



Institutional Proposal

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A. Setting the Institution's Context and Relating the Proposal to the Standards

1. Institutional Context Statement

The University of San Diego was founded in 1949 when Most Reverend Charles Francis Buddy, first Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego, and Reverend Mother Rosalie Hill, Religious of the Sacred Heart, obtained charters from the State of California for San Diego University the College of Men, with its associated School of Law, and for the San Diego College for Women. Classes began in 1952. By the time the institutions merged in 1972 to form the University of San Diego, enrollment had grown to 2,516 students. The 1972 merger brought major changes in the corporate relationships of the two governing bodies. The university is Catholic, independent of the diocese and any sponsoring religious congregation, and responsible to its own Board of Trustees.

Since the 1972 merger, the university has grown to become a nationally recognized Catholic institution of higher learning. In 1994, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching classified USD as a "Doctoral University," recognizing the strides made in graduate studies and research. In the 2005 reclassification, USD became a "Doctoral/Research University." The Princeton Review has included USD in its guide to the best 351 colleges in the nation, and in 2003 the university was granted a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the oldest and most prestigious academic honor society in the United States. With USD's academic reputation reaching national and international audiences, the caliber of undergraduate student applicants has steadily increased. The average SAT score was 1098 in 1996 and rose to 1175 by 2007. The percentage of incoming freshmen with a high school grade point average of at least 4.0 more than doubled from 13% to almost 30% during that same time period. Recognition of the law and graduate programs is also increasing, with several programs nationally ranked.

USD enrolls over 7,000 undergraduate, graduate, and law students, taught by a faculty of nearly 700, and is known for its commitment to teaching, the liberal arts, the formation of values, and community service. USD now offers more than 60 bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees and is composed of six academic divisions: the College of Arts and Sciences, School of Law, School of Business Administration, School of Leadership and Education Sciences, Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science, and the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies, whose founding dean joined USD in August of 2007.

Prior Commission Actions

USD's growth, changing academic identity, and increased recognition have brought new challenges and influenced our approach to issues raised by the Commission in our previous review. In their 2001 action letter, the Commission noted that the university's strategic planning process might provide an opportunity to "recommit the University's constituents to a common vision" and set a foundation for the next WASC review. In 2003, President Lyons set in motion conversations to solicit broad input from campus and community constituents and then used that information to examine USD's mission and core values, articulate a vision for the future, and craft a set of visionary strategic goals. By 2004, USD had new mission, vision, and values statements, and a multi-year planning process to establish and implement new strategic directions was underway. Five strategic goals were identified:

1. USD will become a more culturally diverse and culturally competent community through recruitment at all levels, deepening transborder and international educational partnerships, and involving students and faculty in international learning experiences.
2. USD will provide integrated learning experiences across educational contexts and contribute to the scholarly research on ethics to develop intentionally the leadership capacities of all students.
3. USD will be a powerful advocate for social justice and human rights through the establishment of the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies and the recruitment of international scholars and peace practitioners.

4. USD gives a privileged place to the liberal arts and sciences in its undergraduate curriculum and in its influence on graduate and professional programs.
5. USD will substantially increase its endowments, strengthen fiscal viability, and forge stronger relations with alumni and friends by developing a stronger and clearer institutional identity regionally and nationally.

The Board of Trustees approved the new mission, core values, vision, and strategic goals in 2004, and set in motion a university-wide Strategic Directions Initiative to develop five year action plans, described on the university website. Many activities under the umbrella of our Strategic Directions Initiative are also relevant to the three challenges identified by the Commission's action letter in 2001: assessment, diversity, and information technology.

Assessment. In 2001, the WASC Senior Commission identified a need for "progress at identifying the key questions about student learning and institutional performance, collecting and analyzing appropriate data, and using the analysis to guide program and institutional improvement." In addition, they urged the University "to move forward diligently with its plans to strengthen a culture of assessment across the campus," for the purpose of creating a stronger sense of an intellectual and learning community. In response, revision of the core curriculum was initiated. Based on an extensive, 3-year review of the existing general education program, a new set of core curriculum educational goals was adopted by the faculty, the University Senate, and Board of Trustees in 2004. These goals were written as broad student learning outcomes that can be achieved through multiple courses in multiple departments and programs. The goals addressed outcomes in writing, mathematics, critical reasoning, second language, religious studies and philosophy, humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, and diversity. Outside of the core curriculum, the assessment of undergraduate and graduate student learning continued to progress at different rates across the university. The task of identifying and assessing student learning outcomes in undergraduate majors and in graduate programs was primarily the responsibility of the major academic units. Some programs, especially those with professional accreditation requirements, had consistently conducted program reviews according to their own disciplinary requirements. However, it was generally recognized that some systematic, university-wide approach to academic program review would have to be developed to ensure consistency in the evaluation of the educational effectiveness of its programs.

Diversity. The WASC Senior Commission's action letter identified the need to implement plans that transform the university's institutional intellectual and moral commitment to diversity and inclusion into action. Following our last accreditation review, our third Irvine grant supported several diversity initiatives: we adopted a diversity requirement as part of our 2004 revision of the core curriculum, established a new major in Ethnic Studies, and our commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive community was a central theme in our mission statement and the first of our strategic goals. In 2005, a university-wide Committee on Inclusion and Diversity (CID), co-chaired by faculty and administrators from Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, began work one of the President's Strategic Directions initiatives. We have increased the number of faculty of color in the College of Arts & Sciences, so that nearly 20% of the fulltime faculty members come from underrepresented groups. We have continued efforts to recruit additional faculty of color in the professional schools. In addition to our work on recruiting and retaining people from underrepresented groups, we have also accelerated efforts to achieve cultural competence and create an inclusive campus. Since our last site visit, our actions have included reviewing admissions data, conducting an inventory of campus diversity activities, launching the first phone bank to recruit students of color, redesigning an existing scholarship program to recognize student contributions toward fostering inclusion, sending a team of faculty and students to the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity, and organizing a new bridge program for first generation students about to enter the university. Past changes in administration resulted in sporadic implementation of a university-wide plan, but the university has renewed its commitment to ensure a systematic transformation of plans into action.

Technology. At the time of the last site visit, the Commission recommended development of an "academic technology plan that is driven by the teaching, learning, and research needs of faculty and students." Since that time, there have been a number of significant improvements to the technological infrastructure of the university. Just prior to the Commission's action letter in 2001,

USD's Executive Council created a new position of Chief Information Officer for the Office of Information Technology Services. The first CIO initiated a computer replacement plan, a new telecommunications plan, a plan to combine administrative and academic networks, brought WiFi to campus, and also contracted to have new template-based websites developed to create uniformity in our domain system. He also implemented new Oracle HR and Finance systems to replace old homegrown systems. Although significant problems related to outdated systems and infrastructure continued to occur, we have made major improvements since 2006 that have reduced their frequency and provided enhanced services. The growth and improvement of information technology services has become a major university-wide impetus for increasing the quality of student learning.

2. Preliminary Self-Review under the Standards of Accreditation

Planning for the WASC review process began with a series of presentations in early 2006 to explain the new process to various campus constituents, including over 200 participants in a President's Retreat, the University Senate, the President's Cabinet, and the Executive Council. The WASC Steering Committee convened in early October 2006 to review WASC materials and USD's institutional accreditation history and to design a plan for drafting the institutional proposal. Work began on a combined "What Really Matters on Your Campus?" and "Worksheet for Preliminary Self-Review under the Standards" table. Several members of the committee attended the WASC January 2007 workshop in Pomona. By March 2007, the Steering Committee had settled on using the umbrella of "educational excellence" as the launching framework from which to discuss emerging themes for our institutional proposal.

During spring, 2007, the Steering Committee created the Learning Resource Group (LRG), a group with broad campus representation, to work with the Steering Committee in addressing key issues of importance and to investigate how these might be related to each of the four standards. The LRG was divided into four subgroups, each charged to address one of the four WASC Standards. Each group met individually to complete the "Worksheets for Preliminary Self-Review under the Standards." By the end of summer, 2007, each of the Standards' subgroups had identified the Criteria for Review (CFRs) that were particularly relevant for our self-study. Continued discussions in the Steering Committee resulted in CFR rankings across the four standards (see [Appendix 2: Worksheet for Preliminary Self-review Under the Standards](#)); items receiving ranking of 2 and 3 in self review, and A or B in importance, warranted further attention. As a final step in the proposal process the Steering Committee has tasked LRG representatives with project identification, implementation, and data collection in the Capacity and Preparatory Review of our accreditation process.

3. Process for Proposal Development and Leadership Involvement.

In addition to the work of the Steering Committee and LRG subcommittees, we conducted focus group interviews of students, faculty, staff, and administrators in February and March 2007. We began with the assumption that campus constituents would be engaged and energized by the process of defining and achieving "educational excellence" as our central theme. Over 50 people participated in these interviews, which generated areas of importance validated in a subsequent online survey. In April 2007, we invited students, staff, faculty, and administrators to participate in a brief online survey to identify authentic opportunities and challenges in the university's pursuit of educational excellence (see [Appendix 3](#)). Respondents were asked to rank items that focus group participants had identified as important for the university to address at this time. Nearly 1,000 members of the university community participated in the survey, and over half of the respondents were students. An additional 133 administrators, 81 undergraduate faculty, 22 graduate faculty, 27 adjunct faculty, and 69 staff participated. Results from the survey indicated that respondents ranked teaching excellence and the achievement of student learning outcomes as central to the academic quality of our institutional programs. Providing creative and effective learning environments, promoting intellectual curiosity, and facilitating the application of knowledge across contexts were identified as key components of "educational excellence." Respondents also indicated the importance of examining decision-making and planning processes, especially in terms of seeking input and using data effectively. In addition, respondents identified a need to explore a more integrated model of learning, both in and out of the classroom, and a need to increase campus diversity and inclusivity.

The Steering Committee worked to develop and refine three central themes, drawing upon many sources across the university: the focus groups and campus survey, USD's institutional history, past Commission recommendations, activities conducted as part of USD's Strategic Directions initiatives, critical feedback from our WASC representative, and discussions with the LRG. Because the university recognizes the need for resources to support and sustain assessment activities and the use of assessment data for institutional planning and decision making, the Steering Committee has chosen "defining, evaluating, and enhancing educational effectiveness" as the first theme in this self-study. Advancing cultural diversity continues to be an area of high priority at USD, but there are goals we have yet to achieve. One of our ongoing challenges is to coordinate our diversity efforts in a more coherent way, mobilizing our efforts beyond isolated initiatives. Focusing our attention on three distinct components, "advancing diversity in campus structure, climate, and curriculum" is the second theme of our institutional self-study. Finally, USD has made significant strides in addressing the Commission's concerns about our technology infrastructure. We can now direct our attention to improving our use of technology in the educational enterprise by "creating and sustaining innovative learning spaces"; this issue is the third theme of our self-study. In summary, we have identified three central themes:

1. Defining, Evaluating, and Enhancing Educational Effectiveness.
2. Advancing Diversity in Campus Structure, Climate, and Curriculum.
3. Creating and Sustaining Innovative Learning Spaces.

B. Framing the Review Process to Connect the Capacity and Educational Effectiveness Reviews

Introduction

In the next several sections, we will explore our three central themes by key research questions, outcomes, and organizational activities in the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) phase. We will demonstrate how these themes are related to our research questions and outcomes during the Effectiveness Review (EER) phase. Rather than interpret these as sequential phases, we have provided an overlapping framework. The CPR will focus on examining the infrastructure that supports student learning, diversity planning, and core resources for technology, whereas the EER will investigate the results of program and curricular review, diversity results, and the enhancement of student learning through innovative learning spaces.

1. Overview and Goals for the Accreditation Review Process

We view the WASC review process as an opportunity to highlight and improve our markers of academic excellence in order to develop more effective and informed ways of assessing student learning, advancing campus diversity, and integrating technology into innovative learning spaces. As a framework for the two phases of CPR and EER, the three themes will guide us as we develop researchable questions, expected outcomes, and organizational activities in the CPR. Our emphasis will shift from examining the capacity of our existing systems to the achievement and enhancement of student learning during the EER.

Defining, Evaluating, and Enhancing Educational Effectiveness:

USD has made progress in identifying and assessing student learning outcomes across the university, and a number of initiatives are currently underway. We have begun the process of articulating our educational goals by extrapolating them from what is now embedded within USD's mission and core values statements, graduate and undergraduate program goals, and core curriculum goals.

Last fall, the WASC Steering Committee recommended that a task force be charged to develop overall learning outcomes for the undergraduate curriculum at USD. At the same time, the Graduate Assembly has been actively involved in developing graduate learning outcomes to be met

by all graduate programs across the university. These outcomes are emerging from current undergraduate and graduate goals, which include independent learning, critical thinking, ethical conduct, cultural competence, and engagement in global contexts. Following the general education revisions adopted in 2004, the undergraduate Core Curriculum Committee was established, and the committee is currently reviewing and approving courses designed to meet the core curriculum goals. A staged faculty development process is being implemented to acquaint faculty with the tasks of aligning these core goals with course objectives and assessment activities. Through these processes, faculty are learning new ways to think about articulating broad competencies and assessing student learning outcomes for program and core curricular improvement.

Recognizing the need for a systematic, institution-wide approach to assessing the effectiveness of educational programs, the Provost's Office and the University Senate developed an Academic Program Review process, focusing on assessing programmatic student learning outcomes as well as the curricular and structural supports available for achieving those outcomes. The Academic Program Review process was implemented during the 2007-08 academic year. Departments within the College of Arts and Sciences are at varying stages of implementing and assessing program goals and learning outcomes as a basis for curricular changes and improvements. The recent revision of the core curriculum and the development and implementation of academic program review are two major methods for defining, evaluating, and enhancing education effectiveness. Our reaccreditation self-study provides us with unique opportunities to examine the quality and outcomes of these two critical processes.

Advancing Diversity in Campus Structure, Climate, and Curriculum:

We recognize that we need to move beyond individual programs typically identified with diversity and inclusion, and embed the underlying values in our daily practices across the university. By focusing on diversity as a central theme, we will strive to create a learning community characterized by inclusive engagement with diverse peoples and perspectives. The President's Advisory Board on Inclusion and Diversity (PABID), which began meeting in October, 2007, was charged with creating a more effective process to implement action in systematic ways and to ensure accountability for diversity initiatives (Statement and Purpose of this Board is on university website (<http://www.sandiego.edu/inclusion/>)). This group will help us address, among other things, lingering concerns about the quality of USD's campus climate, particularly for underrepresented students, and the ability to attract and retain them.

There are three areas of diversity that will be explored in our self-study: structure, climate, and curriculum. Structural diversity refers to the proportional representation of various groups in the student and faculty populations. For example, several key university groups have suggested that we need to develop ways to more successfully recruit ethnically, economically, and religiously diverse students, faculty, and staff. The second diversity aspect, campus climate, refers to the general perceptions about issues of diversity and inclusion, as well as the development of multicultural competence across the institution. Climate plays a critical role in retaining students, faculty, and staff. To this end, PABID and student groups have recommended that support services and programs be targeted for study. Finally, the third aspect, diversity in the curriculum, refers to the ways in which course offerings provide opportunities for students to develop cultural competence. Several key campus groups have suggested analysis of the numbers, quality, and types of classes offered at USD with diversity themes/content, and other curricular programs that specifically target diversity. In the CPR phase, we will explore existing resources and curricular offerings designed to advance diversity across the campus. In the EER phase, we will focus particularly on how each of these three aspects will become the basis for our research questions and outcomes during the CPR and EER phases of our institutional self-study.

Creating and Sustaining Innovative Learning Spaces:

In 2006, USD hired a new CIO to continue the expansion and improvement of information technology across the campus. Recent accomplishments include:

- Implemented a web registration system to replace the outdated telephone course registration system
- Replaced the university e-mail system with the new messaging and calendaring systems

- Upgraded WebCT (now CE6), the university learning management system, and established an instructional technology support team to aid faculty
- Provided massive streaming video capabilities to the entire university community
- Implemented the new Banner student administrative system
- Launched Luminis portal to serve as USD's virtual one-stop student service center
- Expanded wireless networking for 100% campus-wide coverage
- Upgraded the network and server infrastructure throughout the university
- Established a faculty-based committee to adopt uniform clicker technology for the campus.

In addition, under the auspices of the Provost's office, the Information Resources Council was formed so the academic community could provide feedback to the CIO and the central IT organization. Now that significant strides have been made in developing the technological infrastructure of the university, we recognize the need to focus on the relationship of technology to the educational enterprise.

Formal learning spaces encompass both traditional and innovative classrooms, laboratories, studios, and computer labs, often with design features such as fixed orientation and set number of seats that prescribe the instructional format. New technologies can transform informal, nontraditional environments such as hallways, foyers, cafeterias, libraries, courtyards, dormitories, and faculty offices into learning spaces. A primary focus of our self-study will involve defining and identifying "innovative learning spaces" and discovering how these may be sustained. During the CPR, we will consider how technology currently contributes to learning activities through applications such as course management systems, electronic research databases, and electronic presentation hardware and software. In the EER, we will consider how we might foster active learning by constructing innovative learning spaces.

Institutional Purposes and Outcomes:

As we prepare for the CPR and EER, we have proposed a self study which thoroughly integrates the two phases. The results of the CPR will inform key research for the EER. Additionally, the university recognizes two key purposes of accreditation: the importance of full compliance with the four standards established for re-accreditation for institutional reflection and renewal, and our demonstrated commitments to institutional capacity and educational effectiveness. We emphasize these in our Statement of Institutional Stipulation. In subsequent sections, we identify key outcomes, research questions, and indicators for our three themes. Our themes reflect a broader set of institutional outcomes, as referenced in the *Handbook of Accreditation* (2001, p. 36):

- Identification of key indicators for educational effectiveness integrated from course to institutional levels, which support planning and decision-making.
- Increasing clarity about our learning goals and outcomes and criteria for defining, evaluating, and enhancing these.
- Greater faculty involvement in evaluating and enhancing student learning, supported by institutional resources and practices.
- Continued capacity for self-reflection and quality assurance of that process.
- Fuller understanding of learning that results in improvement of teaching, program offerings, and institutional policies.

The reaccreditation process offers USD opportunities to refine its infrastructure and achieve those outcomes that characterize a learning-centered organization.

2. Approach for the Capacity and Preparatory Review

In the CPR, we will determine the adequacy of existing support structures for each of the three themes. We will demonstrate a commitment to provision and maintenance of an infrastructure that will permit us to achieve our stated goals. WASC describes it as reviewing the "framework of institutional capacity," which "allows an institution to explore crosscutting issues such as whether resources, structures and processes are aligned with the institution's mission and priorities, and

whether the institution has the capacity to measure, interpret, and use evidence about its effectiveness.”

2.i Self-Assessment of Capacity

In this section, the University’s self assessment for its capacity under Standards 1, 3 and 4 will be examined. Section 2.ii will focus on Standards 2 and 4.

Theme 1: Defining, Evaluating, and Enhancing Educational Effectiveness: During the CPR, we will build upon our prior work of identifying specific curricular and co-curricular outcomes by examining the processes we currently use to evaluate student learning. Then we will examine how results of those processes are incorporated into institutional planning and decision-making. In order to sustain a culture of assessment and continuous improvement, we must develop an infrastructure that supports assessment of student learning and integration of assessment results in institutional decision making. To that end, we have elected to focus our capacity review on the following key questions, outcomes, organizational activities, and key indicators:

Key Questions for Capacity and Preparatory Review:

RQ1. What human, financial, and physical resources are currently invested in the assessment of student learning across curricular and program review?

RQ2. How are we integrating institutional and assessment data from these processes into our decision-making and planning processes?

RQ3. How do we ensure input from appropriate stakeholders in institutional decision-making processes?

CPR Outcomes and Organizational Activities:

By the end of the CPR, we expect to have:

- Identified the amount and types of human, financial, and physical resources and processes needed to sustain assessment of curricular and program review.
- Identified systematic and effective processes for integrating institutional and assessment data into our decision-making processes.
- Identified ways to ensure avenues for input from appropriate stakeholders into institutional decision-making processes.

During this phase, our investigation of assessing student learning will address specific capacity issues and relate to the following CFRs: 1.2, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, and 4.1-4.8 (See [Appendix 5: USD Reaccreditation Phases, Themes, and Related Criteria for Review](#)). Key indicators will include evidence integrating institutional data on retention and success with assessment of student learning (Standard 1); evidence of sufficient personnel to adequately support the evaluation and enhancement of student learning and teaching effectiveness (Standard 3); and evidence that aligns strategic thinking and planning with a commitment to improving student and organizational learning (Standard 4). Identifying sources is further elaborated in the first table of [Appendix 6: Preliminary Work Plan and Milestones for USD WASC Reaccreditation](#)).

Theme 2: Advancing Diversity in Campus Structure, Climate, and Curriculum: Under our second theme, we will examine the advancement of campus diversity across three dimensions: structure, climate, and curriculum. As noted earlier, there have been a number of diversity initiatives undertaken since the last WASC review. Current efforts build on those initiatives to ensure that plans are implemented. Our research questions and outcomes therefore focus on structure, climate, and the curriculum by investigating the processes of recruitment, retention, graduation, and post-graduate goal achievement, as well as developing of cultural competence. For the CPR, we have identified several key questions, outcomes, activities and indicators:

Key Questions for Capacity and Preparatory Review:

RQ4. How do we attract and recruit students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds?

RQ5. How do we support the retention and success of students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds?

RQ6. How is the development of cultural competence as an educational goal supported by our curricula?

CPR Outcomes and Organizational Activities:

By the end of the CPR, we expect to have:

- Identified and begun to implement effective strategies for recruitment of students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds.
- Identified and begun to implement effective strategies for increased retention and success of students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds.
- Assured that all students have opportunities to develop cultural competence.

In our investigation of this theme, we will pay particular attention to examining our existing institutional processes for advancing diversity as related to CFRs 1.5, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2, and 4.7 (See [Appendix 5:USD Reaccreditation Phases, Themes, and Related Criteria for Review](#)). Key indicators supporting these CFRs will include information about our current policies and practices for recruitment and retention of students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds; our curricular and co-curricular programs that support diversity; and general measures of student success (Standards 1 and 3). Our examination will also include aligning our planning processes with our educational objectives related to diversity and increasing faculty involvement in achieving those objectives (Standard 4). Types and sources of evidence are also indicated in the first table of [Appendix 6: Preliminary Work Plan and Milestones for USD WASC Reaccreditation](#).

Theme 3: Creating and Sustaining Innovative Learning Spaces: Now that we have built a strong technology infrastructure, we are primarily interested in better integrating technology with the learning, teaching, and research needs of students and faculty. While we have substantially improved academic services (for example, course registration and email systems), we have not systematically studied how information technology contributes to learning environments such as classrooms, labs, studios, libraries, and less traditional learning spaces. Focusing on this aspect of our third theme in the CPR phase will enable us to consider the following relevant questions and related outcomes:

Key Questions for Capacity and Preparatory Review:

RQ7. How is information technology currently used in student learning and what are its anticipated uses?

RQ8. How does information technology contribute to formal and informal learning spaces?

CPR Outcomes and Organizational Activities:

By the end of the CPR, we expect to have:

- Identified current and anticipated information technology needed to support achievement of student learning outcomes.
- Conducted a comprehensive audit of learning spaces and determined appropriate uses of technology in different learning environments.

Our investigation of integrating information technology in the CPR will address, in particular, CFRs 3.4, 3.6, 3.7 and 4.2 (See [Appendix 5: USD Reaccreditation Phases, Themes, and Related Criteria for Review](#)). One set of key indicators will include evidence of faculty use of information resources, services, and technology (Standard 3). Another set will address how our classroom scheduling processes align faculty requests for instructional technology with existing spaces (Standard 4). Types and sources of evidence are also indicated in the first table of [Appendix 6: Preliminary Work Plan and Milestones for USD WASC Reaccreditation](#).

2.ii Infrastructure for Educational Effectiveness

In this section, we will identify how examination of the University's infrastructure will be used to support educational effectiveness, especially as related to Standards 2 and 4.

Theme 1: Defining, Evaluating, and Enhancing Educational Effectiveness: Our CPR emphasis on educational effectiveness will highlight: 1) existing processes and systems that support learning in terms of our stated outcomes and levels of student achievement, 2) infrastructure for program and curricular review, and 3) faculty support and involvement. This examination will particularly address CFRs 2.2a. and b., 2.3, 2.4, 2.7, 2.11 and 4.14.8 as appropriate. For example, our evaluations of Standards 2.2a and b. will focus on core competencies at undergraduate and graduate levels; those of 2.3 will highlight how learning outcomes are stated and implemented at course, program, and institutional levels; and those of 4.4 will explore how educational effectiveness indicators are tracked through program review (see [Appendix 5: USD Reaccreditation Phases, Themes, and Related Criteria for Review](#)).

Theme 2: Advancing Diversity in Campus Structure, Climate, and Curriculum:

Under our second theme, we will examine the infrastructure currently in place to support diversity-related initiatives. The CFRs targeted for examination will include: 2.2a. and b., 2.3, 2.4, 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 2.14, 4.2, and 4.7 (see [Appendix 5: USD Reaccreditation Phases, Themes, and Related Criteria for Review](#)). For example, we are interested in identifying and evaluating existing opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to develop cultural competence. Our investigations of campus climate will include examination of the support various co-curricular programs provide for students from diverse backgrounds. We also expect to identify and apply several measures of cultural competence in our analyses.

Theme 3: Creating and Sustaining Innovative Learning Spaces: Under our third theme, we will examine how the university supports curricular and instructional innovation, especially those related to developing spaces such as classrooms, computer labs, libraries, and information services. We will evaluate how well our fiscal, human, and physical resources are aligned to support such innovations. Targeted CFRs include 2.8, 2.13, and 4.2 (see [Appendix 5: USD Reaccreditation Phases, Themes, and Related Criteria for Review](#)).

2.iii Preparation & Progress toward EER

We have framed our preparations for the two reviews as a continuous process of inquiry and discovery by developing a strong correspondence between the key questions of the CPR and the research questions of the EER. The CPR has two functions: we determine capacity by examining our institutional purposes, processes, infrastructure resources, and policies; we prepare for the EER by integrating CPR outcomes with the objectives of the EER.

By the end of our CPR, we will have achieved our stated outcomes across our three themes. In the first theme, we expect to have identified the availability of resources, implementation of data, and assurance of stakeholder input into decision-making processes that support the assessment of student learning. Results from this phase will help us identify how we can more effectively integrate these processes with assessment of student learning. For our second theme, we will have analyzed diversity at multiple levels: structure, climate, and curriculum. We will have investigated our current policies and practices for recruitment, retention, and success of students, faculty, and staff, and we will have identified more opportunities for creating cultural competence across the curriculum. Results from this examination will provide direct insights for the EER into the ways we construct an integrative climate of support to enhance learning in students from diverse backgrounds. Results from the CPR will also clarify our approaches for increasing cultural competence as a general learning outcome. For the third theme, we expect to have identified how we currently use instructional technology and applications we might consider for the future. Also, we will have conducted an extensive audit of learning spaces to inventory the opportunities we now provide. These three themes provide ample opportunities to examine our institution from the unique perspectives of capacity and effectiveness.

3. Approach for the Educational Effectiveness Review

In preparing for our EER, we are committed to making effective use of the information we systematically collect and analyze about our student learning, particularly in relation to assessing student learning outcomes, promoting a diverse campus community, and integrating information

technology into the teaching-learning enterprise. WASC describes the institutional core commitment for EER as “an opportunity for the institution to explore holistically its approaches to educational effectiveness. The institution assesses whether its systems, such as course and program design, faculty support, and program review, are effectively linked to evidence of student learning and are consistent with the educational goals and academic standards of the institution.” The key outcomes and research questions identified in this framework are the results of discussions with the Steering Committee, feedback from our WASC representative, the WASC Learning Resource Group, Dean’s Council, Executive Council and Cabinet, Graduate Assembly, and University Senate. For the EER, we will use the three themes identified in the CPR to focus on areas needing improvement in the achievement of educational outcomes.

3.i Outcomes

The main objective of the university’s self-study is to evaluate and improve student and institutional learning through the analysis of our unique strengths and specific challenges. For the EER, we propose the following outcomes for our three themes.

Theme 1: Defining, Evaluating, and Enhancing Educational Effectiveness: During the CPR, we will be identifying systems and processes that support student learning. In the EER, we will attempt to determine how to integrate these processes and systems to enhance student learning.

Anticipated EER Outcome: By the end of the EER, we expect to have developed a policy for integrating resources, institutional and assessment data, and stakeholder voices in the evaluation of student learning outcomes. Program and curricular review will result in plans for improvement at the course, program, and institutional levels.

Theme 2: Advancing Diversity in Campus Structure, Climate, and Curriculum: In the CPR, we will investigate the processes that advance diversity across three domains: campus structure, climate, and curriculum. In the EER, we will explore ways to enhance learning in students from diverse backgrounds and to increase students’ cultural competence.

Anticipated EER Outcomes: By the end of the EER, we expect to have:

1. Determined improvements needed to promote learning success for students from diverse backgrounds.
2. Determined improvements needed in the curriculum for increasing cultural competence.

Theme 3: Creating and Sustaining Innovative Learning Spaces: During the CPR, we will primarily focus on investigating how information technology contributes to formal and informal learning spaces at USD. In the EER phase, we will shift our attention to investigating how student learning is enhanced, particularly through the use of technology.

Anticipated EER Outcome: By the end of the EER, we expect to have developed strategies for creatively integrating information technology into learning spaces to enhance student learning.

3.ii Research Questions & Key Indicators

During the CPR, we will focus our attention on systems and processes in the institutional infrastructure that contribute to evaluating our stated learning outcomes. In the EER, we will investigate how the integration of resources, institutional and student learning outcome data, and stakeholders’ input contribute to enhancement of student learning at course, program, and institutional levels. In addition to the evidence, methods, and indicators discussed below, please refer to the Preliminary Work Plan and Milestones for USD WASC Reaccreditation.

Theme 1: Defining, Evaluating, and Enhancing Educational Effectiveness: Key Questions and Evidence/Methods/Indicators for Educational Effectiveness Review:

RQ9. How do our investments of resources contribute effectively to the achievement of student learning outcomes? For this research question, we would examine potential gaps

identified in addressing the first research question (RQ1) of the CPR phase. These would include ways to improve the resources allocated and used to assess select student learning outcomes, such as methods of collecting and evaluating samples of student work (e.g., test, assignments, capstone projects, and performances) at program, core curricular, and co-curricular levels. The [Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators](#) (Appendix 1: Table 6) identifies methods and key curricular indicators at the core and program levels. Additionally, the university is developing general graduate and undergraduate goals for assessment. Tracking student learning outcomes will permit us to make direct and specific improvements in the investment of our resources. Specific targeted groups will include department chairs and program directors, academic deans, the Provost, associate provosts, and the Vice President for Student Affairs.

RQ10. How could institutional and student learning outcome data be used more effectively for improving our decision-making and planning processes? In addressing this research question, we will investigate potential gaps identified in RQ2 during the CPR in selected applications of data, and how these might be revised to increase the effectiveness of our institutional decision-making and planning processes. For example, the academic program review process could be streamlined so that departments and programs could implement data collected and analyzed during their self study phases. Results from these analyses could be incorporated into campus master planning decisions. Targeted groups would include the Executive Council; the Cabinet; Campus Master Planning Task Force; department chairs and program directors; academic deans; Academic Review Committee.

RQ11. How could we more effectively ensure input from appropriate stakeholders in institutional decision-making processes to improve student learning? For this research question, we would explore the findings for RQ3 in the CPR phase. Those findings should indicate how input is assured from appropriate stakeholders. In the EER phase, we will examine how improvements can be made in ways that enhance student learning generally as a result of stakeholders' input. Appropriate stakeholders include the Executive Council; the Cabinet; academic deans; University Senate; Student Affairs; Associate Students; Graduate Student Council; selected representative stakeholders from student, faculty, alumni, and staff; department chairs and program directors.

Theme 2: Advancing Diversity in Campus Structure, Climate, and Curriculum: Key Questions and Evidence/Methods/Indicators for Educational Effectiveness Review:

RQ12. How can we enhance learning for students from diverse backgrounds? In addressing this research question, we will use the results from the RQ6 during the CPR phase by analyzing information on selected student learning outcomes (e.g., written competencies, mathematics competencies) for students from diverse backgrounds. Student learning outcomes will be assessed using a variety of quantitative measure samples (placement or competency level exams) and qualitative indicators (e.g., final projects, or senior theses). In the EER phase, we will relate assessment result of student learning to various support services directly and indirectly related to students from diverse backgrounds. Targeted methods and groups will include tutorial support services; the Core Curriculum Committee assessment reports; annual assessment reports from department chairs and program directors; year end reports from academic deans and various programs within Student Affairs (e.g., Multicultural Center, First Year Experience and Second Year Experience committees).

RQ13. Do the curricular experiences related to diversity increase cultural competence among all students? In order to address this research question, several measures and indicators of cultural competence will be developed to reflect the impact of diversity factors in the curriculum (e.g., the "D" diversity courses in the undergraduate core curriculum, student experiences studying internationally). Groups providing such information would include department chairs and program directors; academic deans; Associate Provost for

Internationalization; and the Core Curriculum Committee. Targeted groups for study are students through academic or administrative programs.

Theme 3: Creating and Sustaining Innovative Learning Spaces: Key Questions and Evidence/Methods/Indicators for Educational Effectiveness Review:

RQ14. How does the use of information technology at USD enhance student learning? In the CPR phase, we will focus on examining how information technology is currently used and its projected application. In the EER phase, we will investigate how its use will contribute to the enhancement of student learning. Selected learning outcomes in courses that use technology, such as web-based course management systems, e-portfolios, and SmartBoard, will be explored. Targeted groups will include department chairs and program directors working in collaboration with Information Technology Services and the Center for Educational Excellence, participating faculty and students selected for study.

RQ15. How can we improve the contributions of formal and informal spaces to student learning? During this phase, we will attempt to analyze how modifications of selected learning spaces have improved the environment for student learning. Selected projects will focus on formal classroom environments, whereas others will target informal learning spaces. Targeted groups will include department chairs and program directors; representatives from the campus libraries and the Center for Educational Excellence; and faculty and students who participate in these projects.

3.iii Systems of Quality Assurance

The university has established an institution-wide system of academic program review. All programs are required to undergo an extensive ten-point self-study and an external review by representatives from two outside institutions. Results of both are examined by the Academic Review Committee, which includes representatives from each of the university's academic Schools and the College. The committee provides extensive feedback and recommendations to participating programs.

Assessment of student learning is an essential part of academic program review. All programs are expected to establish proficiency levels, demonstrate achievement of student learning, and systematically use findings for program improvement. Our undergraduate programs are in various stages of developing and applying performance categories and levels for rubrics to standardize their evaluation processes. Some undergraduate programs use external benchmark assessments, such as the ETS exam in Chemistry and Biochemistry. Several have capstone courses or senior theses/projects. Other program assessments include pre-and post-testing, in-house exit exams, major field tests, and senior performance evaluations. Most graduate programs undergo accreditation by professional agencies in addition to the WASC accreditation process.

The Core Curriculum Committee has established a general set of learning goals across many core competencies, and rubrics to assess them are under development. Learning goals are aligned for all courses offered in the core curriculum. We pilot-tested the CLA and then decided to revise our in-house logic exam as an alternative assessment. Upper division writing competency requirements and required learning goals for diversity courses are routinely applied and reviewed by the committee. Working with faculty and students, the committee will develop a valid and reliable measure of cultural competence, to be supported by qualitative analyses of focus groups and interviews. To learn more about student engagement, we have participated as an institution in five administrations of NSSE and allowed our benchmark scores to be published in *USA Today*. Plans are underway in Student Affairs to implement student learning objectives for co-curricular programs and strategies for assessment. Faculty and students will participate in our audit of traditional and non-traditional learning spaces and assist in developing institutional guidelines for the components and configuration of classrooms and campus learning spaces. As the guidelines are implemented, we will investigate the extent to which the components enhance teaching and learning. For example, we hope to conduct qualitative and quantitative analyses as renovation of learning spaces occur.

We expect to expand our assessment methods substantially during the CPR. By the end of the EER, our self-study will have yielded accumulating evidence for continued improvement in student learning.

C. Demonstrating a Feasible Plan of Work and Engagement of Key Constituencies

1. Work Plan and Milestones

In previous sections, we have identified organizational structures and processes, key indicators, and outcomes for each review phase. Our analyses under each phase will either be derived from existing projects and initiatives or be designed specifically for the CPR and EER. For example, the stated outcomes for our first theme will probably be achieved as the Academic Review Committee works toward streamlining the academic program review process in order to make more effective use of educational effectiveness data. The outcomes on diversity will focus on implementing effective strategies for recruitment, retention, and success of students from diverse backgrounds by gathering relevant information from a variety of sources, including the President's Advisory Board on Inclusion and Diversity, the Admissions Office, and programs affiliated with FYE/SYE. Investigating cultural competence will include projects studying the effects of the diversity core requirement in the undergraduate curriculum. Our third theme will include projects that identify how information technology is creatively integrated into learning environments. For example, the newly-formed Innovative Learning Space Committee may be charged to conduct an audit of learning spaces. Details of our preliminary work plan and milestones are presented in Tables 1 and 2 of [Appendix 6](#). The first table identifies sources and types of evidence gathered for the relevant CFRs across themes and review phases, and the second table provides a timeline for the major milestones of our reaccreditation process.

2. Effectiveness of Data Gathering and Analysis Systems

Centralized institutional research has undergone major changes since USD's last site visit. A new director of institutional research was hired in 2001 to convert data collection and reporting from paper-based to electronic processes. Snapshot data files replaced paper listings, and new Web sites were developed to provide institutional data tables to all faculty and staff. President Lyons arrived in 2003 and created the office of Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) to support broad-based University policy and planning initiatives through integrated research and planning. IRP is responsible for reporting, compliance, analysis, and planning support at the institutional level and is staffed by three full-time professionals: the executive director, the institutional planning and project administrator, and the research analyst.

Creating a "culture of evidence" at USD is a priority for President Lyons and IRP. To that end, IRP has developed several avenues for distributing information. Public-access Web offerings include:

- USD at a Glance – basic facts about the university
- Quick Facts – simple tables of aggregate data
- Common Data Set – data collected for college guidebook providers
- Strategic Directions – official record of the current planning initiatives
- Campus Space – information about space allocation by the Space Committee
- Programs Offered – official list of degrees, majors, minors, certificates, and credentials

Other Web sites provide more detailed information for internal audiences:

- Stat Book – detailed trend data tables available to faculty and staff
- USD Trends – brief reports of survey results and institutional trends for faculty and staff
- Board of Trustees – an information resource for the USD Board of Trustees IRP is currently developing a series of tables comparing USD with other schools and reaching out to

collaborate with other offices – including Financial Aid, Human Resources, Career Services, and the Controller – to improve the breadth of institutional data available online.

The next step in promoting a culture of evidence is to provide more analyses that interpret data for the campus community. However, ad hoc requests from individual administrators, faculty, staff, and students have increased the office workload to a level that precludes adding many new projects. The academic program review process has further increased ad hoc requests for data and analysis from academic departments. Implementing the Banner Student System in Fall 2008 creates both opportunities and challenges for the office. The snapshot files collected every term will come from the Banner's Operational Data Store rather than the old legacy databases. This conversion will streamline the data collection process but will also require rewriting programs and reconfiguring data files. Within a few years, IRP hopes to assist Information Technology Services in creating a comprehensive data warehouse.

The academic assessment process and management of data for student learning has developed independently of other data management sources. In 2004, the interim provost created an Office of Assessment and hired a Director of Assessment. Historically, assessment efforts were decentralized across departments and programs in each of the academic units, and the director position was created to organize these fragmented efforts at an institutional level. In the fall of 2006, the office underwent significant restructuring; the director left, and USD hired an assessment coordinator to assume some of the former director's responsibilities. With the changing structure, the assessment coordinator and director of the Center for Educational Excellence combined efforts to facilitate the development of assessment plans for undergraduate programs and for the core curriculum in the College. Undergraduate and graduate assessment plans will become systematically implemented through academic program review with oversight from the associate provost in charge faculty development and assessment and with the support of Institutional Research and Planning, the new College dean, and deans of the other academic units.

For the WASC accreditation process, the Steering Committee and Learning Resource Group are central to our data gathering efforts. The Steering Committee is responsible for planning, oversight, and direction of the reaccreditation process; the Learning Resource group, which includes members of the Steering Committee, is composed of key stakeholders from across campus, who assist the process by organizing and collecting related evidence and generating data for WASC reports. Both groups will use a WebCT-based website to organize and store all electronic documents related to reaccreditation activities. Critical WASC document will be published at appropriate intervals on USD's WASC website. Considerable progress has already been made in identifying the sources of evidence for both stages of review.

3. Commitment of Resources to Support the Accrediting Review

USD has committed sufficient funding and resources to complete all phases of the self-study and reaccrediting process. The full nature of this commitment is stated formally in the [Statement of Institutional Stipulation](#) (listed at the end of section D). We expect to incur and support expenses for faculty and staff members of the WASC committees (the Steering Committee and the Learning Resource Group) to receive additional training by attending conferences and workshops related to the accreditation process, and for faculty and staff who will be directly involved in projects designed to answer our identified research questions for each of the review phases. This support will included, but not be limited to, clerical support, office space, and technological assistance during the four-year process. Additional resources will be provided for costs associated with hosting two on-site visits from WASC teams.

D. Presenting Appendices Connected to the Proposal

1. Data Exhibits:

APPENDIX 1: Required Data Exhibits

- [Undergraduate Bulletin; Graduate Bulletin](#)
- Organizational Charts: [President](#); [Academic Affairs](#); [Student Affairs](#); [Mission and Ministry](#); [Finance and Administration](#); [University Relations](#)
- [WASC/ACSCU Summary Data Form](#)
- [Table 1: Fall Headcount Enrollment by Level](#)
- [Table 2: Fall Headcount Enrollment by Status and Location](#)
- [Table 3: Degrees and Certificates Granted Annually by Level](#)
- [Table 4: Instructional Faculty by Employment Status](#)
- [Table 5: Key Financial Ratios](#)
- [Table 6: Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators](#)
- [Table 7: Inventory of Concurrent Accreditation and Key Performance Indicators](#)

[APPENDIX 2: Worksheet for Preliminary Self-review Under the Standards](#)

[APPENDIX 3: Results of Online Campus Survey](#)

[APPENDIX 4: President's Advisory Board on Inclusion and Diversity: Statement and Purpose](#)

[APPENDIX 5: USD Reaccreditation Phases, Themes, and Related Criteria for Review](#)

[APPENDIX 6: Preliminary Work Plan and Milestones for USD WASC Reaccreditation](#)

2. Off-Campus and Distance Education Degree Programs

Program name and degree level	Modality*	Address, City, State, Zip, Country	FTE enrollment	Contact Person (if applicable)
M.Ed. in Special Education with Deaf and Hard of Hearing credential	off-campus	John Tracy Clinic 806 West Adams Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90007	10.2	Mary McGinnis Director, Teacher Education
M.S. in Supply Chain Management	blended/hybrid	University of San Diego School of Business Administration 5998 Alcalá Park San Diego, CA 92110	19.0	Simon Croom, Program Director
M.S. in Global Leadership	distributed	University of San Diego School of Business Administration 5998 Alcalá Park San Diego, CA 92110	55.8	Bob Schoultz, Program Director

3. [Institutional Stipulation Statement](#)