



## Cal Poly WASC Steering Committee

Thursday, April 24, 2008  
10:00-12:00  
10-241

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**In Attendance:** Bruno Giberti, Rick Ramirez, Denise Campbell, Tom Mackin, Dan Villegas, Mary Whiteford, David Conn, Rachel Henry, Brandon Souza, Doris Derelian, Linda Halisky, Anna Gold, Brent Goodman, Derek Gragson, Peggy Browneller Paradis, Tom Trice, Cheryl Ney

**Absent:**

### Introduction to the WASC Process

#### Overview

- Accreditation has changed from a compliance model to one of continuous improvement. Cal Poly participated in the pilot program of the self-study model during its last review in 2000. The process has now been codified but is still evolving. Essentially what WASC expects is for the institution to do research on itself.
- This review can be an opportunity to improve Cal Poly in the ways we want to improve it.

#### Since WASC 2000

- In the current review, we need to demonstrate how we have responded to the concerns raised in the previous review. WASC gave Cal Poly three tasks after the last review, which have thus far been addressed in the following ways:
  - Establish a culture of inquiry with respect to learning
    - Academic program review, outcomes-based assessment
    - Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL)
    - University learning objectives
  - Ensure financial support of high cost fields
    - Capital campaigns
    - College-based fees
    - Legislative initiatives
  - Focus on campus climate and diversity
    - Recruitment with partner schools
    - Climate initiatives (1st Gen, Provocative Perspectives, etc.)
    - Expanded SAS programs, FYE and SYE programs

Campus climate and diversity especially continues to be a challenging area for Cal Poly.

#### Stages of the Process

- Institutional Proposal—comparable to research proposal for doctoral dissertation. Approved in December 2007
  - What do we want to find out?
  - How are we going to do it?
  - What do we expect to find out?
  - Established the context for the accreditation review.

- Defined goals and outcomes.
- Performed preliminary self-review under WASC Standards at Academic Senate retreat.
- Outlines study objectives, methodology, and data presentation for CPR and EER
- Capacity & Preparatory Review (CPR)—comparable to comps. We will prepare a report prior to the site visit in 2010.
  - There is ambiguity about the boundaries between the CPR and EER; they inevitably get blurred.
  - Focuses on hard and soft infrastructure: facilities, personnel, and processes. What do we have in place that allows us to achieve educational effectiveness?
  - Can be thought of as inputs.
  - The visiting team will decide whether we're ready to move on to the EER when they do their review.
  - There may be capacity-related issues that need to be carried forward into the EER.
- Educational Effectiveness Review (EER)—comparable to dissertation. We will prepare an additional report before the site visit in 2011.
  - What have we found out about our success in achieving educational effectiveness?
  - Can be thought of as outputs.

#### WASC Standards

- WASC is a membership organization authorized by the federal government to accredit educational institutions.
- Accreditation is necessary to receive federal financial aid, among other things.
- The standards help WASC demonstrate to the federal government that institutions deserve accreditation.
- In the process of answering the questions we are interested in knowing about ourselves, we need to point to evidence that indicates compliance with the standards but in a holistic rather than a checkbox fashion. The visiting team can ask for additional evidence that Cal Poly meets the standards.
- Each standard has Criteria for Review (CFRs), and we must be able to demonstrate to the visiting team that all the CFRs were met somewhere in our report. Working groups are encouraged at this point in the process to develop reports they feel are important to the institution. Relating those reports to the CFRs can happen at a later date.

#### Timeline

- CPR in Spring 2010. Draft CPR reports written by end of Spring 2009.
- EER in Fall 2011.
- Spring 2008: Working groups will finalize research questions, methodologies, and data needs.
- Draft CPR reports finished at the end of AY 08-09.
- Steering Committee will provide some integration. The editor may then write an integrating chapter.

## **Themes**

### Overarching Theme: Our Polytechnic Identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

- Some of the differences between a 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Polytechnic include: teaching vs. learning; the changing relationship between GE and the major toward more collaboration; convulsive vs. ongoing assessment; information transfer vs. learning to learn.

### Integrated Educational Experience

- Anti-silo theme.
- Presents an opportunity to view educational experience as less compartmentalized.

### Learn-by-Doing

- The 20<sup>th</sup> C concept of learn-by-doing applies to some majors not others. The 21<sup>st</sup> C needs a wider definition of polytechnic that includes all disciplines and addresses learn-by-doing as an intellectual challenge.

### Teacher-Scholar Model

- The teacher-scholar model is still a challenge for Cal Poly. It was not part of Cal Poly's approach in the past, and the institution is in transition between an exclusive focus on teaching and understanding the full relationship between teaching and scholarship.

### Cross-cutting Issues

- Diversity: The decision to include diversity as part of each theme is supported by the Inclusive Excellence model that states that infusing diversity throughout the educational experience leads to excellence. The danger is that diversity will disappear, so working groups need to remain aware of it.
- Sustainability: A possible issue of integrating the educational experience.

### Big Ideas for Self-Study

- Cal Poly is in transit from a 20<sup>th</sup> to a 21<sup>st</sup>-century institution, and each theme is at a different point in the transition.
- The self-study is potentially transformational, moving Cal Poly from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The resulting reports can be inspirational documents that the campus truly wants to read.

## **Charge to the Working Groups for Spring 2008**

### Working Group Formation

- Chairs:
  - Our Polytechnic Identity: Tom Mackin, Chair, Mechanical Engineering
  - Integrated Educational Experience: Doris Derelian, Chair, Food Science and Nutrition
  - Learn-by-Doing: Tom Trice, Associate Professor, History
  - Teacher-Scholar Model: Derek Gragson, Associate Professor, Chemistry
- Working groups have broadly representative membership. Volunteers were solicited during the Institutional Proposal process and in an additional campus-wide invitation. In consultation with working group chairs, additional members are being added in areas in which representation or expertise is still needed.

### Charge to Working Groups

- Finalize membership
- Establish meeting times
- Read and discuss Institutional Proposal
- Own your individual themes
  - Refine questions, methods, and outcomes
  - Pay special attention to diversity and sustainability
  - Resubmit plans to Steering Committee
- Determine evidence to be gathered during Summer
  - Brent is available to help working groups determine what data is actually available.
  - Student work is also a type of data. Working groups need to consider whether the senior project is currently designed in such a way that students can demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes when they complete it. Part of the CPR may be to design and recommend a common understanding of what a senior project is.
  - Working groups are not aiming to develop a uniform product for the whole campus but rather a common set of standards with discipline-specific ways to meet them.
  - One possibility is that the senior project become an artifact that represents students' achievement of all the university learning objectives.
- Be ready to hit the ground running come Fall

### Discussion

- Working groups need to become familiar with what WASC expects in assessment efforts. During the preliminary self-review under the standards, the Academic Senate identified as the most important the CFR regarding clearly-stated educational objectives and processes to measure them.
- Working groups need to consider how learning is happening outside the classroom.
- Discussion took place over how to balance what the working groups recommend with what might pass the Academic Senate. No conclusion was reached, but the point was raised that if there is buy-in from the faculty during the process, then there will be buy-in going forward into the Senate.
- The strategic plan is part of what will be under review during the WASC process. The two processes will work together, although the timing of the two are different.
- The comments from the online survey from Fall 2007 are a rich source of campus opinion on the themes.
- Working group chairs are free to organize committees how they wish.
- Accreditation small
- The Steering Committee approved the charge to the working groups

### **Steering Committee**

- The Steering Committee is comprised of the working group chairs and representatives from each college and major unit.
- Charge:
  - Serve as a clearing house – review the output of the working groups
    - Coordinate
    - Integrate
    - Advise

- Inspire
  - Challenge
  - Approve
- Ensure that cross-cutting issues are addressed
- See the whole thing – be the architects of the process
- The Steering Committee approved its own charge.