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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
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22 June 2009

Dear FAOs:

UC Merced's Capacity and Preparatory (CPR) report will be submitted to WASC in early July 2009. Following this, a team of WASC reviewers will visit our campus from September 29 to October 1, 2009 to confirm and evaluate further our institution's reported "infrastructure to support educational effectiveness especially in regard to retention and graduation, the assessment of student learning, and program review" as well as our capacity for "organizational learning" including the "use of evidence"[1] in these processes.

One focal point of this visit undoubtedly will be our capacity to undertake effective assessment of student learning. To assess this, visiting team members will [2]

- review course syllabi to see if student learning outcomes are set forth;
- examine processes and methods for assessing student learning at the course, program and institutional level;
- ascertain the capacity of faculty to undertake assessment of student learning.

To accomplish this final point, the visiting team likely will plan focused interviews with small groups of FAOs and their faculty colleagues.

As a proactive step in preparing for this visit, the Center for Research on Teaching Excellence and Institutional Planning and Analysis (IPA) have assigned a staff member to each faculty group. These individuals will

- provide support to your faculty as they undertake the assessment of your first program learning outcome;
- help to prepare you and your colleagues for this fall's site visit; and
- assist with planning for the Educational Effectiveness Review, which will extend your current assessment efforts and crucially determine the success of our official accreditation in 2011.

Within the next two weeks you will receive a joint email from your CRTE and IPA staff members requesting an introductory meeting to become familiar with the assessment activities your program has planned or is undertaking currently. Please plan to meet with your assessment support team as soon as it is convenient so that they may begin to anticipate your program's needs and prepare accordingly.

[1] WASC *Handbook of Accreditation,* 2008, p.30.
[2] WASC, *Hosting a Site Visit*, March 2009, p.21

As always, thank you very much for your leadership in our accreditation effort; Initial Accreditation most certainly would be impossible without it.

Sincerely,

Gregg Camfield
Professor & Chair, WASC Steering Committee