REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW

Self-Study

Presented to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges by the University of San Diego

30 JULY 2010
University of San Diego
http://www.sandiego.edu

Contact Person:
Andrew T. Allen, Ph.D., Associate Provost and Professor of Economics
University of San Diego
San Diego, CA 92110
Phone: (619) 260-4553
Fax: (619) 260-2210
andrewt@sandiego.edu
SELF-STUDY
Reaffirmation of Accreditation Capacity and Preparatory Review Self-Study

Presented to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) by the University of San Diego

Table of Contents
INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................................................... 1
• Institutional Context

SECTION ONE: Evidence of Institutional Capacity .................................................................................. 3
STANDARD ONE: Institutional Purpose and Educational Objectives......................................................... 3
• Institutional Purposes
• Integrity
STANDARD TWO: Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions .................................... 6
• Teaching and Learning
• Scholarship and Creative Activity
• Support for Student Learning and Success
STANDARD THREE: A Sustainable Institution ..................................................................................... 10
• Faculty and Staff
• Fiscal, Physical and Information Resources
• Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes
STANDARD FOUR: Commitment to Learning and Improvement ............................................................. 13
• Strategic Thinking and Planning
• Commitment to Learning and Improvement

SECTION TWO: USD's Three Themes ....................................................................................................... 16
THEME ONE: Defining, Evaluating, and Enhancing Educational Effectiveness......................................... 16
• Undergraduate Program Assessment
• Graduate Program Assessment
• Core Curriculum
• Academic Program Review
• Student Affairs Assessment
• Next Steps
THEME TWO: Advancing Diversity in Campus Structure, Climate, and Curriculum .............................. 23
• Recruitment
• Retention and Graduation
• Curriculum
• Next Steps
THEME THREE: Creating and Sustaining Innovative Learning Spaces .................................................... 29
• Information Technology
• Learning Spaces
• Evidence for Improvement
• Next Steps

CONCLUSION AND READINESS FOR THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW ....................... 33
VISION, MISSION and CORE VALUES
Of the University of San Diego
Approved by the Board of Trustees February 22, 2004

Mission Statement
The University of San Diego is a Roman Catholic institution committed to advancing academic excellence, expanding liberal and professional knowledge, creating a diverse and inclusive community, and preparing leaders dedicated to ethical conduct and compassionate service.

Core Values
The University of San Diego expresses its Catholic identity by witnessing and probing the Christian message as proclaimed by the Roman Catholic Church. The University promotes the intellectual exploration of religious faith, recruits persons and develops programs supporting the University's mission, and cultivates an active faith community. It is committed to the dignity and fullest development of the whole person. The Catholic tradition of the University provides the foundation upon which the core values listed below support the mission.

Academic Excellence
The University pursues academic excellence in its teaching, learning and research to serve the local, national and international communities. The University possesses that institutional autonomy and integrity necessary to uphold the highest standards of intellectual inquiry and academic freedom.

Knowledge
The University advances intellectual development; promotes democratic and global citizenship; cultivates an appreciation for beauty, goodness, and truth; and provides opportunities for the physical, spiritual, emotional, social, and cultural development of students. The University provides professional education grounded in these foundations of liberal learning while preparing students to understand complex issues and express informed opinions with courage and conviction.

Community
The University is committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive and collaborative community accentuated by a spirit of freedom and charity, and marked by protection of the rights and dignity of the individual. The University values students, faculty and staff from different backgrounds and faith traditions, and is committed to creating an atmosphere of trust, safety and respect in a community characterized by a rich diversity of people and ideas.

Ethical Conduct
The University provides a values-based education that informs the development of ethical judgment and behavior. The University seeks to develop ethical and responsible leaders committed to the common good who are empowered to engage a diverse and changing world.

Compassionate Service
The University embraces the Catholic moral and social tradition by its commitment to serve with compassion, to foster peace, and to work for justice. The University regards peace as inseparable from justice and advances education, scholarship and service to fashion a more humane world.

Vision Statement
The University of San Diego is becoming a nationally preeminent Catholic university known for educating students who are globally competent, ethical leaders working and serving in our complex and changing world.
SELF-STUDY
CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The University of San Diego is a Roman Catholic institution committed to advancing academic excellence, expanding liberal and professional knowledge, creating a diverse and inclusive community, and preparing leaders dedicated to ethical conduct and compassionate service. We aspire to be a preeminent Catholic university known for educating students who are globally competent, ethical leaders who work and serve in the complex and changing world. Our Mission, Core Values, and Vision statements, aligned with our strategic goals, serve as the foundation for the WASC reaffirmation of accreditation process. (CFR 1.1)

We adopted the three major recommendations of the last WASC Commission letter (March 6, 2001) as the three central themes for our self-study: the assessment of student learning, diversity, and technology. Each theme focuses upon two sets of research questions, one set for the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) and one set for the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER). The first group of research questions focuses on the university’s infrastructure and systems that support student learning. Key issues emerging from these research questions will lead to improvements in the university’s infrastructure and systems that support student learning and inform the direction of the EER.

Institutional Context

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 two colleges. The San Diego College for Women began classes in 1952. The San Diego University, comprised of the College of Men, with its associated School of Law, opened its doors in 1954. By the time the institutions merged in 1972 to form the University of San Diego, enrollment had grown to 2,516 students. Sponsorship by the Diocese and the Society of the Sacred Heart was withdrawn after the merger. The university’s by-laws specified that the Bishop of the Diocese or his representative and a priest of the diocese, and the Provincial of the Society of the Sacred Heart or her representative and a sister of the society have membership on the Board of Trustees, though neither group retained any reserved powers. Today, the university is responsible to its Board of Trustees (typically 40 members) and is legally independent of the diocese and any sponsoring religious congregation.

Since the 1972 merger, the university has grown to become a nationally recognized Roman Catholic institution of higher learning. In 2003, the university was granted a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the oldest and most prestigious academic honor society in the United States. In 2005, the Carnegie Foundation classified USD as a “Doctoral/Research University” for the Advancement of Teaching. As USD’s academic reputation reached national and international audiences, the caliber of undergraduate student applicants steadily increased. The average SAT score was 1149 in 1999 and rose to 1207 by 2009. The percentage of incoming freshmen with a high school grade point average of at least 4.0 increased from 28.5% to 37.3% during that same time period. The Juris Doctor program and several graduate programs are nationally ranked.

Today, USD enrolls more than 7,800 undergraduate, graduate, and law students, taught by approximately 800 full- and part-time faculty. In Fall 2009, the student-faculty ratio was 14.7 to 1. USD is known for commitment to teaching, liberal arts, ethical 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
USD’s growth and increased recognition have brought new challenges and opportunities that 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 initiated a strategic planning process to solicit broad input from campus and community constituents. Subsequent examination of USD’s mission and core values led to articulating a vision for the future and crafting a set of strategic goals. By 2004, USD had new mission, vision, and values statements approved by the Board of Trustees, which set in motion a university-wide Strategic Directions Initiative to develop five-year action plans. The goals were structurally institutionalized through the formation of the International Center and the Center for Inclusion and Diversity, the expansion of the First- and Second-Year Experience programs, and the development of the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies. Many activities under the umbrella of our Strategic Directions Initiative are also relevant to the three themes of our self-study. (CFR 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)

The University of San Diego, in its Catholic character, derives its mission and values from the gospel and the Church’s continuing commitment to intellectual, moral, social, and spiritual values. USD places a particular emphasis on promoting the social teachings of the Church, a tradition of thought and action that affirms the Church’s commitment to work for a just and peaceful society. Students are encouraged to explore the compatibility of faith and reason through education and to develop strong moral convictions. The university welcomes students, faculty, and staff of all faiths and believes that all people benefit from the examination of other faith traditions. Approximately half of our undergraduate students, administrators, and staff, and a third of graduate students and faculty, report being Catholic. Undergraduate students explore the Catholic character of USD through the core curriculum requirements of nine credits of theology and three credits of ethics. University Ministry invites the USD community to liturgies, immersion trips, local service opportunities, retreats, small faith-sharing communities, pastoral counseling and companionship, scripture study, and all-faith services. Students celebrate Mass in Founders Chapel, and many alumni return to be married there. The Center for Catholic Thought and Culture invites faculty and other to engage the many contributions, past and present, of the Church—especially in its intellectual and cultural manifestations—from the perspectives of their teaching and research interests. The physical presence of the Catholic Church is felt on campus through its Spanish Renaissance architecture modeled after the University of Alcalá de Hernares, a great sixteenth-century humanist Catholic university and the surrounding environs that was the home of San Diego de Alcalá.

USD is fortunate to have a highly qualified and experienced leadership team. Mary E. Lyons, PhD, became the president of the University of San Diego in July 2003. During her extensive career in education, Dr. Lyons has enjoyed rich and varied experiences as a teacher, professor, and administrator. She has been a university president since 1990. Julie Sullivan, PhD, serves as Executive Vice President and Provost. She is the Chief Academic Officer and Chief Budget Officer of the university. Vice Presidents of Business Services and Administration, Mission and Ministry, Student Affairs, and University Relations complete the leadership team. Members of the Board of Trustees are selected based upon their qualifications to enhance the executive leadership of the university. (CFR 1.3)

The first section of our CPR Self-Study addresses the four WASC Standards with the corresponding Criteria for Review (CFR). The second section describes the findings of the research questions for each of our three themes. The conclusion summarizes our capacity to support student learning and our readiness for the EER visit in Spring 2012. The appendices present the required supporting documents and the USD Retention Plan Summary, an essay on student success. The attachments include additional supporting information and are referenced in the text. Some information is hyperlinked and may be accessed by clicking on the highlighted word or phrase.
STANDARD ONE:
Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

Institutional Purposes

The USD Mission and Core Values are central to all curricular and co-curricular programs and they serve to integrate both. The Mission and Core Values are threaded throughout USD publications, including USD’s website, Undergraduate Bulletin, Graduate Bulletin, Archways Student Handbook, Student-Athlete Handbook, and the Policy and Procedure Manual. Mission statements for academic programs, administrative offices, and student support areas are aligned with the university Mission statement.

Students are introduced to the Mission and Core Values at Torero Days, a four-day freshmen orientation program. An assessment of these efforts in Fall 2009 (report available) found that nearly 90% of the new students can recognize academic excellence and community as core values and approximately 50% recognize knowledge, ethical conduct and compassionate service. To improve student recognition of the core values, orientation organizers will try new approaches for Fall 2010’s Torero Days.

Faculty are introduced to the Mission and explore our Catholic identity through orientation of new faculty led by the Provost’s Office and the Catholic Identity Seminars sponsored by the Center for Catholic Thought and Culture (CCTC). New administrators and staff are introduced to the Mission and Core Values during orientations sponsored by Human Resources. The CCTC offers public lectures, colloquia, liturgical and cultural events, and travel seminars for continuing development of faculty and staff. (CFR 1.1)

At the university level, faculty have drafted twelve undergraduate student learning goals, including standard competencies such as critical thinking and written communication. Six preliminary graduate-level learning goals, with an additional goal for doctoral students, have also been proposed. The university learning goals emanate from the university Mission and Core Values that provide the foundation for student learning outcomes across curricular and co-curricular programs.

The University Assessment Committee coordinates the overall student learning assessment efforts taking place in each academic and non-academic unit. Assessment plans are in place, and evidence is being collected to demonstrate program learning outcome achievement throughout the university, with some programs further along than others (see Table 7.1, Inventory of Educational Effectiveness). Student learning outcomes are essential to all program reviews through USD’s Academic Program Review process, accreditation reports for the professional schools, or the assessment of co-curricular support units.

Increasingly, academic programs at USD use direct measures to assess student learning. For the last two years, faculty have progressed from viewing assessment as useful only at the course level to using direct measures to assess the health of programs. Faculty collect data that address program student learning outcomes, analyze that data, and meet to discuss the results and their implications for program improvement. Student learning outcomes, assessment plans, and results are discussed in detail in Theme 1.

USD also collects and analyzes indirect measures of student learning through national surveys, such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and surveys developed at USD, including the USD Freshman Survey, Graduating Senior Survey, and Career Destinations Survey. Seniors reported that their USD experience is effective or very effective in acquiring a broad education (93%), thinking critically and analytically (94%), writing (87%), speaking clearly (81%), learning on their own (79%), and developing a personal code of ethics and values (73%) (USD Graduating Senior Survey, 2008; NSSE, 2008). Survey results have been consistent over time (NSSE: 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008), with a few weak areas identified by comparison with peer groups. For example, students rate USD less effective at improving their cultural awareness and understanding (49%) (NSSE, 2008). (CFR 1.2, 1.3)
Student success is monitored in three key areas: recruitment, retention, and graduation. With USD's academic reputation reaching national and international audiences, the caliber of undergraduate student applicants has steadily increased. Between 1999 and 2009, the average SAT score of matriculated freshmen rose from 1149 to 1207. The percentage of incoming freshmen with a high school GPA of 4.0 or higher increased from 28.5% to 37.3% over that same time period. We consistently retain an average of 85% of our freshman students to the sophomore year, and we have several initiatives in place to improve the retention and experiences for first- and second-year students. USD's most recent six-year graduation rate is 74% for the cohort that entered in Fall 2003. Retention and graduation rates, degrees awarded, and employment data are publicly available on the website of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning in the Common Data Set (CDS) and Quick Facts. (CFR 1.2)

Both the Executive Vice President and Provost and the Vice President for Student Affairs lead the Strategic Oversight Council on Retention (SOCOR) to support institutional retention initiatives, evaluate data, and monitor progress. Refer also to the section entitled “Support for Student Learning and Success” in Standard 2, and retention efforts discussed in Theme 1 and Theme 2, and the USD Retention Plan Summary. (CFR 1.3)

Integrity

The University of San Diego believes that academic freedom is essential to teaching and to the pursuit of scholarly activities within an academic community. A comprehensive review to update the entire Policy and Procedure Manual is currently underway, and the section pertaining to academic freedom is a collaboration of the Faculty Senate, the Board of Trustees, and the President. (CFR 1.4)

The university is financially and legally independent of the Roman Catholic Church. There is no history of Church interference in substantive university decisions outside of USD’s normal governance process. (CFR 1.6)

Diversity. One of USD’s 2004 strategic priorities was to become a more “culturally diverse and culturally competent community.” Ongoing initiatives have culminated in the creation of the Center for Inclusion and Diversity (CID); the center is tasked with exploring and evaluating all aspects of diversity on campus for students, faculty, and staff. The CID and other initiatives are explained in greater detail in Theme 2.

The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) offers an Ethnic Studies major and minor, and a minor in Women’s and Gender Studies. Within the core curriculum, there are three approaches to developing intercultural competence. First, there are Diversity (D) courses, with targeted learning outcomes. All undergraduate students are required to take at least one D course. Second, all students must take English 121, which includes reading literature from underrepresented groups. Third, students increase cultural awareness by completing a second language competency requirement with a cultural component.

USD also values global cultural competence. In collaboration with the International Center, CAS faculty are piloting a global studies seminar to complement the growing number of undergraduate studies abroad programs. The Institute of International Education ranked USD second nationally in percent of undergraduates studying abroad.

At the graduate level, diversity is often defined within an international context. The School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES) houses its own Global Center and has an internationalization requirement for all graduate students. The Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies’ (KSPS) two institutes and its diverse cohort of students in the master’s program advance research, education, and fieldwork on peace and justice issues in Mexico and around the world. Students in the International Master of Business Administration program form consulting teams with students in other countries. Since its inception, the Hahn School of Nursing (SON) has had a focus on diversity, with one of the first trans-cultural health care courses in the country. The school also held an early federal grant for a migrant health care specialization in
the nurse practitioner program that continues in course requirements for the Master's Entry Program in Nursing. The Legal Clinics provide information and legal services to more than 400 low-income individuals in San Diego. The School of Law sponsored the National Asian Pacific Asian Bar Association Conference and the law school’s Career Services office assisted with the development of the Diversity Fellowship program for the San Diego County Bar Association.

Student Affairs supports diversity efforts through two centers, the United Front Multicultural Center (UFMC) and the Women’s Center, both of which sponsor or co-sponsor many educational programs, activities, and events. They have collaborated to develop “Safe Space Allies” training for students, faculty, and staff to validate, support, and respect members of the LGBTQ community. This training complements the long-running “Rainbow Educators,” a group of students, faculty, staff, and alumni who create and present workshops on sexual orientation and other diversity issues to many groups on campus, including student organizations, athletes, faculty and staff, and students living in residence halls. In addition, the UFMC supports 12 different multicultural student clubs and organizations.

USD makes serious efforts to recruit, retain, and support students and employees from diverse backgrounds. The Provost provides up to ten full-tuition “Circle of Excellence” scholarships for high-achieving, underrepresented students. Between 2004 and 2008, the amount of USD gift aid awarded to incoming freshmen with need increased by 116%, from $5.0 million to $10.7 million. Several programs, including McNair Scholars, target underrepresented student groups. McNair Scholars is a federal TRiO program designed to prepare undergraduate students for doctoral studies through involvement in research and other scholarly activities. Two thirds or more of the McNair Scholars are students who are both first generation and low-income. Student Support Services (SSS) is a four-year program that provides mentoring and personalized advising support for first generation, historically underrepresented, and/or low-income students. In Fall 2009 18% of the freshmen class were first generation and 13% were Pell Grant recipients. After the freshman year, students from underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply for the Noyce Scholarship, which funds talented students in STEM majors for up to three years (including one year in a master’s program in SOLES).

The Center for Educational Excellence (CEE) offers seminars and workshops for faculty and staff, including ongoing workshops on how to support underrepresented students. USD has substantially reorganized services to support diversity recruitment and retention. Existing positions have been redefined to staff the CID, and new positions (i.e., transfer admissions counselor and assistant director of multicultural recruitment) have been created. See Theme 2 for a more detailed discussion of diversity. (CFR 1.5)

Academic Integrity. Prospective students and their families can research pertinent university characteristics and policies by accessing the Student Consumer Information website. USD presents its academic programs and services in the Undergraduate Bulletin and Graduate Bulletin as well as through departmental websites, electronic publications, and the Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS). DARS is a software tool for charting a student’s progress toward her/his degree that can be accessed online; it is a “how to” guide that provides information about requirements for degree programs and credentials for students and their advisors.

USD has established policies and procedures to ensure fair and equitable treatment of students. Student conduct and grievances are included in the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities. In 2009-2010, a cross-institutional committee and an external consultant conducted a comprehensive review of the code and all its related processes. Recommended changes will be finalized and implemented for Fall 2010. Additional policies for student-athletes are described in the Student-Athlete Handbook. Refund policies and deadlines are found in the bulletins and the website. Institutional Review Board policies and procedures govern human subjects research, including research that involves students. The Policy and Procedure Manual states grievance procedures for faculty and staff. (CFR 1.7, 1.8)

The Board of Trustees Audit Committee meets on a quarterly basis and provides oversight of the university’s financial operations. The university is audited by Moss-Adams, LLP. Upon completion of the
audit, the Audit Committee meets with the auditors to review the financial statements and the auditors’ report on the adequacy of internal controls and other findings. The university maintains specific policies for travel, entertainment, and purchasing. \((CFR\ 1.8)\)

The university engages in ongoing dialog with WASC. We have submitted substantive change proposals when appropriate and have furnished data as requested (e.g., Annual Reports). There have been many opportunities for us to use the expertise available through WASC to improve our processes. USD has sent faculty, student affairs professionals, and administrators to several WASC workshops. Amy Driscoll, a student learning outcomes assessment expert for WASC, conducted an on-campus workshop for faculty and student affairs professionals in 2009. Cyd Jenefsky, one of the authors of the WASC guidelines for academic program review, conducted a workshop for faculty during a recent refinement of the program review process. \((CFR\ 1.9)\)

**STANDARD TWO:**

**Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions**

Since the last WASC visit, the University of San Diego has made considerable progress in developing an assessment culture to insure successful achievement of our educational objectives. Many of USD’s professional programs are accredited by external agencies that expect both direct and indirect measures of student learning. As a result, assessment efforts in these academic areas were among the first to focus attention on student learning outcomes assessment. The arrival of a new Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences in 2008 and renewed support from the Office of the Provost helped to emphasize the importance of effective assessment on campus. Both Student Affairs and School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES) allocated funds to hire assessment professionals. The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), the School of Law, and the School of Business Administration (SBA) restructured positions and reassigned assessment responsibilities to faculty members and administrative staff. The Theme 1 essay provides a more detailed account of the assessment efforts across the institution.

**Teaching and Learning**

USD offers more than 60 bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degree programs. Undergraduate majors are housed within the CAS and the SBA. Graduate and professional programs are offered in the CAS, SBA, School of Law, SOLES, the Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science (SON), and most recently, the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies (KSPS). In 2008-09, USD awarded 2,249 academic degrees, including 1,264 bachelor’s, 574 master’s, 59 LLM, 327 JD, and 25 PhD degrees.

USD has been fully accredited by WASC since 1956. In addition to WASC’s accreditation, specific programs at USD are accredited by professional accrediting bodies. (See Theme 1 for more detail.) Proposed majors follow a process to ensure that the curriculum is current and relevant. The few graduate degree programs that do not have professional accreditation review are externally reviewed through USD’s academic program review process. \((CFR\ 2.1,\ 2.2ab)\)

Requirements for baccalaureate degrees are consistent with disciplinary standards and are subject to a systematic process of peer review. Students must also complete the core curriculum, a distributed general education model comprised of 54-60 units. The core curriculum was last examined and revised in 2004, but because of its current breadth, the core provides little opportunity for undergraduate students to choose elective courses. Its problematic structure and cumbersome set of learning outcomes is under review and is discussed in Theme 1.

Undergraduate education emphasizes teaching excellence, opportunities for undergraduate research, small classes, and innovative interdisciplinary courses. Exceptional students are invited to participate in the Honors Program. In 2003, the university was granted a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the oldest and most
All degree programs have entry-level requirements that are specified in the Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins, available online, and on departmental websites. The print Bulletins are revised every two years to ensure currency; the online versions are revised as needed. Undergraduate students are assigned to advisors to ensure that they meet the requirements for the major in a timely manner. Advising is facilitated by the use of the Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS) mentioned in Standard 1. (CFR 2.2)

In recent years, faculty have progressed from assessing student learning at the course level to assessing entire programs using direct measures. Faculty have developed student learning outcomes for each undergraduate and graduate program. Student learning outcomes are published on departmental websites and assessed according to curriculum maps. Faculty subcommittees are working to establish learning outcomes that define clear mastery levels for knowledge, skills, and values for core curriculum courses. Degree programs specify not only the courses needed to graduate but also the competencies required for graduation. USD takes a holistic approach to educating students. Twelve institutional learning goals, in final draft, serve as a foundation for learning outcomes that are being developed and tested across campus. The learning goals are a critical focus for curricular and co-curricular programs. Discussion of these and general assessment processes appear in Theme 1. (CFR 2.3)

We recognize that student engagement and first-year characteristics are key contributors to student learning and we regularly review results from several national and in-house surveys, such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey, USD’s New Freshman Survey, Graduating Senior Survey, and the Career Destinations Survey. Most programs conduct their own exiting student surveys that focus on program improvement. NSSE benchmarks provide some indirect evidence of USD students’ performance in the five categories of: (1) level of academic challenge, (2) active and collaborative learning, (3) student-faculty interaction, (4) enriching educational experiences, and (5) supportive campus environment relative to a peer group. We have drawn some inferences about USD students, particularly in comparison to students at peer institutions. For example, our students are similar on levels of active and collaborative learning and student-faculty interaction. USD students score higher on community-based projects, interaction with faculty outside of class, and enriching educational experiences, such as internship, community service, and study abroad. USD students score lower than peers on collaborative teamwork in class and culminating experiences. Programs target the areas where students are not scoring as well as those at peer institutions as part of academic program review. (CFR 2.4, 2.5)

Within each program at USD, faculty are aligning student learning outcomes with assessment of student work. Much of the evidence of program outcome achievement is obtained through course-embedded assignments aligned with each program’s assessment plan. Indicators of academic performance are demonstrated by the very high pass rates for graduates of programs that have formal licensing examinations and benchmarked Major Field Tests. In addition, students seeking credentials to teach or become school counselors pass required state examinations at very high rates. (CFR 2.6)

Professional schools across USD have been engaged in academic program review through their accreditation processes (e.g., ABA, AACSB, ABET, NCATE). USD recognized the need to emulate these processes within the CAS and within graduate programs not subject to external review. Efforts to systematize this process began in 2006, when the University Senate drafted and adopted its first Academic Program Review policy. The first iteration of the policy left gaps in its application, and the USD Guidelines for Program Review was created in Summer 2009 in order to address these deficiencies. The guidelines incorporated the recommendations in the WASC Resource Guide for ‘Good Practices’ in Academic Program Review. These include student learning outcomes assessment and external review of each program by qualified peers. (CFR 2.7)
Scholarship and Creative Activity

USD highly values faculty scholarship and ranks it as one of four primary criteria in the Appointment, Reappointment, Rank and Tenure process. It is also an important consideration in the review for annual merit raises. The Office of the Provost supports scholarship through Faculty Research Grants (approaching $1 million annually), University Professorships ($20,000 per award), and sabbatical awards, and demonstrates USD’s commitment to faculty scholarship by maintaining this level of support during the current economic downturn. Individual academic units also have funds budgeted to support research. Centers and Institutes that fund research include the Center for Educational Excellence (CEE), the Center for Inclusion and Diversity (CID), the International Center, the Social Issues Committee, and the Trans-Border Institute. The Offices of Sponsored Programs facilitate applications for externally funded research. Between 1999-00 and 2009-10, grants and contracts increased from $2.3 million to $7.2 million. (CFR 2.8)

USD values and promotes connections between scholarship and teaching. The CEE provides workshops and other opportunities for faculty to enhance their pedagogical skills and scholarship. It also funds Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) grants for research and travel to and from conferences. Other offices recognize and support innovation and creativity in teaching through awards such as the Davies Teaching Award, the Experiential Education Award, outstanding preceptor awards, and professional school awards.

The university also provides many opportunities for undergraduate students, as well as graduate students, to conduct research. Creative Collaborations, formerly known as the USD Student Research and Internship Conference (1991 – 2005), showcases the vibrant student-faculty interactions that are a hallmark of a USD education. The 2010 event included more than 150 presentations of collaborative research and creative projects. Working side-by-side and engaged in intellectual pursuits with their faculty mentors, USD students gain lifelong experiences that extend beyond the classroom. Pre-Undergraduate Research Experience (PURE) was initiated by faculty to increase the interest, retention, and achievement of underrepresented high school students through active involvement in a scientific research project. The Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE) program is intended to foster student interest in research, enhance student affiliation with faculty in their academic disciplines, and provide financial support for joint student-faculty summer research projects; some are published in peer-reviewed journals. McNair Scholars are expected to successfully complete the baccalaureate and to apply to graduate school. USD applied for and earned the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. The Center for Community Service-Learning offers training and support for courses with a community service focus and has developed rubrics for assessing student work related to community service-learning projects. (CFR 2.9)

Support for Student Learning and Success

At USD, we routinely publish student data on retention and graduation for freshman and transfer student cohorts disaggregated by demographic factors, including race/ethnicity, gender, resident status, religious preference, and financial need in the Stat Book. See Table 3.2 for retention rates by gender and race/ethnicity. USD’s current fall semester one-year retention rate averages 85% for both freshman and transfer student cohorts, and has remained at this level for several years. It falls toward the lower end of retention rates when compared with ten peer institutions and is slightly lower than the 88% average reported in the IPEDS Data Feedback Report 2009. See Attachment 4 for peer comparison tables.

The graduation rate for the 2003 cohort of incoming freshmen is 74%, a figure at the lower end of six-year graduation rates reported by our ten peer institutions. See Table 3.2 for graduation rates by gender and race/ethnicity. These rates are discussed in more detail in Theme 2. USD’s graduation rate for the 2002 entering cohort (75%) is higher than predicted by US News & World Report (73%) and Washington Monthly (69%). Their predictive models include student academic ability as measured by SAT scores and other characteristics of incoming freshmen. (CFR 2.10)
We have been actively investigating reasons for student attrition to develop solutions for improving our retention and graduation rates, now summarized in our essay about student success (USD Retention Plan Summary). Research at other universities has shown the complexities of student persistence (Tinto, 1993; Kuh et al., 2005). Since the last WASC accreditation visit, several initiatives have been directed toward improving retention and graduation rates, including early identification of at-risk students and support for underrepresented groups, such as African American students and out-of-state students. USD has systematic review at two levels. The Strategic Oversight Committee on Retention (SOCOR), comprised of senior-level administration, has set a target retention rate of 90% for the Fall 2012 freshman class based on comparisons with peer institutions. SOCOR appointed a cross-divisional committee, Committee on Undergraduate Persistence (CUP), to make data-informed decisions about strategies and policies related to student success.

CUP has been tasked with developing an integrated model to address student retention based on Tinto’s (1993) Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure and Kuh’s (2008) High Impact Educational Practices report that emphasizes the education of the whole student. Their work emphasizes academic and social integration as a framework for connecting the complex array of factors that contribute to student success. Rather than dealing with all model factors simultaneously, CUP annually assesses key programs and data, including the preceptorial program, residence life, and Torero Days orientation. Curricular and co-curricular assessment efforts are described more fully in Theme 1 and the USD Retention Plan Summary. (CFR 2.11)

Summer advising, Torero Days, and the preceptorial program provide an extensive academic advising support system for incoming students. Additionally, USD provides numerous support services and web resources, including the Center for Student Success, the Student Support Services (SSS), and web-based resources available through the MySanDiego portal to enhance students’ academic and social engagement. Students can plan their course schedules and track their progress toward graduation using DARS. (CFR 2.12)

USD’s One Stop Student Center provides students with assistance for registration, student accounts, and financial aid. The Center consolidates business transactions for the Financial Aid, Registrar, and Student Accounts offices into one location where students can receive personalized customer service. Career Services, a centralized resource for USD students, alumni, and employers, promotes professional development of students and alumni, provides individual career counseling services, and builds productive partnerships that create career opportunities. Additional advisors serve students in undergraduate and graduate business programs, pre-health, pre-law, education, and peace studies. A separate career services office serves the School of Law.

USD's campus-wide wireless network provides access to many online services via the Internet. Students have access to computers in labs and informal spaces across campus, including the libraries. The libraries offer extensive access services, with electronic and interlibrary loan support. The division of Student Affairs houses specialized programs, services, and experiences, which promote student success in and out of the classroom. (CFR 2.13)

University policies for transfer of credits are available in the printed and electronic Undergraduate Bulletin and Graduate Bulletin. The CAS and each of the professional schools specify information and requirements for transfer students on their websites. Special events and information sessions for new undergraduate transfer students are included in Torero Days orientation, and academic units and Student Affairs continue to assist transfer students’ successful integration into USD. The CAS Dean's Office also provides academic advising support until students are assigned to a major advisor. Two transfer preceptorial classes were piloted in 2009-10. The Transfer Student Organization (TSO) fosters social integration between transfer and returning undergraduate students and advocates for their specific set of needs. (CFR 2.14)
STANDARD THREE: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Sustainability

The University of San Diego has undergone a period of robust growth since the last WASC visit, characterized particularly by expansion of the physical plant, information technology infrastructure, and support services for achieving our mission and vision. Numerous new programs and initiatives have diversified the curricular and co-curricular components of the USD student experience, leading to a richer learning environment. As USD makes strides toward its larger goal of promoting sustainability on local, national, and international fronts, it is engaged in implementing procedures and practices that will strengthen and sustain its mission.

Faculty and Staff

USD has grown considerably over the last two decades, with substantial increases in undergraduate and graduate populations as well as in the quality of student preparation. From Fall 1999 to Fall 2009, the student body increased from 6064 to 7222 FTE; during this same period, the number of employees grew from 1171 to 1726 FTE (Stat Book). The increase in personnel has included more full-time faculty members and more professionals and staff to support new curricular and co-curricular programs and the enlarged university infrastructure. This increase reflects the natural path of maturation of a relatively young university, support for our Strategic Directions initiatives, and increased demands of university stakeholders. USD’s staffing levels are comparable to those of peer institutions (Stat Book).

Since the last WASC visit, USD has placed a greater emphasis on faculty scholarship, with a concomitant reduction in teaching load as faculty expanded their research. In order to deliver classes with a low student/faculty ratio, USD has increased the number of full-time faculty but also must continue to supplement with part-time faculty. For Fall 2009 we had 381 full-time faculty and 427 part-time faculty with contracts equivalent to 153 FTE, bringing our total instructional faculty to 534 FTE (Stat Book). (CFR 3.1)

Faculty quality is very high, as reflected in scholarly productivity and professional accomplishments. University Professorships recognize faculty who have demonstrated outstanding scholarly achievements in teaching and research supporting the mission and goals of USD. During the last academic year, Dean Boyd reported that CAS faculty produced 13 books, 28 book chapters, 99 peer-reviewed publications, 64 additional publications, 68 creative works, and presented at nearly 300 professional association meetings. The School of Law faculty is rated 22nd in the nation based on scholarly reputation and 27th in the nation based on scholarly impact. BusinessWeek rankings of undergraduate business programs award USD business faculty an A+ for teaching. Many faculty collaborate with undergraduate and graduate students, actively engaging them in knowledge creation and dissemination through publications and professional society meetings. The success of these faculty-student scholarly relationships is robustly demonstrated during Creative Collaborations.

The university has rigorous standards and procedures for hiring full-time, tenure-track faculty; 94% of full-time faculty have terminal degrees. Hiring procedures are less codified for part-time faculty; 59% have terminal degrees and constitute a more varied population. Some are long-term employees with specialized knowledge and skills; others provide expertise for targeted courses in response to changing disciplinary needs or to enhance the scope of existing department profiles; many provide needed coverage of multiple section offerings for high demand courses. We are concerned about the number of part-time faculty teaching core curriculum courses, and appropriate remedies are actively being discussed. The Center for Educational Excellence (CEE) includes an adjunct faculty member on its advisory board and plans to target this faculty group in its faculty development and assessment programs. Refer to Standard 2 and Theme 2 for discussions of faculty diversity. (CFR 3.2)
In the last ten years, USD has responded to challenges of evolving demands in higher education by hiring additional professional staff. New information technology requires staff with contemporary skill sets. Assessing student learning outcomes, both curricular and co-curricular, requires hiring specialists in these fields and awarding release time for establishing faculty support teams. Unfunded mandates for increased accountability from the US Department of Education requires additional institutional research expertise. Higher expectations from both students and their parents for student services and support require expansion of facilities and staff.

Systematic policies and procedures are in place for annual evaluation of faculty and staff. Tenure-track faculty undergo additional review through the rank and tenure process. For faculty, teaching effectiveness, scholarship, service to the university and the community, and support of the university’s mission are criteria for merit pay, promotion, and tenure. Student evaluations of teaching as well as peer observations and evaluations of classroom teaching and course materials constitute crucial elements of the files for faculty promotion and tenure review. Each academic unit oversees the process of faculty rank and tenure review and sets appropriate standards for excellence within particular disciplines. Evaluation procedures for part-time faculty are inconsistent, varying across academic units. (CFR 3.3)

CEE holds numerous workshops, providing opportunities for faculty and staff to improve their teaching and learning, expand their knowledge about USD initiatives, enhance their engagement with university mission, and strengthen the scholarship of teaching and learning. Financial support for faculty development through participation in external workshops and conferences as well as grants for developing educational projects are provided through awards from CEE, the CAS Committee on Teaching and Learning, and the International Center. In addition, each academic unit provides support for faculty development, conferences, and travel, although this varies widely across academic units.

Academic Technology Services, a division of Information Technology Services (ITS), holds frequent workshops for faculty and staff to improve their software skills and knowledge for teaching and research. ITS staff works with faculty to incorporate new technology resources into their courses, disseminate information about major upgrades to services, and assist with implementation of new technology. Human Resources offers training for all employees, including job-related topics, wellness, and diversity. (CFR 3.4)

**Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources**

USD continues to be financially strong. Our operating budget has been increasing steadily over the past five years, reaching over $300 million in fiscal year 2009-10. The university is currently audited by Moss-Adams LLP, and consistently receives unqualified audit opinions. Through the recent deep national recession, USD maintained a balanced budget, responded to increased student financial aid needs, supported our educational objectives, and retained existing faculty and staff. Compared to institutions with the same bond rating, we have a lower debt-service-to-operation ratio and a higher return-on-net-assets ratio. Between 2005 and 2009, our total fiscal year-end net assets increased from $475 million to $558 million. In a climate where many colleges and universities suffered investment losses of tremendous magnitude, USD was able to weather these conditions without resorting to drastic cuts to academic and student support programs. With increasing attention to sustainable practices, we are working to build the endowment of $220.8 million (June 30, 2009) and systematically reduce operating expenses.

The endowment provides modest support to the operating budget (less than 10%). The *IPEDS Data Feedback Report 2009* shows that USD is more tuition dependent than its peers; at USD 92% of core revenues come from tuition and fees compared to 78% for our peers. Undergraduate tuition and fees are $36,292 (academic year 2009-10), which places us in the mid range of our peers. The average tuition discount rate of 24% helps to defray these costs. USD has a need-blind admission process based on academic and personal characteristics of prospective students, and the Financial Aid Office constructs financial aid packages based on students’ academic characteristics and financial need. (CFR 3.5)
The tremendous growth in physical plant at USD over the last decade provides enhanced student services and promotes interactive academic experiences. The new Student Life Pavilion is a state-of-the art green facility, seeking USD’s first LEED certification (Gold Level). The facility contains expanded activity and meeting spaces for students and faculty, and dining and markets that feature sustainable foods and promote environmental awareness. The Jenny Craig Pavilion greatly enhanced the facilities for both intercollegiate and intramural athletics, and also serves as a community resource for San Diego. The Board of Trustees has approved a master plan for sports and recreation.

The Donald P. Shiley Center for Science and Technology (SCST), a facility of 150,000 gross square foot housing modern laboratory facilities, is a premier example of expansion in service of academics. Housing the Departments of Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Marine and Environmental Studies, the building layout promotes a collaborative teaching and learning environment, characterized by student-faculty research programs and an integration of departments in key areas. Special laboratories with equipment supporting geographic information systems, nuclear magnetic resonance, electron microscopy, laser technology, molecular biology and biochemistry, and environmental sciences are features of the SCST. Incorporation of modern classroom technology was also an important design feature of the new Mother Rosalie Hill Hall that houses the School of Leadership and Educational Sciences. The Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science maintains a state-of-the-art, high-fidelity nursing simulation and standardized patient laboratory where students develop or enhance their clinical skills in a safe environment. Areas within older buildings have been renovated to house specialized equipment and laboratories for engineering, computer science, arts, nursing and other disciplines.

USD has two libraries, Copley Library and the Pardee Legal Research Center. Our library holdings, professional staffing, and expenditures are slightly below average compared to peer schools. The recently approved facilities campus master plan proposes a new and expanded library. Libraries at USD are active hubs of student work, utilizing accessible library computing resources. Use of digital means to expand library holdings and participation in a collaborative circuit circulation system with other local university libraries bolster the library resources. A new University Librarian for Copley Library was recently hired to continue responding to the challenges of this era of digital transformation. (CFR 3.6)

After the last WASC visit, the Action Letter dated March 6, 2001 asked the university to develop “an academic technology plan that is driven by the teaching, learning, and research needs of the faculty and students.” In response to the Action Letter, we chose to focus on technology as one of our major themes in this self-study (Theme 3). USD is proud to report that remarkable improvements have taken place in our information technology infrastructure and services. In 2006, a strategic plan for IT was developed to help guide the major projects and improvements needed to advance technology and services at USD. Much of the initial funding for IT improvements resulted from a cost-saving initiative that permanently reallocated $2 million in operating funds. Annual technology operating and capital budgets increased from approximately $4.2 million to $13.0 million between 2000 and 2010.

Our wireless network is now among the most dense and pervasive deployments at any university. All indoor spaces in every building have wireless coverage, and approximately 90% of outdoor spaces have full wireless coverage. USD received an innovation award from InfoWorld as one of the top 100 IT projects in 2009 for wireless security and guest access.

The university’s web portal, MySanDiego, provides students, staff, faculty, and others associated with the university with fast, one-stop, personalized access to campus-wide information. The portal uses a consistent web-based user interface to present information from a variety of data sources. Content is personalized and customizable depending on an individual’s interests and roles. All users—faculty, staff, students, parents and alumni—are able to access their permitted information and perform vital functions with a “single sign-on” through our secure web portal. For example, students can register for classes online and access their academic records through the portal. Faculty advising is greatly facilitated through online access to academic records, learning management systems, retention instruments, and grade submission.
Almost all classrooms are equipped with computer consoles and data projectors that are routinely upgraded, although other aspects of classroom maintenance and planning need more attention. Information technology in the classroom is discussed in greater detail in Theme 3. (CFR 3.7)

**Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes**

The organizational structure of USD is clearly delineated, and key administrative changes over the last ten years have better aligned organizational units with the mission and strategic vision of the university. Efforts underway to better align effective decision making with our mission and goals include increased data collection and analysis, participation in national studies, and self-study within the university. (CFR 3.8)

The USD Board of Trustees is legally independent of the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego, but clearly committed to the Catholic values and character of the university. They oversee the financial health of the university, including setting tuition rates and approving salary and wage increases. The board has authority for final approval of all university policies, hires the president, and reviews the president’s performance annually. (CFR 3.9)

The administration provides effective educational leadership and management of the university. President Lyons leads the Executive Council, which includes the Executive Vice President and Provost and the Vice Presidents for Business Services and Administration, Mission and Ministry, Student Affairs, and University Relations. The Cabinet includes all members of the Executive Council as well as two associate provosts, six deans, the chair of the University Senate, the Vice Provost and Chief Information Officer, the Executive Director of Athletics, the Assistant Vice President/Dean of Students, the Assistant Vice President for Public Affairs, and the General Counsel. (CFR 3.10)

The faculty acts to maintain academic quality and exercises faculty governance through assemblies and committees within each academic unit and through the University Senate. The Senate, composed of faculty from across the campus, has jurisdiction over the general quality of studies and student welfare. The Senate is in the midst of reviewing and revising the Policy and Procedure Manual of the university through active debate and deliberation. The university continues to make progress in aligning student learning outcomes with the mission and goals of the institution. Systematic academic program review in the CAS has been initiated, and best practices from the initial cycles of program review are being used to refine the process. (CFR 3.11)

**STANDARD FOUR:**
Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement

**Strategic Thinking and Planning**

Soon after President Lyons’ arrival at USD in July of 2003, she renewed the strategic planning process. The Strategic Long Range Plan in effect at that time had been designed to guide the university’s development from 1995 through 2005. It was detailed, comprehensive, and dated. With full support of the Board of Trustees, President Lyons launched “Strategic Directions” in October 2003. She appointed a steering committee to guide the process and charged its members to examine USD’s mission and core values, articulate a vision for the future, and craft a set of strategic goals. The official publication of the university’s Strategic Directions is posted online.

The process of identifying strategic priorities began with a series of focus groups and telephone interviews for the campus community and external constituents, followed by a campus-wide survey of students, faculty, and staff to validate the findings. The steering committee used summaries of these activities to refresh the institutional statements of mission and core values, and to develop a new vision
statement and five strategic goals. These goals were visionary, broad in scope, and designed to position USD for the future. (CFR 4.1)

During the following academic year, retreats, workshops, interviews, and open forums gave members of the campus community opportunities to help translate the visionary goals into themes for action. In May of 2005, the Executive Council prioritized four strategic institutional initiatives: Catholic Social Thought, Inclusion and Diversity, Integrated Learning, and Internationalization.

A broad-based task force, comprised of faculty, students, staff, and led by two co-chairs from different divisions within the university, was appointed to explore each initiative. Each task force was charged to thoroughly investigate its initiative; describe the human, fiscal, technical, and physical resources required to integrate it into USD’s organizational structure; identify measurable indicators of progress; and design implementation plans. By Fall 2007, each task force had reached varying stages of implementation. By the end of Spring 2008, each had been replaced by a suitable administrative configuration within the university. Both the International Center and the Center for Inclusion and Diversity were created as a result of Strategic Directions.

A fifth strategic initiative—Sustainability—was launched in November of 2007 to explore possibilities for creating a more sustainable campus. On a fast track, the task force produced proposals by April of 2008. This initiative was responsible for USD’s first green building and a solar panel project to create the eighth-largest solar energy facility on a U.S. college campus.

Several additional initiatives identified during the planning process did not become strategic goals because they were considered to be primarily operational rather than inherently strategic. These issues were assigned to appropriate administrators for resolution. For example, Academic Affairs, working with the college and the schools, developed procedures for academic program review and assessment of student learning; Information Technology Services (ITS) continued to develop the technology infrastructure; and Admissions created the Enrollment Management Committee to establish enrollment targets. The provost increased her emphasis and financial support for faculty development by restructuring the Center for Learning and Teaching as the Center for Educational Excellence (CEE).

Strategic planning at USD has not been limited to Strategic Directions. After the broad strategic goals were established, each major division of the university developed unit-specific strategic plans in accordance with those goals. Student Affairs, for example, developed goals around the themes of Integrated Learning, Community, and Organizational Excellence. More recently, the USD WASC Steering Committee relied heavily upon various campus constituents to develop the Institutional Proposal, which was the foundation for developing this self-study. In Fall 2009, USD completed a two-year facilities planning process, yielding a new campus master plan that provides a vision for physical development over the next decade. With the Strategic Directions initiatives now implemented, President Lyons plans to revisit the strategic goals during the 2010-11 academic year and develop new initiatives, which will incorporate feedback from the WASC site visit as well as the campus community. (CFR 4.2)

Planning processes at USD are informed by data. Qualitative data are periodically obtained through focus groups, workshops, open forums, and surveys. Planning groups and university administrators also draw upon extensive quantitative data prepared and provided by Institutional Research and Planning (IRP), the Controller’s Office, Budget and Treasury, Student Financial Services, and Admissions. These offices also provide data for quarterly dashboard reports for the Board of Trustees. Historically, data reflecting evidence of educational effectiveness has been a factor in planning for professionally accredited programs. This focus will broaden as our processes for program review and assessing student learning outcomes become standard practice. Alignment of resources is easier to define and therefore more evident in unit-specific strategic plans. We continue our efforts to become more transparent, inclusive, and strategic at the institutional level. (CFR 4.3)
Commitment to Learning and Improvement

USD is committed to sustaining academic excellence and advancing knowledge. Academic programs accredited by professional associations have long followed standards established by those associations for program review and assessment of student learning. Programs not professionally accredited now undergo an institutional program review process, which includes a rigorous self-study with external evaluation. Faculty exercise oversight of the curriculum and maintain quality assurance processes, which now include results from student learning assessments. USD has stringent procedures in place for approving new programs. Proposed programs undergo extensive internal review, and several of these must also be reviewed by external accrediting agencies. Please see Theme 1 for further discussion. (CFR 4.4)

The office of Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) was created shortly after USD’s last reaccreditation visit, and IRP now supports broad-based university policy and planning initiatives through its integrated responsibilities of research and planning. During the past ten years, IRP has moved institutional data from binders to websites. Institutional data summaries are posted for the public in Quick Facts. Data formerly accessible only by top-level administrators are now more transparent and useable. Information available to faculty and staff via USD’s password-protected intranet includes extensive trend tables in the Stat Book, results of national and institutional surveys, and short USD Trends summaries of institutional research. Recent issues of USD Trends summarize the classroom surveys administered by the Theme 3 team. IRP has contributed to the academic program review process by providing departments with detailed tables to foster data-driven discussion and planning at the program level. In consultation with other offices, IRP has reviewed data collected through external surveys, and the University Assessment Committee is investigating survey administration timelines to increase awareness of the potential burden on students. (CFR 4.5)

Use of institutional data for decision-making and planning has increased over time as data has become more comprehensive and more widely available. Curricular and co-curricular assessments are becoming increasingly important in administrative evaluations of the effectiveness of campus programs. Results of national and institutional surveys help to shape current retention efforts. Peer review and student evaluations of teaching are important components of rank and tenure reviews, which are guided by faculty. In addition, course and program development is informed by supplemental questionnaires, focus groups, and student interviews. (CFR 4.6)

Providing state-of-the-art classroom technology has been a priority for USD over the past decade. The Information Resources Council, which includes faculty representatives from major academic areas, student representatives, and ITS staff, advises Information Technology Services (ITS). Excellent progress has been made in installing classroom technology, and now we must develop processes for evaluating how effectively it is being used.

CEE supports the university in all phases of pedagogical development by providing integrated programs, events, and resources to assist faculty in creating an intellectually challenging environment for learning. The center advances the scholarship of teaching and learning through grant support and workshops. Workshop topics include student outcomes assessment, new uses of classroom technology, issues of campus diversity, resources for faculty research, and innovative pedagogy. CEE mentors new faculty across all criteria for rank and tenure, and is launching new programs to support adjunct faculty. Its programs and support have been a positive force in promoting the use of learning management systems, which are now used to some extent by over a third of the faculty. The CEE Advisory Committee, composed of faculty representatives from different academic areas, advises the director and staff. CEE is very active in its outreach efforts, but faces an ongoing challenge of attracting larger audiences.

The Registrar’s Office produces grade distribution reports for all programs, which are discussed in each of the academic units. Grade distribution reports are also considered as part of the rank and tenure process.
Grading policies and practices are regularly examined as part of the academic program review self-study and discussed in faculty assemblies and the University Senate. (CFR 4.7)

USD’s professional schools and several academic departments have program advisory boards through which practitioners, alumni, and employers provide suggestions for program improvement. All programs accredited by professional associations use stakeholder input in program evaluation. Some schools and departments regularly survey their alumni, and Career Services and IRP conduct an annual survey of recent bachelor’s degree recipients to determine how many are employed and how many are pursuing graduate education. The assessment team of the College of Arts and Sciences (the A-Team) is developing a standard survey of alumni in collaboration with IRP, Career Services, and Alumni Affairs. As an institution, we must strive to involve stakeholders more consistently in our evaluation of campus programs. (CFR 4.8)

**THEME ONE:**

**Defining, Evaluating, and Enhancing Educational Effectiveness**

USD has made considerable progress in identifying and assessing student learning outcomes across the university since our last reaccreditation process. We continue to collect and analyze evidence relevant to issues of student learning. Several task force groups and committees have been working to refine our broad institutional learning goals distilled from these sources: USD’s mission and core values statements, graduate and undergraduate program goals, and core curriculum goals. 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 intellectual and learning community.

As stated in our Standards essays, USD’s primary efforts have led to the establishment of permanent systems within the institution that are devoted to assessing student learning. Financial support from the Provost’s Office, particularly for the College and Arts and Sciences (CAS) and the core curriculum, helped to prioritize student learning outcomes assessment. A newly appointed associate provost created the University Assessment Committee, comprised of representatives from the professional schools and CAS, Student Affairs, and Institutional Research and Planning. By aligning academic and co-curricular learning outcomes with the undergraduate learning goals, USD expects to achieve a more fully integrated learning environment.

Both Student Affairs and the School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES) allocated funds to hire assessment professionals. Other areas, including CAS, the School of Law, and School of Business Administration (SBA), restructured and reassigned assessment responsibilities to existing positions. Assessment of student learning outcomes was already underway in many of USD’s professional programs as part of their separate, external accrediting processes. Supported by the Provost’s Office, a task force appointed by the University Senate developed an academic program review process that focused on curricular and structural supports for external peer review. The academic program review policy was developed in 2006, implemented during the 2007-08 academic year, and refined and revised in 2009-10. In addition, each unit in Student Affairs is articulating learning outcomes and three-year assessment plans.

By selecting student learning as the first theme, the university has responded at all levels of the institution. We asked three key research questions for the 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?

This essay illustrates how we have addressed these questions with regard to developing capacity to assess student learning outcomes at the undergraduate and graduate levels, within the core curriculum, and in co-curricular programs. Assessment is also central to the academic program review process.

**Undergraduate Program Assessment**

Assessment of student learning outcomes at the undergraduate level is centered in the CAS and the SBA. The new dean of CAS has appointed permanent staff and funding to support the assessment processes detailed below. The SBA has recently completed their AACSB accreditation, which required extensive review of student learning outcome assessment processes to ensure a quality learning environment.

*College of Arts and Sciences.* Prior to the arrival of the current dean in July of 2008, progress on establishing a culture of assessment was slow and sporadic. During the academic year 2007-08, the Center for Educational Excellence (CEE) hosted discipline-specific sessions for department chairs and interested faculty. The CEE director and prior assessment coordinator worked individually with representatives from each program to develop goals, a preliminary step in transforming their existing teaching objectives into learning outcomes. Education and resources covered the full assessment cycle: constructing learning outcomes, mapping curricula, identifying and using direct and indirect evidence, and applying the results for program improvement.

The new dean made learning outcomes assessment a high priority. Within her first year (2008-09), she appointed a CAS assessment director and an assessment support team (A-Team) comprised of faculty from the four divisions: humanities, social sciences, fine arts, and natural sciences/mathematics. The assessment director and A-Team members received financial support through administrative reassigned time. A-Team members developed templates for annual assessment reports and required all programs to develop learning goals and outcomes. Each department received stipend support for assessment work over the summer, and by September of 2009, departments had reported on the results and analysis for at least two outcomes.

In the second academic year, 2009-10, all departments developed long-term assessment plans based on a three-year cycle using an A-team template. Faculty continued to revise current lists of outcomes to specifically address knowledge content, skills, and values they expect students to achieve by completing the program. Long-term plans also included aligning outcomes with a curricular map and an activity rubric, identifying assessment responsibilities, and building a three-year timeline. Faculty also developed course-level student learning outcomes for all spring course syllabi, replacing the previous teaching objectives. All CAS programs submitted annual reports of outcomes assessment results. All departmental assessment plans and reports are available upon request.

The CAS has concentrated on developing a systematic process to collect and analyze data as evidence for student learning and to use that data in curricular planning and pedagogical development. Annual faculty reports show a growing awareness of the value of conducting assessments. This awareness is apparent in several ways. More faculty are helping students to understand learning expectations by involving them in the process. Faculty are generally engaging in more frequent discussions of scaffolding the curriculum and including part-time faculty in efforts to increase consistency across the assessment cycle. Faculty are just beginning to understand the advantages of establishing reliable measures through inter-rater scoring and externally validating measures through benchmarking. With committed resources, we now have a viable process in place to revise and refine analysis of student learning data, and to apply the results in the development and analysis of the CAS’s curricular programs.
School of Business Administration. The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), following a site visit in April 2009, recently reaccredited the SBA. During 2007-08, faculty developed student learning outcomes for all undergraduate programs. The first round of data collection for all objectives in targeted courses occurred during Spring 2008, followed by analysis and the development of action plans during the summer. This process was repeated during 2008-09 for the fall and spring semesters. Rubrics were developed for embedded assignments and applied by individual faculty members in their own courses. Unusually high achievement levels at the 90% level were reported across all outcomes. To address concerns about validity and reliability, outcome measures and methods of application were modified. The assessment cycle was changed to collect data annually instead of every semester.

After data had been collected and results analyzed for two years, faculty decided to employ external tests to validate some of their outcome results. During Summer 2009 and Fall 2009, the measuring tools for critical analysis, global business practices, ethical attitudes and values, and technology were analyzed and revised. Sam Houston University allowed the SBA to use its critical analysis assessment test, an instrument comprised of multiple-choice items. Results from the survey showed much lower achievement rates than those obtained from the original classroom measures. The newly formed Undergraduate Assurance of Learning Committee is studying similar instruments for assessment of ethical values and attitudes, global business practices, and technology applications. See Attachment 8 for a summary of student learning assessment in the Bachelor’s of Business Administration and Bachelor’s of Economics programs. The assessment process continues to be revised and refined.

The Department of Engineering in the SBA includes three programs: mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, and industrial and systems engineering. For an ABET reaccreditation in 2009, each of the three programs produced an extensive assessment plan that identified program outcomes, aligned with individual course outcomes through curricular mapping, and described assessment tools used to analyze direct and indirect evidence. Faculty members used the Student Performance Assessment Data (SPAD) instrument to score student achievement levels, and summaries of these were provided to ABET in corresponding program assessment manuals. Program improvements are detailed from 2003-2009 in summary tables and include action items such as curricular redesign and increased application of various tools and methods. For greater detail, see the Engineering summary.

Graduate Program Assessment

Most programs at the graduate level have accrediting bodies that require student learning assessment as part of the accreditation process (Table 8.1). As described in the undergraduate section, programs in the SBA are reviewed and accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International (AACSB). Programs in the Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science are reviewed and accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The School of Leadership and Education Sciences has accrediting bodies for many of its programs, including the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE), and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). The Law program is accredited by the American Bar Association (ABA). All graduate programs supplement the information used for their accreditors as needed to meet the USD program review standards.

Our graduate nursing programs have been at the forefront in assessment of student performance, as is the case for most accredited health programs with a strong clinical component. Nursing organizations specify competencies that must be met by students in various specialty areas. In addition, the Master of Nursing Science (MSN), Master’s Entry Program in Nursing (MEPN), Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), and PhD programs have established competencies that are evaluated for each graduate program in the Hahn School of Nursing (SON). Each semester, clinical faculty and experienced preceptors observe candidate knowledge and skills and document competencies. These evaluations become part of portfolios that demonstrate increasing expertise throughout the program of study. Program-specific questions on course
evaluations and alumni and employer surveys provide indirect evidence of student learning for each nursing program. Faculty review the results of these assessments and licensing examinations annually. The MEPN program tracks pass rates for graduates who take the nursing licensure examination; these average close to 100%. Advanced practice certification examination pass rates are tracked for MSN students in the Nurse Practitioner, Clinical Nurse Specialist, and Executive Nurse Leader programs and for MEPN graduates who take the Clinical Nurse Leader certification examination. Certification pass rates will also be tracked for post-baccalaureate DNP graduates. Employment data, graduation rates, and employer and alumni satisfaction with program outcomes are obtained for all SON programs as an accreditation requirement.

Graduate programs in the School of Business Administration (SBA) develop student learning outcomes aligned with learning goals, the mission of the SBA, and the university mission. Each program has created a curriculum map that ties learning outcomes to the appropriate courses. In addition, each program identifies specific knowledge, skills, and attributes that can be assessed using direct or indirect measures for program-level student learning outcomes. Although specific student learning outcomes are identified for each graduate course and program-level outcomes are mapped to specific courses, SBA tends to use data from sources outside of courses to assess program-level student learning outcomes. MBA program measures include external client assessment of student consulting projects and peer assessment using rubrics. They also use indirect measures from Educational Benchmarking, Inc. (EBI) to compare perspectives of USD students with those of students in MBA programs at other universities.

Credential programs in the School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES) include elementary, secondary, and special education teaching; preliminary and professional administration; and pupil personnel services: school counseling. For these programs, outcomes assessment is prescribed by state standards, much like the programs accredited in SON. The standards specify competencies for assessment of candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Credential programs have a clinical component that allows trained supervisors to directly evaluate candidates’ abilities. Master’s programs (MA and MEd) and the PhD program have developed student learning outcomes and mapped them to program courses. At this time, most graduate programs are in the second year of collecting and analyzing data to assess student learning and program effectiveness. Faculty in the Nonprofit Leadership and Management MA program have created the third iteration of a rubric to assess student portfolios. The MEd programs and most of the MA programs hold faculty meetings to examine program assessment results and to determine next steps for the programs. Faculty in the Department of Learning and Teaching developed and refined a rubric to assess action research projects. These faculty members worked with SOLES’ director of assessment support to ensure inter-rater reliability for the action research rubric. Leadership Studies PhD faculty are developing a rubric for assessing the dissertation and plan to implement it in 2010-11.

The Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies (KSPS) specifies program goals for the relatively new MA in Peace and Justice Studies. Faculty have identified student learning outcomes in their course syllabi, and course assignments relate to the outcomes. For 2010-11, faculty will develop program level student learning outcomes and a curriculum map to identify in which courses the outcomes are taught and assessed. They expect to begin systematic program assessment data collection and analysis in 2010-11. By 2011-12, they will have completed a full assessment cycle.

Faculty in the School of Law currently assess student learning in several ways. For example, in the first year, students take practice midterms in some courses and are offered special workshops and presentations on outlining and preparing exam answers. In addition, all first year students enroll in a two-semester lawyering skills course that is taught in a small section format and requires students to prepare, revise, rewrite, and present several written assignments and oral arguments. In the upper division, all students are required to take at least one professional skills training courses, one intensive writing course (with required drafts and rerewrites), and a professional responsibility class. From 2008 to 2010, the School of Law conducted a study of recent graduates that compared incoming student predictors with measures of student performance across the program (i.e., first year course performance, bar course performance, and GPA). As a result of this study, law school faculty approved revisions to the Academic Rules in 2009 and 2010 that focus
on students who struggle to pass the bar examination on their first attempt. The ABA is currently reviewing
new assessment standards for all law schools, which will be approved in Fall 2010. In anticipation of these
changes, the dean is appointing a faculty assessment group to review the standards in 2010-11 so that the
law school will be in compliance prior to their Spring 2012 ABA site inspection.

There are four graduate programs in the CAS: Master of Fine Arts in Dramatic Arts, Master of Arts in
History, Master of Arts in International Relations, and Master of Science in Marine Science. These are in
the preliminary phases of assessment, producing long-term plans to initiate assessment during 2010-11.

Core Curriculum

Following the last WASC visit, USD conducted a campus-wide general education review and revision
process from 2002 to 2004. The revision committee was comprised of representatives from the university
faculty, Student Affairs administrators and staff, and students. The results of this process confirmed the
existing distributed model of education. The revised core curriculum (formerly called general education)
contained the previous four basic competencies (Written Literacy, Second Language, Logic, and
Mathematics) and added a new Diversity competency. The curriculum also included knowledge
competencies across four divisions (Humanities, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and Theology &
Religious Studies/Philosophy). Faculty subcommittees produced sets of learning outcomes for each of the
nine areas, resulting in a list of 43 outcomes. From Spring 2005 through Spring 2006, all core curriculum
courses were reviewed to assure that core learning outcomes were aligned with course learning objectives,
but attempts to systematize evaluation of the core learning outcomes did not yield results. For example, the
prior assessment director introduced the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) on a trial basis, but the
length and difficulty of the test led to a very low response rate. Because few undergraduate programs were
using direct learning assessments at the time, faculty did not understand the purpose of the CLA and did not
encourage students to participate.

The learning outcomes’ large number and weak descriptions also compounded initial difficulties in
assessment. The 43 core outcomes were the product of lists created independently, resulting in redundancy
of stated competencies. To increase awareness of best practices in student learning outcome assessment, the
director of the Center for Educational Excellence (CEE) met with chairs of departments that offer core
classes to explain the phases of the assessment cycle: establishing effective outcomes, developing curricular
maps for aligning outcomes with embedded assignments, developing and applying rubrics based on
outcome criteria, analyzing outcome data, and implementing curricular revisions based on results.

At the same time, efforts to establish a list of institutional undergraduate learning goals were
spearheaded by the First Year Experience Committee, the CEE director, and the Core Curriculum
Committee. With the assistance of the associate provost, the Academic Affairs and Planning Committee
assigned a task force to develop undergraduate goals. In Spring 2008, the task force produced ten goals, fully
aligned with the university’s mission and core values. During academic year 2008-09, the goals were
presented to various groups and discussed across campus through CEE workshops. With input from
Student Affairs, University Ministry, the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees, and the
Parents’ Advisory Board, the number of goals was expanded to twelve.

Under the leadership of the new CAS dean, program assessment ensued at a rapid pace, but the core
curriculum represented a tougher challenge. All programs were required to assess at least one core outcome
for the first time in Spring 2009, but efforts were not systematized and results were inconclusive. However,
this exercise provided much-needed practice to understand the difficulties in assessing the core curriculum.
In January 2010, the associate provost assembled a team of faculty, including the CAS A-Team, to attend a
WASC assessment workshop. With this assistance, the CAS A-Team distilled the 43 outcomes into six basic
competencies accepted by department chairs in consultation with their departments: 1) core knowledge in
the natural sciences, social sciences, theology/philosophy, and humanities, 2) critical thinking and logic, 3)
With the assistance of the A-Team, the Core Curriculum Committee proposed a **three-year assessment plan**, approved by the dean in Fall 2009. During Spring 2010, three competency areas were targeted for assessment: written literacy, second language literacy, and diversity. To complement our focus on diversity in Theme 2, we chose cultural competence as our first systematic analysis for the core. At least one cultural awareness outcome is affiliated with English 121, the lower division written literacy requirement, and Language 201, the second language literacy requirement.

**Academic Program Review**

To promote evidence-based decision-making, USD crafted an academic review policy that could contribute directly to strategic planning processes. When WASC released its “best practices” guidelines for program review, a task force worked to integrate those guidelines with USD’s policy during Summer 2009. The guidelines explain a four-stage process: program self-study, external site visit by program review team, university-wide committee recommendations, and senior-level administrative recommendations for strategic planning. Departmental program review coordinators receive stipend support from the Provost’s Office during the review process.

A department’s self-study includes qualitative and quantitative evidence of the program’s strengths and weaknesses. Student learning outcomes assessment to document curricular improvement is a central characteristic of this process. The self-study also considers the program’s sustainability and the level of support needed to meet the high standards of academic excellence required by each program and its corresponding discipline. The program review team provides objective analysis for the department, dean, and provost about (a) strengths and areas of needed improvement, (b) assessment of student learning and the curricular environment, and (c) opportunities and plan for improvement. Academic program review complements external accreditation for graduate and certificate programs on campus. If a program’s accreditation self-study does not include evidence of student learning outcomes assessment, the department must submit such evidence for academic program review.

**Student Affairs Assessment**

The Student Affairs division began the strategic planning process with a review of relevant data and a SWOT analysis at a division-wide meeting in June 2008. A division task force synthesized the information and constructed three themes: Integrated Learning, Community, and Organizational Excellence. The task force appointed working groups to develop an aspiration statement and goals for each theme. In January 2009, the division hired an associate dean of students with assessment expertise, who led the Student Affairs Leadership Team (SALT) in synthesizing, prioritizing, and assigning timelines for the goals and objectives. Team leaders developed implementation plans for each objective by identifying specific steps, timelines, and personnel necessary for completion. The final plan was accepted by the division in September of 2009.

One of the strategic goals is to develop a culture of assessment within the division. In Spring 2009, SALT approved a Vision for Student Affairs Division Assessment, including a process for creating the culture of assessment, and an Assessment Resource Guide to support units as they complete the process. In Summer 2009, units began identifying learning outcomes and developing a three-year assessment plan. Currently, nine units are engaged in the process; two have completed the assessment cycle and are implementing their findings into future planning. This work has been mapped in a comprehensive matrix.

**Next Steps**

To address the first two research questions, USD has invested human, financial, and physical resources in the assessment of student learning across curricular and co-curricular program review. Faculty and administrators are beginning to integrate institutional and assessment data into decision-making and
planning processes at program and division levels. In response to the third research question, we need to develop mechanisms to ensure systematic input from all appropriate stakeholders. The intensive self-appraisal resulting from academic program review and the WASC institutional self-study have helped to align evidence with planning at all levels so that changes become intentional and integrated.

At the undergraduate level, CAS will fully implement long-term program plans for the first time in Fall 2010. Faculty will refine and revise program plans as awareness of the process grows and an assessment culture develops. Opportunities for improving curriculum and pedagogy will become apparent as faculty teams examine their assessment results. Continued interpretation of results will provide internal accountability and serve as the basis for setting external benchmarks. As the process matures, faculty will develop increasingly complex and appropriate measures and methods for assessment.

The SBA faculty have already defined student learning outcomes and constructed basic rubrics. As these measuring tools and methods are reviewed and revised, the SBA will be able to benchmark more of their results with institutions using similar measures. The SBA assessment team has adapted an external assessment of critical analysis and is seeking suitable external measures for its other program outcomes. Student response rates will remain high for the direct measures because they are tied to incentives such as extra credit and participation points in certain classes. Response rates for indirect measures, such as student surveys, will remain high because they are tied to the “passport program,” which is a graduation requirement for all undergraduate business students.

The Engineering programs first established student learning assessment processes prior to 2000, in line with the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET’s establishment of EC2000, which called for such processes. An important element of these criteria is the active involvement of engineering faculty and all three of the engineering programs have mature processes in place for continuous improvement of student learning and assessment of student learning. A major focus for improving student learning was directed over the last four years to the first year student experience in ENGR 101 and ENGR 102 – learning outcomes were changed to ensure that students each participated meaningfully in a multi-disciplinary team design of a robot in both of these courses. The next steps are to improve student learning outcomes in the capstone design sequence taken by seniors in engineering to better define rubrics (for both technical and non-technical aspects) used to measure successful designs and to establish even higher standards for student achievement on these projects.

As we enter academic year 2010-11, graduate programs are at different stages in developing their student learning outcomes assessment. Law school and KSPS programs will be developing student learning outcomes and determining means for assessing them. Faculty in SBA and SOLES will be evaluating the quality of the data they have already collected and refining direct measures for their outcomes. Faculty in other accredited graduate programs, which have data collected for student learning outcomes assessment, will focus on using that data for program improvement.

Next steps for reviewing the core curriculum include assessing written literacy and intercultural competence. Assignments collected in English 121, Spanish/French 201, and lower division diversity (D) courses are being evaluated during Summer 2010 by faculty compensated with stipends. Rubrics for each of these assessments are adapted from AAC&U’s rubrics for written communication and intercultural knowledge and competence. Additional rubrics for portions of the second language competency are adapted from the American Language Association’s outcome criteria and will be triangulated with current language placement and third-semester competency exams.

During Spring 2010, CAS department chairs appointed faculty to a discussion group charged to review the current list of 12 undergraduate learning goals. Focusing on student learning outcomes assessment, the group is considering various ways the goals might be achieved through the core. Potential strategies include interdisciplinary tracks of courses for knowledge, skills, and values outcomes; living-learning communities; capstone experiences, and portfolios. The discussion group is developing a proposal for core curriculum reform that will be presented to the Academic Assembly and University Senate during Fall 2010.
The University Assessment Committee has studied the academic program review process and will offer suggestions for streamlining the process to the University Senate. For example, most departments and review teams regarded the presence of a USD member on the external program review team as unnecessary. Another example is the difficulty of obtaining and incorporating feedback from all appropriate stakeholders into the program review process. The CAS A-Team is developing a standard alumni survey to address the information needs of academic programs, Career Services, and Alumni Relations. The A-Team is also working to expand the use of senior exit surveys to recognize students as primary program stakeholders.

Continuing work begun in Fall 2009, SALT provides status reports for their strategic objectives and posts this information to the Student Affairs website. In the second year of plan implementation, SALT will continue to review relevant data and incorporate new initiatives into the plan as necessary. Student Affairs has recently implemented a process for summarizing annual assessment data and incorporating the information into annual unit reports and goal setting, as well as adjustments to the strategic plan. In response to the current budget climate, the strategic plan is being used to prioritize allocation of resources in hiring decisions as positions become vacant, and temporary positions are being reviewed to determine alignment with priorities.

By focusing on defining, evaluating, and enhancing educational effectiveness, USD has committed resources to ensure the development of effective assessment processes for the present and future. The university has developed systems for regularly considering evidence in the decision-making process at program and division levels with input from appropriate stakeholders.

THEME TWO:

Advancing Diversity in Campus Structure, Climate, and Curriculum

The University of San Diego’s Mission includes creating a diverse and inclusive community. One of our core values is community: “The University is committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive and collaborative community accentuated by a spirit of freedom and charity, and marked by protection of the rights and dignity of the individual. The University values students, faculty and staff from different backgrounds and faith traditions, and is committed to creating an atmosphere of trust, safety and respect in a community characterized by a rich diversity of people and ideas.” Theme 2 centers upon three research questions:

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?

As noted in Standard 1, USD renewed its focus on diversity following the last WASC reaccreditation. Our efforts to increase campus diversity have yielded positive results. The Diversity Timeline provides a ten-year summary of the numerous diversity and inclusion initiatives at USD since our last reaccreditation.

Historically, a majority of the freshman class has been White and female. Recruitment efforts between 1999 and 2009 increased the percent of freshmen from minority groups from 22% to 30%. Concurrently, the proportion of male freshmen increased from 37% to 43%.

Faculty diversity has improved slightly in the same period, with recruitment and hiring focused on attracting minority and female faculty. Between 1999 and 2009 the representation of full-time minority faculty increased from 15% to 18%; recruitment and retention of minority faculty continues to be a priority. During the same period, the percent of full-time female faculty members increased from 39% to 45%.

Women are well represented in the administration of the university. The executive leadership team includes women in key university positions, including the President, Executive Vice President and Provost, and Vice
President for Student Affairs. Six assistant vice presidents are women. The deans of the College of Arts and Science, the School of Leadership and Education Sciences, and the School of Nursing and Health Science are female, as are a majority of associate and assistant deans. Women are well represented among department heads, including fields in which women are traditionally underrepresented, such as the Departments of Chemistry and Engineering.

From 1999 to 2009 minority representation increased from 47% to 56% for non-administrative staff and from 20% to 23% for administrative personnel. For both groups the proportion of females remained about the same (62% to 59% for non-administrative staff and 55% to 59% for administrators). A large number of directors and middle management are female, including executive director of institutional research and planning, controller, registrar, budget director and the senior director for academic technology services. See Tables 4.1A and 4.1B for faculty and Tables 4.3A and 4.3B for staff details.

During 2009-10, USD conducted a more in-depth study of diversity on campus, particularly regarding current campus structure, climate and curriculum. We used a variety of approaches to benchmark our current status. We developed an Equity Scorecard, adapted from USC’s model, to explore structural diversity through the dimensions of retention, success, social activities, and faculty representation. Our undergraduate students participated in the pilot year of the Diverse Learning Environments Survey (DLE), developed by the Higher Education Research Institute, to assess campus climate. We assessed students’ perceptions of the D-Course core requirement. In addition, we posed the three research questions above to each academic division and 18 administrative and support units, asking them to identify specific diversity initiatives and actions to supplement the information from the scorecard and surveys. Our findings are summarized below.

Recruitment

As mentioned above, minority representation in the freshman class increased from 22% to 31% between 1999 and 2009. Efforts to recruit a diverse undergraduate student population are led by our Department of Admissions. In the summer of 2008, we created and filled a new position, assistant director for multicultural recruitment. The assistant director engages in local outreach to San Diego junior and senior high schools, develops and distributes materials that highlight diversity efforts on campus, travels to target areas for recruitment purposes, and coordinates a fly-in program that funds student visits to campus to meet other students, attend workshops and classes, and spend a night in a residence hall. This visit to campus, directed toward students from underrepresented groups, occurs between their admission and their decision to attend.

One aspect of the Equity Scorecard highlighted enrollment in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) majors. Compared with the ethnic distribution of the undergraduate student population, there are higher proportions of Asian, Black, and American Indian students, and fewer Hispanic and female students in STEM majors. Increased minority enrollment in STEM majors is attributable, at least in part, to outreach efforts of the science programs. For example, our chemistry department implements the American Chemical Society’s pre-college outreach. Several grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF) assist in recruiting students from minority groups into science, mathematics, and engineering majors. NSF has also funded grants that partner faculty from the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and the School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES) to foster student interest in becoming science and math teachers.

Scholarships and other funds are available for minority students who are interested in attending USD. The purpose of the Pre-Undergraduate Research Experience (PURE) program is to increase interest, retention, and achievement of underrepresented students through active involvement in a scientific research project. High school students from underrepresented groups who will begin classes in the fall are invited to spend the summer prior to their freshman year carrying out research in laboratories on the USD campus.
To date, our recruitment yields for undergraduate Black students have lagged behind those of our peer institutions. In 2009, 3.3% of USD’s new freshmen were Black, compared to an average of 5.8% for our peers, and 2.2% of degree-seeking undergraduates were Black compared to 5.6% for our peers. In contrast, we have recruited a higher percentage of Hispanic students than many of our peers.

Admission of graduate students is more decentralized, with recruitment personnel located in the professional schools. These recruitment professionals identify and invite diverse students into their programs. For example, SOLES actively promotes programs via its web site, graduate fairs, and events specifically for students from underrepresented communities. SOLES maintains a Diversity Scholarship Fund and also funds graduate assistantships, awards merit scholarships, and provides assistance for minority students to find housing and jobs on campus. The Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science (SON) recruits through networks with the Black Nurses Association, the Hispanic Nurses Association, and the Asian Nurses Association. The School of Law participates yearly in the West Coast Law Consortium Minority Law Day, which has a pool of 4000 prospective minority law candidates. Law school recruiters also visit Historically Black Colleges and Universities and use law databases to actively identify minority candidates for recruitment.

Recruiting minority faculty is a priority for all academic areas. CAS has initiated a practice of requiring departments to advertise vacant positions in at least one venue that targets underrepresented groups in their disciplines. For example, a position in sociology was recently advertised in division publications of the American Sociological Association targeting underrepresented scholars, the Ford Foundation Minority Scholar listserv, *Mujeres activas en letras y cambio social*, as well as several other networks and listservs for faculty from underrepresented groups. All graduate professional schools advertise positions for faculty in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, as well as publications for a wide range of underrepresented groups. For example, the School of Nursing and Health Science posts faculty openings in *Minority Nurse*.

Processes are in place to recruit and hire diverse staff members. All hiring managers participate in Human Resources training on effective recruitment processes and submit a detailed recruitment plan. Positions are advertised in multiple venues, such as *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* and *The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education Magazine*. Most departments utilize various publications, professional organizations, and conferences to recruit a diverse applicant pool. Departments also highlight the importance of diversity and inclusion to candidates during the interview process.

**Retention and Graduation**

The three-year average retention rate for first year students is 85.0%. This rate is fairly consistent for all race/ethnicities except Black (80.5%) and American Indian (81.3%) students. The total number of students for these two groups is much smaller than that of the other groups (Fall 2008: Black freshman, n = 19; American Indian, n = 13). Regarding persistence to degree, the Equity Scorecard compares three-year averages for six-year graduation rates (2006 through 2008). USD’s graduation rate is lower than that of our peers for all minority groups except American Indians.

Although freshman SAT scores for USD’s Black and Hispanic students compare well nationally, their entering SAT scores and high school GPA’s are lower than those of our other first-time freshmen. While at USD, they earn fewer A’s than other groups, as noted in the Equity Scorecard. Students from all minority categories are underrepresented in the undergraduate Honors Program. These data indicate a need for additional assistance for minority students. USD has developed financial, curricular, co-curricular, and integrated strategies for providing support for Black and other minority students.

The Black Student Retention and Recognition Committee (BSRRC) introduces new students to key faculty, staff, alumni, community leaders, and other students, and makes faculty or staff mentors available. In Fall 2009, BSRRC held a special welcoming event for Black students and their families and also conducted a special graduation ceremony for seniors. Summer 2010 marks the entry of first-year black students into the Student Support Services bridge program.
Co-curricular programs supplement retention efforts of academic units across campus, including Student Support Services (SSS), United Front Multicultural Center (UFMC), and the BSRRC. SSS provides academic tutoring, advice, and assistance in course selection; information and assistance in applying for financial aid; and individualized career counseling for USD undergraduates from underrepresented groups. The goal of SSS is to retain and graduate program participants. Furthermore, Student Affairs provides cultural, academic, and social programming. Campus units such as the UFMC, Women’s Center, Disabled Student Services, and the International Center also support our students. The federally funded McNair scholarship is awarded to sophomore and junior students who are both first generation and low-income.

The UFMC supports many organizations for students of specific racial/ethnic backgrounds, including the Association of Chicana Activists, the Black Student Union, Chaldean American Student Association, Filipino Ugnayan Student Organization, Indian Student Association, International Student Organization, Jewish Student Union, American Indian Student Organization, and People of the Islands. In addition, the UFMC supports PRIDE, men and women at USD who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning, and their allies.

We collected data on student perceptions of the campus climate using the pilot DLE. This survey was distributed to all sophomores, juniors and seniors (except new transfers) in Fall 2009. The overall response rate was low at 21.4% (N= 623, 436 female, 187 male). Although there were small numbers of respondents among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual students (n=30), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students (n=12), and Black students (n=10), we paid special attention to their responses. Please see our preliminary analysis of the DLE survey; HERI will be releasing a full report in 2010-11.

DLE respondents rated their perceptions of campus climate across a number of variables. Overall, students rated the university as welcoming. Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) respondents rated USD as more intolerant, hostile, racist, sexist, and impersonal than heterosexual students. Females rated the university as more racist, less diverse, intolerant and more homophobic than males. Half of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that USD appreciates difference in sexual orientation. At Catholic institutions, a tension exists between Catholic teaching and social issues pertaining to sexual orientation and gender expression. This tension may be reflected in the finding that 76.3% of all survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that USD has campus administrators who regularly speak about the value of diversity.

Faculty, administrators, and staff are making efforts to create a more welcoming environment for all students. During 2009-10, Student Affairs facilitated Safe Space Ally training for more than 125 faculty, administrators, and staff who serve as a resource for the LGBTQ community. Student Affairs staff are trained to be acutely aware of diversity issues and intervene quickly when incidents occur. DLE results indicate that 39% of respondents witnessed discrimination “sometimes” to “very often.” However, only 2.7% stated that they had ever reported an incident of discrimination to a campus authority. As a result, Student Affairs will implement training for student leaders to help them respond to acts of intolerance.

USD provides training to help faculty and student leaders interact with students from underrepresented groups. Faculty members who also serve as academic advisors provide individual support and guidance for minority students. The CEE offers workshops and meetings each semester on how to advise students from underrepresented groups. The DLE survey revealed that 97.1% of respondents from all ethnic groups find faculty approachable. Responding to the preceptorial student survey, 78.4% of freshman participants agreed or strongly agreed that their faculty preceptors were responsive to their unique needs (74.0% Black; 80.6% Hispanic), and 92.3% agreed or strongly agreed that preceptors created an inclusive and welcoming environment (81.5% Black; 92.5% Hispanic).

Retention efforts for graduate programs are based in each of the professional schools, designed for their unique populations. In recent years, USD has increased financial support for students in graduate programs across the university. For example, considerable financial aid is provided for SON students, including
specific grants that target minority students. A newly formed Black Graduate Student Association provides support for its members.

Because faculty and staff from underrepresented groups are few in number, they are disproportionately asked to serve on campus committees and feel pressured to accept. The university has been trying to alleviate this problem by hiring more minority faculty and staff, but has only had modest success. Formal and informal events for tenure track faculty give participants a chance to share experiences and discuss approaches for fostering inclusion and respect for all. These events for new, junior, and adjunct faculty are often offered in cooperation with CEE. New law school faculty receive much of their support through mentoring relationships and gatherings such as the Faculty Colloquium that offers 12-17 lunch talks a year. The Human Resources department offers a variety of support services for professional development as a primary strategy in the retention of diverse staff.

Curriculum

Developing cultural competence is a key educational objective at USD. It is one of the undergraduate learning goals and a primary program outcome for several departments, such as Ethnic Studies, Gender and Women’s Studies, and Sociology. At the general undergraduate level, there are three ways that all students are encouraged to develop cultural awareness in the core curriculum: Diversity (D) courses, English 121, and Language 201.

The diversity designation identifies courses in which students will achieve three basic outcomes related to cultural awareness of underrepresented groups within the United States. Diversity courses require a review by the Core Curriculum Committee to ensure that their course objectives are aligned with the core curriculum outcomes, and assessment efforts to date are discussed in detail below. Comprehensive lists of D courses are attached. There are approximately 85 D courses offered across the CAS divisions (primarily in the Social Sciences and Humanities) and two diversity courses (one required for all majors) offered in the SBA.

Undergraduate students enrolled in D courses and faculty teaching those courses were surveyed during Fall 2009. A total of 938 students from courses in the social sciences, humanities and business completed the assessment; most of the respondents were freshmen and sophomores. Respondents indicated that the D course was effective in helping them develop empathy (82.9%), increased their awareness of the causes and effects of structured inequalities and prejudicial exclusions (83.2%), and increased their understanding of themselves and others beyond stereotypes (81.6%). Respondents agreed that this course introduced ideas the students had not previously encountered (78.8%) and that they have been able to see connections and importance between the material in this course and real-life situations they might face on the job, in their family, and as a citizen (85.8%). A majority of the students agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more confident about their ability to work with others as a result of this course. Some differences were noted. Upperclassmen and students in social science and business D courses agreed more often than underclassmen and students in humanities D courses that their courses increased their awareness of diversity and feelings of inclusion in the classroom. Students who had taken more than one D course tended to agree more with these questions. Female respondents were more likely than males to indicate that the courses would affect their behavior. Please see the full report.

Students must also complete English 121 as a lower division writing requirement. In the last revision of the core curriculum (2002 through 2004), it was decided that all English 121 sections would include a range of works by U.S. minority authors and develop one key outcome to specifically address cultural awareness. All students are required to complete a third-semester competence of a second language (Language 201), in which they “analyze and engage issues of diversity across cultures and within the U.S.” See page 4 of the Report of the General Education Review Committee.

Co-curricular programs support curricular development of domestic and international diversity issues. The Office of Community Service-Learning provides course-based learning in local and regional
communities for a growing number of courses. The International Center provides workshops for faculty who want to develop and assess global engagement learning outcomes in their courses. Faculty led 87 study abroad courses from Fall 2009 through Summer 2010.

Professional schools and graduate programs also address domestic and international diversity issues. Programs from prelicensure through the PhD in Nursing and the Doctor of Nursing Practice in SON focus on clinical care of patients from many cultural backgrounds. Similarly, degree and credential candidates in the SOLES’ Marital and Family Therapy, Counseling, and Education programs work with clients and students from diverse groups. KSPS candidates in the MA in Peace and Justice Studies program have the opportunity to participate in human rights efforts around the world. The law school’s Legal Clinics provide informational and legal services for more than 400 low-income residents of San Diego. The International MBA Program is run in conjunction with the Ahlers Center, which organizes international consulting practicum and study abroad opportunities for IMBA students.

Cultural competence is a major component of the first three semesters of the SON. Domestically nursing students are placed in a number of clinical agencies working with diverse immigrant and refugee communities. Internationally, the clinical immersion program prepares the students to become culturally responsive nurse leaders. SOLES has an internationalization requirement, which can be met through study abroad, specific courses, and projects. At this time, all of the courses in the Department of Learning and Teaching, and many in Counseling and programs in Leadership Studies have included student learning outcomes related to increased cultural competence. The Law school offers courses in international and comparative law and has a number of foreign trained attorneys, as well a study-abroad program.

**Next Steps**

Providing a campus climate that is welcoming, inclusive, and supportive continues to be a priority for USD. Our emphasis for the EER phase of reaccreditation will be creating an optimal learning environment to ensure success for students from all backgrounds. We have reorganized institutional systems to improve our processes and planning of services to support all students.

The Center for Inclusion and Diversity (CID) is an important culmination of a series of efforts that began with the president’s strategic initiative on inclusion and diversity, which was formalized as the President's Advisory Board on Inclusion and Diversity (PABID). PABID identified critical issues and formulated an action plan to be implemented by the newly formed CID. The CID, which is jointly supported by Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, is currently establishing goals and officially opens its doors in Fall 2010.

The Committee on Undergraduate Persistence (CUP) mentioned in Standard 2 and Theme 1 has developed a comprehensive retention plan with both broad-based strategies and strategies targeting specific student groups (see USD Retention Plan Summary). The BSRRC will provide additional support to Black students with a one-unit support course in Fall 2010. Academic advisors are assigning incoming Black students in clusters to preceptorial classes to minimize potential feelings of isolation. BSRRC will also continue its mentoring program for incoming Black transfer students, based on a successful pilot year. In addition, there are several initiatives across campus to create peer connections among undergraduate students, particularly by establishing one-to-one peer relationships. For example, the United Front Multicultural Center is implementing a new peer-mentoring program for underrepresented students. Forty undergraduates have agreed to be peer mentors in the inaugural year. Many departments are just starting to develop methods for assessing the effectiveness of initiatives supporting diverse students, faculty, and staff. Our data collection efforts will assist us in identifying best practices for implementation at USD.

To study the D requirement of the core curriculum, faculty collected students’ reflective essays from D courses. During Summer 2010, faculty are analyzing these essays for evidence of cultural awareness, cultural self-awareness, openness, and empathy (perspective-taking) using an AAC&U developed rubric for intercultural knowledge and competence. Faculty are also analyzing outcome achievement data for English
121 and Language 201. We recognize that the D attribute is applied to multiple courses across disciplines, and we will determine how to establish more reliable measures of cultural competence.

A curricular/co-curricular effort related to diversity will be piloted in 2010-11: the Unity Living-Learning Community (LLC). The Unity LLC will explore issues of diversity in the broadest sense and consider how the LLC can be a catalyst for artistic, social, intellectual, and civic engagement. Students will address questions about identity, privilege, and power that exist inside and outside of a diverse community. Throughout their first year, students will consider how values might be shared despite differences, how effective communication and political participation might build community, and how the “intersections” of experiences are similar on campus and across the nation.

A new international experience designed for second-year students is being piloted for the students who arrived as new freshmen in 2009. In Fall 2010, Second Year Experience Abroad participants will complete a global studies seminar in preparation for study abroad to develop awareness, appreciation, and respect for the complexity of cultural, political, environmental, and social issues worldwide. During the Intersession 2011, approximately 205 participants will earn core curriculum credit while studying abroad in one of four locations.

We have in place a wide range of academic and co-curricular support service for students from diverse backgrounds. For the EER phase of our self-study, we will assess these services more consistently to determine which contribute most effectively to student persistence. From our CPR investigations, we realize that cultural competence is developed through the integration of curricular and co-curricular experiences. For the EER, we will assess experiences both inside and outside the classroom to gauge the level of cultural competence achieved by our students.

### THEME THREE:

**Creating and Sustaining Innovative Learning Spaces**

Theme 3 focuses on technology’s contribution to the classroom environment experienced by faculty and students. We investigated how information technology contributes to USD’s learning spaces and how those spaces might be improved for learning and teaching. This theme was guided by two research questions for the CPR self-study:

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?

Formal learning spaces include classrooms, laboratories, and studios where classes are regularly scheduled. Informal learning spaces include a variety of areas where students spontaneously gather to study. General use classrooms have been the main focus of our investigation during the self-study, but we expect to expand our study for the EER.

### Information Technology

Following USD’s reaccreditation visit in 2000, the Commission recommended that the university “direct attention toward developing an academic plan that is driven by the teaching, learning, and research needs of faculty and students.” During the past decade, Information Technology Services (ITS) has made substantial improvements throughout the university’s entire technology infrastructure, and many of these improvements directly impact learning and teaching. *(CRF 3.4, 3.6, 3.7)*
• Computer replacement program: PCs or Macs are leased on a three-year replacement cycle for all tenured and tenure-track faculty and for full-time administrators and staff, ensuring that computers are reasonably consistent and current across campus.

• Software licenses: A volume discount program, negotiated with a variety of vendors, provides software applications to faculty and staff at no cost or at significantly discounted rates. Licensed software is regularly upgraded on university computers.

• Increased bandwidth: A high-performance network throughout the entire campus supports Internet-based teaching, learning, and research endeavors.

• Classroom technology upgrades: Most lecture and seminar rooms include classroom consoles with computer, data projector, sound systems, SMART boards, and other media. Rooms are upgraded on a scheduled cycle to keep technology current.

• Student records systems: The Banner student system, implemented in Fall 2008, provides admissions and financial aid assistance, online registration for students, and online grade submission for faculty. Both students and faculty can check academic records and monitor progress with the Degree Audit Reporting System advising system. The Cognos reporting system can provide up-to-date class lists and other departmental reports. Most student services, including registration, financial aid, degree audit, and obtaining grades, are channeled through USD’s MySanDiego portal. MAP-Works identifies new freshmen students at risk of leaving the university.

• Learning management systems (LMS): WebCT/Blackboard is designed to allow students and faculty to communicate and participate in classes delivered online or use online materials and activities to complement face-to-face teaching. TWEN (The West Education Network) is a course management system specifically designed for law schools. Faculty can deliver class-specific materials such as syllabi, schedules, PowerPoint presentations, lecture notes, recorded lectures, e-books and reading materials. Students and faculty have access to chat functions, web conferencing, and discussion boards.

• Wireless network: Ubiquitous state-of-the-art Wi-Fi not only provides greater flexibility in the classroom, it allows students untethered access to the Internet, library materials, and LMS. Every building and virtually all outdoor spaces on campus provide high-speed wireless access for all forms of mobile devices.

• Training and support: ITS and the Center for Educational Excellence (CEE) offer demonstrations of new hardware, hands-on workshops to learn university-supported software, emerging technology tools, and presentations showing how new technologies can be used in the classroom. ITS typically provides 180 academic technology training sessions per year at no charge to faculty, staff, and students, and their outreach program offers training on site, in the classroom, and on demand. ITS also hosts the Annual Technology Showcase and an orientation for new faculty to highlight existing and emerging technology available for teaching and learning projects.

• 24/7 Help Desk: Help is available at all times for students, faculty, and staff who have questions about university-supported hardware and software.

• Open computer labs: ITS increased the number of computer labs open for students. Software frequently used in courses is installed on lab computers, and printing is available.

• Computers in public spaces: ITS installed more than 500 computers in the university libraries and many public spaces on campus. An on-campus laptop computer checkout program for students makes 74 laptops available for convenient access to e-mail, LMS, library catalogs, and other Internet offerings.

This list of improvements shows what technology is available on campus, but not how it is currently used or might be used in the future. To address our research questions, we launched an investigation to learn more about the technology available in classrooms and how it is used.
Learning Spaces

Our investigation of learning spaces began with examining general use classrooms, the unspecialized rooms that can be used for lectures or seminars by any discipline. Faculty and students had opinions about many aspects of these classrooms in addition to technology. This led us to audit our general-use classrooms with a thorough inventory, focusing on technology and media available; furniture; floor, ceiling, and wall treatments; lighting, both natural and artificial; climate conditions; and configuration.

Our preliminary observation was that many of the classrooms housed in and scheduled by the professional schools were in better condition than those scheduled by the College of Arts & Sciences, where much of the undergraduate instruction takes place. Some of the classrooms seemed too crowded, and we discovered that capacity figures used for scheduling classes are based solely on the number of chairs in a room rather than an optimal number for the layout.

To supplement the information from our inventory, it was important to determine how well these classrooms function as teaching and learning spaces by asking faculty and students who regularly use them. We collaborated with faculty and ITS professionals to develop three classroom-oriented surveys, which were administered December 2009 through March 2010. (CFR 4.3)

- The Student Classroom Survey generated 2355 responses. Students were asked questions about their experiences in the classroom and preferences for informal study spaces. The survey was distributed to 135 undergraduate classes in 66 general use classrooms in December 2009.
- The Faculty Classroom Survey generated 215 responses about 89 classrooms. Faculty were asked to evaluate one or more of the general use classrooms where they taught during Fall 2009. It was available online from February 10 through March 24, 2010.
- The Classroom Pedagogy Survey generated 177 responses. Faculty were asked to imagine the ideal classroom set-up for a frequently-taught course and answer questions about preferred seating, configuration, classroom activities, and technologies they would like to use.

Please see “About the Classroom Surveys” for specific information about survey design and response rates.

These surveys yielded a wealth of information. Overall, students and faculty were not highly critical of most classrooms, but two major areas of concern emerged. The first was a discrepancy between the physical features of a room and the information technology installed. For example, modern technology coexists in many rooms with insufficient whiteboard space, projection screens that cover whiteboards, and lighting that cannot be dimmed for slideshow presentations. The second concern was the very traditional layout of most classrooms. While many faculty are comfortable with the traditional desks-in-rows room configuration, others are frustrated because the furniture cannot easily be reconfigured to support styles of pedagogy other than lecture.

These concerns were most acute for classrooms in those older buildings where classes are scheduled by the College of Arts and Sciences. These differ from newer buildings and those housing professional schools in that they do not have building managers responsible for monitoring the condition of the classrooms, managing routine maintenance and repairs, and planning renovations.

Summaries of the survey findings were shared with the campus community in a series of four USD Trends articles, described briefly below. These articles elaborate on findings directly relevant to our research questions.

- “Using Technology in USD Classrooms” – Both students and faculty expressed a preference for using a limited to moderate amount of technology in courses. Whiteboards, presentation software, and DVDs are the types of technology most frequently used, and faculty indicated that they would
like to use more technology in the future. The faculty’s most common complaint was insufficient whiteboard space when the projection screen was lowered.

- “Furnishing and Configuring USD Classrooms” – Both faculty and students preferred chairs at tables to tablet armchairs by a wide margin; tables provide more workspace for materials. Faculty noted that the university needs more classrooms that can be easily reconfigured for different types of pedagogy, such as small group work and discussion.
- “Condition and Features of USD Classrooms” – The surveys confirm that there is considerable variation in classroom quality. Faculty and students found some classrooms excellent, the majority adequate, and a few with problems that interfered with teaching and learning. In general, classrooms in buildings with building managers received higher ratings than those in buildings without, and classrooms in newer buildings tended to be more highly rated.
- “Improving USD Classrooms” – See Next Steps, below.

Evidence for Improvement

Our investigation showed that features of general use classrooms tend to be upgraded and renovated at different times by different administrative units and funded through different budget lines. ITS upgrades technology; Facilities Management maintains flooring, walls, and lighting; and deans order furniture and other equipment. The rooms are seldom evaluated holistically as spaces for learning and teaching. Sometimes faculty are consulted prior to renovations, and sometimes they are not.

In Spring 2010, the CIO provided a list of classrooms scheduled for technology upgrades during the summer. As an experiment, we decided to try a new process we called a “classroom crawl.” We assembled representatives from several different offices, including Facilities Management, University Design, Telecommunications, Media Services, ITS, the Space Committee, and the College of Arts and Sciences. This group visited each of the classrooms listed, and a faculty member who had taught in each room met the group in the room to talk about what features could be changed to improve it as a place for learning and teaching.

The crawl created a lively, collaborative atmosphere for brainstorming. Faculty members asked questions and made suggestions, and representatives from different areas were able to clarify issues and propose possible solutions. We left each room with a list of recommended changes that everyone agreed would improve the room for learning and teaching. Many of these suggestions corresponded to issues identified through the surveys.

Not surprisingly, the cost of the proposed changes exceeded the budget for technology upgrades. When we met with the Provost to discuss the outcomes of the classroom crawl, she indicated that she liked the process and offered to fund the proposed changes during summer construction. She charged us to work with the College of Arts and Sciences to develop a similar planning process that could be used to improve classrooms in the future.

Next Steps

Improving our general use classrooms depends upon how well we integrate two interrelated types of planning: planning for ongoing maintenance and planning for creative renovation. Addressing faculty concerns about our classrooms first requires ensuring that information technology is current, lighting is zoned, and whiteboards provide ample writing space. In addition, it is critical that we create enough variety in room layouts to accommodate different styles of pedagogy. In both cases, we must look at each classroom holistically as a space for learning and teaching, with synchronous input from all areas involved in both maintenance and use. We must expand the classroom crawl concept to integrated, team-oriented planning – and support this process with a permanent, long-term budget.

Diversifying classrooms means offering a variety of layouts. We must meet the needs and preferences of our faculty as well as update and repurpose rooms to remain current. Not every classroom needs the full
suite of information technology, and not every classroom needs to be a lecture or seminar room. We must develop pedagogy-driven standards for classrooms to guide renovation and future construction, based upon input from Facilities Management, University Design, Telecommunications, Media Services, Information Technology Services, Information Resources Council, and the Space Committee.

While intentionally creating more options for room layouts, we must also provide mechanisms to match instructors with rooms appropriate for the classes they offer. Currently, classrooms are scheduled based solely on class size. In the near future, we hope to expand scheduling options to incorporate different levels of information technology available. When this modification is functioning smoothly, we can add room layouts to the scheduling process. Including technology and layout options in room scheduling will also help us identify the types of rooms most in demand and plan accordingly.

ITS has succeeded at installing modern information technology in our classrooms, and faculty need to learn how new technologies can be integrated into their teaching. Students and faculty seem to be satisfied with classes involving a limited to moderate amount of technology, which is rather at odds with the national discussion, but is reflective of our history as a traditional, residential, liberal arts institution. The opportunity exists to expand faculty’s creative use of technology. Faculty have expressed an interest in using more classroom technology, and we must continue to assist them in learning more about technology available to them on campus.

When formulating the research questions for our Institutional Proposal, we did not realize where our investigations into classroom technology would lead. Our digression into looking at classrooms holistically has been extremely valuable despite taking us somewhat off our originally anticipated course. Looking ahead to the EER, we will have to continue developing mechanisms for classroom improvement based on what we have learned through the CPR self-study. To address our research questions for EER, we will expand our investigations to other types of learning spaces, explore ways we might better accommodate student and faculty preferences, and identify changes that might improve teaching and learning.

CONCLUSION

USD meets its Commitment to Institutional Capacity by operating with the appropriate organizational structures and processes, as well as fiscal stability and integrity, to fulfill our clearly defined mission. Investigating our capacity-oriented research questions for the CPR gives us a strong basis for addressing the research questions developed for the EER. As a result of the CPR self-study we have improved our capacity to measure, interpret, and use evidence about our educational effectiveness. We are preparing for the Educational Effectiveness Review in Spring 2012.

In this report we have presented our strengths and weaknesses in relation to the Standards. With regard to Standard 1, USD has a clear sense of itself as an institution, with a well-defined mission and core values. They tacitly underlie the university’s educational goals and the faculty continue to be involved in more clearly articulating our specific educational objectives. We have made progress in increasing diversity and support services in educational and co-curricular programs, and we recognize the need for continued growth.

We meet or exceed Standard 2’s requirements for teaching and learning, scholarship and creative activity, and support for student learning success. Student learning outcomes assessment is underway at all levels of the institution. Academic program review is well established in professionally accredited programs and is in progress in the College of Arts and Sciences. Our scholarship and creative activities continue to increase in keeping with our rising aspirations of retaining and attracting outstanding teacher-scholars. We effectively combine teaching and research for both students and faculty. Our freshman retention rate of 85% is lower than we aspire to. Some of our recent broad-based initiatives to improve student involvement
and hence retention have not been as successful as we expected. As a result, we have developed a plan to increase our initiatives specifically targeted to improving retention and to actively assess these initiatives.

USD is strong financially, as required by Standard 3, and has continued to support students, employees and programs through the current economic downturn. We recognize that we are tuition dependent and seek to grow our endowment. Our information technology infrastructure is much more robust than at the time of the last review. Our administration, faculty, and staff are well qualified and support the institutional objectives. However, we rely too heavily on part-time faculty and want to improve our formal and informal learning spaces.

Since the last review, strategic planning at different levels has engaged appropriate stakeholders, as called for in Standard 4. Our planning is increasingly informed by analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. Alignment of resources in unit-specific strategic plans is evident, but we must continue our efforts to become more transparent, inclusive, and strategic at the institutional level.

Our themes allow us to focus on specific CFRs in the context of our research questions and will guide our self-study for the EER. Theme 1 highlights our efforts in student learning outcomes assessment of undergraduate and graduate programs, the core curriculum, and co-curricular activities. Faculty and staff are increasingly engaged in all levels of the process and we are committed to revising our core curriculum and refining our academic program review process.

Our research related to Theme 2 has shown an increase in student and faculty diversity on campus, but we recognize that our recruitment efforts must continue. We expect to improve our student success and campus climate by focused initiatives through the new Center for Inclusion and Diversity, the restructured Student Support Services, and the Committee on Undergraduate Persistence. Proposed curricular and co-curricular initiatives include assessing cultural competence and enhancing international experiences.

Our investigations for Theme 3 challenge us to establish a new process to improve our formal and informal learning spaces. These spaces must be evaluated holistically for learning and teaching, with integrated planning for ongoing maintenance and creative renovation. More effective planning is expected to lead to a wider variety of classroom configurations, promote innovative uses of technology, and improve our classroom scheduling process to ensure a better match between place and pedagogy.

REFERENCES


Acknowledgements
The following people graciously gave of their time and expertise in the development and completion of the Capacity and Preparatory Review in 2009-2010 at the University of San Diego, San Diego, California.

UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP
EXECUTIVE OFFICERS
Mary E. Lyons, Ph.D., President
Monsignor Daniel Dillabough ’70, Vice President, Mission and Ministry
Rear Admiral Leenert Hering Sr., United States Navy (retired), Vice President, Business Services and Administration
Timothy O’Malley, Ph.D., Vice President, University Relations
Julie Sullivan, Ph.D., Executive Vice President and Provost
Carmen Vazquez, M.S.W., C.S.W., Vice President, Student Affairs

DEANS
Mary K. Boyd, Ph.D., College of Arts and Sciences
Kevin Cole, J.D., School of Law
Paula Cordeiro, Ed.D., School of Leadership and Education Sciences
Sally Broz Hardin, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N., Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science
William R. Headley, C.S.Sp., Ph.D., Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies
David F. Pyke, Ph.D., School of Business Administration

COMMITTEES
WASC STEERING COMMITTEE
Andrew T. Allen, Ph.D., Chair; Associate Provost and Professor of Economics
Cynthia Avery, Ed.D., Assistant Vice President, Student Life
Carole Huston, Ph.D., Director of Assessment, College of Arts and Sciences and Professor of Communication Studies
Cel Johnson, Ph.D., Executive Director, Institutional Research and Planning
Paula Krist, Ph.D., Director of Assessment Support, School of Leadership and Education Sciences
Mary Sue Lowery, Ph.D., Professor of Biology
Sandra Sgoutas-Emch, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Educational Excellence and Professor of Psychology

UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
Andrew T. Allen, Ph.D., Committee Chair and Associate Provost and Professor of Economics
Mary Jo Clark, Ph.D., R.N., Professor of Nursing
Carole Huston, Ph.D., Director of Assessment, College of Arts and Sciences and Professor of Communication Studies
Cel Johnson, Ph.D., Executive Director, Institutional Research and Planning
Paula Krist, Ph.D., Director of Assessment Support, School of Leadership and Education Sciences
Kathleen Kramer, Ph.D., Chair of the Department of Engineering and Professor of Electrical Engineering
Jewel Leonard, J.D., Assistant Director of Undergraduate Programs, School of Business Administration
Margaret Leary, M.S., Associate Dean of Students
Teresa O’Rourke, M.Div., Senior Assistant Dean, School of Law
Lee Ann Otto, Ph.D., Associate Dean, Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies and Professor of Political Science
APPENDICES
Reaffirmation of Accreditation
Capacity and Preparatory Review Self-Study

Presented to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)
by the University of San Diego

Table of Contents

APPX 1. WASC Summary Data Form
APPX 2. Required Data Elements
APPX 3. Inventory of Educational Effectiveness (Table 7.1 of Data Elements)
APPX 4. Inventory of Concurrent Accreditation (Table 8.1 of Data Elements)
APPX 5. List of Institutional Stipulations
APPX 6. Audited Financial Statements (two years)
APPX 7. USD Retention Plan Summary
Presented to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) by the University of San Diego

Table of Contents

STANDARD 1
   AT1. Undergraduate Learning Goals
   AT2. Graduate Learning Outcomes

STANDARD 2
   AT3. Academic Program Review Guidelines
   AT4. Ten Undergraduate Peer Institutions
   AT5. Peer Retention Rates

STANDARD 3
   AT6. Library Peer Comparisons
   AT7. Organization Charts

THEME 1
   AT8. Executive Summary BBA and ECON
   AT9. Engineering Summary
   AT10. General Education Review Report
   AT11. Core Curriculum Assessment Timeline

THEME 2
   AT12. Diversity Timeline
   AT13. Equity Scorecard
   AT14. DLE Summary
   AT15. Freshman Ethnicity Table
   AT16. D Course Outcomes
   AT17. D Course List
   AT18. D Course Evaluation
   AT19. Center for Inclusion and Diversity Proposal

THEME 3
   AT20. About the Classroom Surveys
   AT21. Using Technology in USD Classrooms
   AT22. Furnishing and Configuring USD Classrooms
   AT23. Condition and Features of USD Classrooms
   AT24. Improving USD Classrooms