

A second major finding is that assessment remains a serious issue and important consideration for future development at Sonoma State, continuing a theme expressed in the 1999 WASC Commission letter. To the credit of academic departments and the individuals who have provided leadership, a systematic program assessment exercise was established and enacted by a majority of departments. The word “exercise” is used pointedly to suggest that the recent effort was a process, albeit useful, that was an overlay to normal routine. This would contrast to the new WASC expectations that assessment should become a natural, integral, and organic process of inquiry into the conditions for learning that is informative with respect to development of effective pedagogy and curriculum.

The status of general education represents a third concern that involves both assessment and overall design. The team discovered little progress since 1999 in assessing general education outcomes, but agreed with the decision that was made recently to focus available energy to complete and initiate a new design or “blueprint.” for general education. While single components of the emerging plan have been tested (i.e., the efficacy of first-year programs), the blueprint as a whole presently lacks a clear and coherent conceptual framework. The University needs to provide a rationale for the various components, establish learning outcomes and appropriate strategies for those outcomes. Further, to ensure that GE planning, implementation and assessment move forward expeditiously, the team noted the need for sustained leadership and accountability, which resulted in the recommendation that a Faculty Director of General Education be appointed.

Finally, the team discussed progress in addressing diversity issues with individuals and groups ranging from the President to selected students. Much of the conversation on this issue dealt with demographic issues and the challenges of attracting students and hiring faculty to enhance diversity with respect to people. Most believe this will remain a difficult issue well into the future given the location of the University and the prospects for assimilation of different peoples within the local culture.

Diversity goals extend beyond demographics however, leading the team to recommend more attention to faculty development aimed at teaching methodologies, more explicit study of reasons for student attrition, and a closer look at the lived experience of students on campus. These avenues for study and improvement seem well within the capacity of the institution to address.

Looking ahead to Sonoma State’s next WASC visit, the findings and recommendations conveyed in this report are pertinent in many ways to satisfaction of all four of the new WASC standards. It is useful to keep in mind that student learning lies at the center of the University’s mission as well as being central to the new accreditation standards. One

key theme that runs through several of the recommendations shared here is that the faculty will need to become more avid scholars of student learning, and recognize that they are part of a much larger academic community that is becoming increasingly aware of new ways to design curriculum and pedagogy for successful learning.