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SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
P.O. BOX 2039
MERCED, CALIFORNIA 95344

5 May 2010

Dear Vice Chancellor Hosley:

As part of our WASC Educational Effectiveness Review self-study, UC Merced is conducting a comprehensive review of assessment practices across the institution. Together with the development of a policy for administrative unit assessment[1], this work will enable us to respond to the WASC Visiting Team's observation that "assessment is not consistent in other [non-Student Affairs administrative] support units at present,"[2] a concern highlighted by the WASC Commission's recommendation that UC Merced establish "a system for the use of assessment and other data at administrative and institutional levels."[3]

The goals of UC Merced's review of assessment are to

- Describe the scope of assessment practices across the campus (e.g., identify which programs and units are at each stage --- nothing initiated; plan drafted; date scheduled; etc.);
- Evaluate the quality of current assessment practices and processes, with particular focus on alignment between unit goals and institutional mission and goals;
- Examine what assessment results reveal about student learning relative to intended learning (where appropriate);
- Examine what assessment results reveal about the efficacy of co-curricular and administrative units relative to unit and University objectives;
- Use the data and evidence collected to identify the resources needed to sustain and improve assessment practices and student learning and support services across the institution.

To support this work, the Steering Committee asks that you please respond to the set of questions appended to this document as specifically as possible. The intention is to represent our current level of development with the goal of future improvement.

As with the Capacity and Preparatory Review Report, all affirmative assertions must be verified by supporting documentation. As such, please include these documents with your response, being sure to link this evidence directly to your narrative response. A simple number or letter-based

[1] A draft Administrative Unit Assessment Process policy is currently being circulated for review and revision.
[2] Report of the WASC Visiting Team Capacity and Preparatory Review, p. 7.
[3] WASC Commission Action Letter March 3, 2010. p. 2.

reference system can be used for this purpose. For supporting documentation that is available online, URLs may be embedded in the text.

If you have any questions or would like to meet in person to discuss this request, please contact Laura Martin, lmartin@ucmerced.edu . Otherwise, **please submit your summary, including supporting documentation and examples, to Laura by June 9**.

Thank you very much for supporting our Initial Accreditation effort.

Sincerely,

Gregg Camfield
Professor and Chair
WASC Steering Committee

Questions

1) a. Has your unit (as opposed to an individual administrator) identified, or is it in the process of identifying, performance goals and related objectives? If so, please provide them.
   b. How are they made available and to whom?
   c. How do they align with the unit's mission?
   d. How do they align the University's mission[1] and goals?
   e. Do they reflect the standards of a professional association? If so, please briefly describe.

2) a. Does your unit review its performance in relation to its objectives? If so, please describe how this is done, including
   i. The process by which objectives are selected for review[2].
   ii. The source(s) and types of data
   iii. The timeline
   iv. How the results are used to inform practices
   v. To whom the results are disseminated

   b. If your unit has a plan for assessing its performance, please provide it.

3) If your unit has engaged in assessment to improve performance[3], please provide one or more examples of this work, *including a description of any changes made to the practices of the unit in response to the results*. These examples are particularly important as they demonstrate that we practice "evidence-based improvement", which is a fundamental expectation of WASC.

4) If your unit has not yet developed goals and objectives what is the timeline for completing this work and initiating assessment?

5) If your unit has goals and objectives but does not regularly assess its performance, what is the timeline for beginning this work?

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[1] **UC Merced's Mission Statement:** "The University of California, Merced's mission is embodied in its proud claim of being the first American research university of the twenty-first century. As the tenth campus of the University of California, UC Merced will achieve excellence in carrying out the University's mission of teaching, research and service, benefiting society through discovering and transmitting new knowledge and functioning as an active repository of organized knowledge. As a key tenet in carrying out this mission, UC Merced promotes and celebrates the diversity of all members of its community."

[2] For example, are objectives identified annually, but without explicit consideration of future assessment work, or has the unit established a plan describing what objectives will be examined in what years?

[3] For example, user satisfaction surveys or metrics that describe unit productivity relative to goals.