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FINAL REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING TEAM

CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW

To University of California, Irvine

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

Reaffirmation of Accreditation

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The evaluation team in conducting its review was able to evaluate the institution under the WASC Commission Standards and the Core Commitment for Institutional Capacity and therefore submits this Report to the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges for action and to the institution for consideration.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page numbers

SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution and Visit

The University of California, Irvine (UCI) is one of ten campuses comprising the University of California system. Founded in 1965, it shares the mission of the system as a whole, as defined by the California Master Plan for Higher Education, "to serve society as a center of higher learning, providing long-term societal benefits through transmitting advanced knowledge, discovering new knowledge, and functioning as an active working repository of organized knowledge." Since its founding in 1965, the campus has grown significantly from 119 faculty members and 1,589 students to approximately 1400 faculty members, 22,000 undergraduate students and over 5000 graduate students. In 1995, after thirty years of existence, UCI was granted membership in the Association of American Universities (AAU), placing it in the company of the 63 leading public and private research universities in the United States and Canada.

A comprehensive research university, it is comprised of eleven schools and four unaffiliated departments and programs across a wide range of disciplines. UCI offers 81 undergraduate majors and 59 undergraduate minors. At the graduate level, it offers 51 Masters' degree programs, 44 Ph.D. programs, three professional doctorates in Medicine (MD), Education (EdD), and Law (JD), as well as three joint doctorates. UCI has blanket degree granting approval at the masters and Ph.D. levels, but must seek approval for professional and joint doctorates. Since 2000, the campus has added nearly 20 new graduate degree programs, including Public Health (MPH), Nursing Science (MS, Masters of Public Policy (MPP) and Law (JD).

The campus's accreditation was last affirmed in the Commission Action Letter dated July 6, 2001. The campus is located in the city of Irvine in Orange County in Southern California with proximity to numerous natural and cultural assets; it has no off-campus sites. UCI has one distance education program, the online Masters of Advanced Study in Criminology, Law and Society, approved by WASC in November 2001. Two other substantive change proposals have been approved since 2001: the joint doctorate in Educational Administration and Leadership (EdD) in June 2003 and the Juris Doctoral (JD) program in February 2009. No special visits were required by WASC in connection with the CPR visit.

B. The Capacity and Preparatory Review Report: Alignment with the Proposal and Quality and Rigor of the Review and Report

The campus's elected to take a theme-based approach to the CPR review in its institutional proposal, submitted in Fall 2009. In order to select the themes for the CPR review, the institution undertook a systematic review of the Standards and Criteria for Review (CFRs), and it identified both its areas of strength (Standards 1, 3, and CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5 and 4.8 under Standard 4) as well as areas needing attention or improvement (Standard 2 and CFRs 4.4, 4.6 and 4.7 under Standard 4). As a result of this self-assessment, it identified three themes for review: Student Learning in the Major, General Education, and Academic Program Review. The institutional themes were appropriately chosen to deepen the campus engagement with Standard II (Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions) and Standard IV (Creating an Organization

Committed to Learning and Improvement). UCI clearly articulated institutional goals for the WASC review in its proposal that were woven throughout the themes, as follows:

1. Greater clarity about the institution's educational objectives and criteria for defining and evaluating those objectives (Themes 1 and 2)

2. Improvement of the institution's capacity for self-review and of its systems of quality assurance (Themes 2 and 3)

3. A deeper understanding of student learning, the development of more varied and effective methods of assessing learning, and the use of the results of this process to improve the programs and institutional practices (Themes 1, 2 and 3), and

4. Systematic engagement of the faculty with issues of assessing and improving teaching and learning processes within the institution, and with aligning support systems for faculty more effectively toward this end (Themes 1, 2 and 3)

In addition to articulating these over-arching goals for the entire WASC review process, the institution also identified specific goals and outcomes for each of the three themes in its institutional proposal. In its CPR report, the institution systematically reviewed each of these goals and outcomes and provided a thorough and frank self-assessment of its progress. The visiting team found the CPR report to be very well aligned with the plan laid out in the institutional proposal. In addition, UCI added a fourth essay on transfer student success to the report, in response to a new WASC stipulation that issues of student success be addressed as part of the CPR. This fourth essay helped the team to address this important area of inquiry and was a welcome addition to the report.

The review team found the overall quality of the CPR report to be high. It was well-organized, well-written, and straightforward in its assessment of both areas where the campus has made substantial progress, as well as areas still requiring attention and ongoing work. In the course of preparing both the institutional proposal and the CPR report, the campus demonstrated engagement with its key constituencies, including faculty (see Data Exhibit V.C.1, Workplan and Milestones). It marshaled evidence appropriately and used this evidence to support its claims. The self-study process appears to have resulted in a greater understanding of the institution's capacity, including areas where it intends to continue to build greater strength.

C. Response to Previous Commission Issues

In its action letter dated July 6, 2001, the Commission reaffirmed accreditation and requested that the campus respond to three issues.

(1) UCI Writing Programs: "ensure that there are sufficient numbers of well-trained instructors assigned and supported to sustain the quality and breadth of these exemplary writing programs." The institutional proposal indicates that additional personnel were assigned to this area to help meet demand, however offering sufficient sections remains a concern. The quality of these courses is monitored through the General Education requirement and will be addressed below.

(2) Undergraduate Research Programs: "provide more useful definitions of specific types of student research that the University wishes to promote and for more effective incentives to foster and sustain faculty participation as research mentors." The campus reports that the number of students participating in funded research and

presenting at the annual symposium has increased from approximately 400 students in 2004 to approximately 600 in 2009. The number of mentors has increased from 268 to 400 in the same five year period. University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey data place UCI first of all the campuses in the number of students who participate in research.

(3) Assessment of Undergraduate Education: "the University does not yet have a comprehensive approach for determining the overall educational effectiveness of its academic programs." The need to assess the effectiveness of its academic and co-curricular programs is by far the most important and fundamental of the issues raised in the last review, and the campus has systematically taken steps to address this area since then, devoting additional funding to the campus's assessment effort both through the hiring of new staff and reconfiguration of existing staff into an Assessment and Research Studies unit and through the establishment of a departmental assessment grants program. The campus's progress in addressing this issue is related to all three of the themes identified by the institution and will be addressed more fully in the next section.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY UNDER THE STANDARDS

A. Theme 1: Student Learning in the Major

The University of California, Irvine is committed to creating a culture of assessment and should be commended for its campus-wide efforts to create the necessary infrastructure to support and sustain assessment activities within the undergraduate

major. Its process is centrally supported, faculty governed, tied to existing university processes, and has the necessary resources in place to make the process sustainable.

A multi-year process of assessment for all undergraduate degree granting programs has been established that begins with the articulation of student learning outcomes and that ends with closing the loop – revising courses and curriculum based on assessment findings. The outcomes demonstrate what students should be able to know or perform as a result of the program. To date, the University has collected assessment plans from 79 out of its 82 undergraduate majors and hopes to have at least 90% of its assessment reports collected by September of 2011. Learning outcomes are available to the university community via the Office of Assessment & Research website. In addition to the establishment of a four-step process, the university hopes to integrate the assessment process with program review, which will help ensure that the process of assessment remains sustainable (CFRs 1.2, 2.3, 2.4). .

In order to sustain this effort, Irvine has created a five-person Office of Assessment & Research Studies that is housed within the Division of Undergraduate Education. The office provides guidance to faculty and staff through workshops and through individual consultation. It has also developed a useful website with how-to materials related to conducting program assessment. It plans on developing an assessment management system to track and store assessment documents. The team suggests that this system be user friendly and systematically integrated in reasonable phases, so as not to create additional burdens on faculty participation.

In addition to the help and assistance faculty and staff may receive from the Office of Assessment & Research, financial resources are also made available to faculty

and staff in the form of Assessment Grants to support assessment projects. In 2009-10 eleven grants were awarded totaling $71,000. The broad representation of faculty receiving assessment grants across disciplines was noteworthy. These grants have served to increase clarity about student learning in the major, develop and refine assessment tools, make curricular changes as well as to share best assessment practices across campus. Each year these projects are showcased at the annual campus-wide Assessment Colloquy, which provides an opportunity to disseminate successful models and which makes evident Irvine's commitment to being a learning organization (CFRs 1.2, 2.3, 2.4).

The university has worked to make the process faculty governed through the creation of the Academic Senate Committee on Assessment to provide oversight to the initiative and by adopting a flexible assessment approach that allows faculty to select and easily embed assessment practices into their curriculum. The assessment committee is comprised of faculty members from each school, two faculty members from the Senate and the Director of Assessment and Research, and it works to provide oversight, track progress and to develop policies in support of student learning. The creation of the committee will also help ensure that the process of assessment remains a permanent fixture at the University. The Academic Senate is actively engaged in determining an appropriate reporting cycle that will yield both useful results and not be overly burdensome to the faculty (CFRs 2.4, 3.11, 4.6, 4,7).

At the graduate level, the Graduate Advisor's Handbook provides students with clear descriptions and expectations for degree requirements. The master's thesis and the dissertation define the capstone experience for students. During the visit, the team was provided with a draft memo issued by the Graduate Council of the Academic Senate to

all Graduate Program Directors and Advisors, outlining a process to develop a more structured approach in assessing graduate programs. So far it has developed a set of assessment guidelines for creating program-specific learning outcomes and assessment plans and hopes to hold assessment workshops in the spring of 2011 in order to offer support to faculty in this process. As the campus works to incorporate assessment of graduate learning into its culture of evaluation, the team urges that models of assessment remain flexible to faculty and that appropriate support structures are established in order to implement and sustain this effort (CFRs 1.2, 2.3, 2.4).

The University is well positioned for its EER review. Assessment at the undergraduate program level appears to be well designed and well managed. Progress in this area should be achievable by the EER visit. The team encourages the central administration to continue in its support of assessment, including providing the necessary support to ensure its success.

B. Theme 2: General Education

UCI chose to concentrate in Theme 2 of the CPR on the development of processes for the review of student learning within its revised General Education (GE) curriculum, as well as the establishment of a process for the ongoing and systematic review and assessment of the structure and effectiveness of GE for the purposes of future planning (CFRs 2.2a, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 3.8, 3.11, 4.1, 4.4, 4.6). The impetus for this initiative as described in the UCI CPR Report is two-fold. First, review and assessment of both GE as a whole, as well as student learning within GE, is a logical outgrowth of the larger initiative to assess student learning outcomes as discussed in Theme 1. Secondly, after the 2004 review of the GE requirements, which went into effect in Fall 2008, the UCI

Academic Senate Council on Educational Policy (CEP) saw a need for the establishment

of a CEP Assessment Committee, "to provide faculty leadership for campus assessment

efforts and to guide the CEP in its various assessment activities related to the GE" (UCI

CPR Report, 11). This subcommittee of the CEP was established in 2009-2010 (CFRs

1.3, 2.3).

With regard to General Education curriculum, the CEP is responsible for setting

policies and requirements, reviewing, and approving these requirements at regular

intervals for GE, the categories contained therein, and individual course approval and

review. The CEP has two subcommittees, the Policy Subcommittee and the Assessment

Subcommittee. The current GE consists of nine Categories. Below are the names, course

requirement distributions, and learning classifications for each Category:

I.   Writing (two lower-division plus one upper-division) (skills)
II.   Science and Technology (three courses) (knowledge)
III. Social and Behavioral Sciences (three courses) (knowledge)
IV.   Arts and Humanities (three courses) (knowledge)
V.   Quantitative, Symbolic, and Computational Reasoning (three courses) (skills)
VI.   Language Other Than English (one course) (skills)
VII. Multicultural Studies (one course that may also satisfy another GE requirement) (application)
VIII. Global/International Studies (one course that may also satisfy another GE requirement) (application)
IX.   Laboratory or Performance (one course that may also satisfy another GE requirement) (application) – subsequently approved for removal by CEP

The CEP Assessment Committee is chaired by a member of the faculty and includes

other members of the CEP as well as Associate Deans and additional faculty from units

heavily affected by GE courses. This committee established three goals to be addressed

within Theme 2. In the ensuing text, each goal and sub-components will be summarized.

Progress made on stated goals will be summarized based on the evidence provided within the

CRP as well as evidence that was presented subsequently upon request of the WASC team

and during the team visit. The description of this faculty-based structure, the team's interviews with the committees and subcommittees, as well as a comprehensive public web site (http://www.assessment.uci.edu/) confirmed that the institution's expectations for learning and student attainment are developed and widely shared among its members, including faculty, students, staff, and external stakeholders and that the parties mentioned above (including administrators) take collective responsibility for establishing, reviewing, fostering and demonstrating the attainment of the developed expectations. (CFRs 1.9, 2.4, 4.3).

The first goal set forth by the CEP was to establish strategies for assessing the GE categories. This goal had been partially met. The Policy Subcommittee of the CEP is in the process of designing a rolling, systematic assessment program for GE Categories. Comparative research was conducted to identify good practices from peer institutions and one member of the committee attended the AAC&U conference, "General Education and Assessment: Maintaining Momentum, Achieving New Priorities," (February 18-20, 2010, Seattle.) Based on information gathered, several recommendations were approved by the CEP and Senate, implementation beginning in Fall 2010. The recommendations include (1) revision of the learning outcomes for each GE category (the CPR candidly reported that the current outcomes are "too broad and do not provide useful guidance" in the approval process); (2) the development of student self-assessment tools and advice to faculty on how to assess progress toward learning outcomes in each course; and (3) the evaluation of current GE courses and the establishment of a re-approval process, with categories V, VII, and VIII identified as the most time-critical for review.

At the time of the team visit, the Policy Subcommittee was very close to developing a system by which courses within GE categories would be assessed on a cyclical basis. A schedule has been set to begin the review of Category V next year and Categories VII and

VIII in subsequent years, which can be a key element of GE Category-level assessment. The team encourages the CEP to consider additional means by which to conduct categorical-level assessment over the long term, including, for example, reports based on data from course-level assessments with student survey data on categorical GE effectiveness (such as UCUES or NSSE), along with other measures such as faculty and/or student focus groups. By the time of the EER, the team would be pleased to see a plan and timeline for a multi-pronged approach to assessing the success of student learning within GE categories. Full implementation of such a plan would not be expected.

The second goal was for the Policy Subcommittee of the CEP to review the current General Education requirements for possible changes and improvements. This goal has been accomplished. The development of clear definitions and student learning outcomes has been developed for each category. As indicated in the commendations section, this is evidence that significant progress has been made in this area. The CPR candidly revealed that discrepancies existed on a categorical level between existing GE learning outcomes, work that students were actually doing in the respective GE courses, and faculty expectations for learning in those same categories. Methodologically, these disparities were evaluated in the context of the original intent of the proposed GE structure and takeaways from the aforementioned AAC&U conference.

Based on this evaluation, the subcommittee recommended a simplification of the GE structure for the purposes of increased transparency to students and faculty with regard to learning outcome goals and the development of a timeline for a streamlined review of GE courses (CFRs 1.3, 1.7). As the process of course-level review continues, because there are now clear learning outcomes in place for each category, the discrepancies discussed above can be remedied.

The team acknowledges that transparency of student learning outcomes for students will be most successful when done in a manner that each individual institution decides is most suited to its particular context and culture. The team notes that educational objectives for the GE are recognized and published on the institution's web site (http://www.assessment.uci.edu/assess/ge.asp). GE-Category learning objectives are consistent with stated learning goals for the GE and are written in student-centered language. At the visit, the team suggested to the CEP that the GE learning outcomes could be stated on syllabi for each category or categories that a course fulfills within the GE, which would increase both student and instructor awareness of the GE learning objectives within a particular course (CFR 2.3).

Significant progress has been made in the Writing curriculum (aided by the formation of a Writing ad-hoc committee), including clearly defined and published outcomes and implemented assessment procedures and analysis of data that have been used to make curricular changes designed to improve student learning. CEP conducted a detailed review of the writing requirements for students, including transfer student writing differences (see Student Success section) and lower- and upper-division writing courses. These are reviewed every summer. The team was impressed with the significant usage of data for the purposes of curricular improvement, such as the restructuring of the writing courses in the Biological Sciences and Physics departments. It is apparent that the structure of the writing requirements and programs at UCI is robust and important to the faculty. The team encourages the CEP to continue its efforts in this area and to expand similar efforts into other GE categories.

Lastly, the CPR report states that the "Policy Subcommittee has agreed on a plan to reevaluate all GE courses," and that it will be a multi-year process. Having already assessed Writing courses, the CEP has identified future categories for assessment and is in the process

of developing a strategy for implementing this large undertaking. The team urges the CEP to consider a process that will not put an undue burden on those teaching the courses or those assessing them. This is a difficult and delicate balance to strike. The team would like to see a well-developed plan and timeline for the assessment at the GE course-level by the time of the EER and notes that the actual course assessment has already begun.

Goal 3 states that "The Division of Undergraduate Education will develop and implement strategies to inform both students and academic advisors regarding the aims and importance of General Education. This goal has been partially met" (UCI CPR, 14). UCI wisely ascertained that until learning outcomes, assessment strategies, timelines and implementation plans are developed, it is premature to accomplish this goal and to implement concrete strategies. However, to its credit, the institution not only concretely identified this as a goal in the CPR, but has also begun surveys of current undergraduate students in Spring 2010 conducted by the Assessment & Research Studies office by adding specific questions to the UC Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) (CFRs 1.7, 2.4, 2.10). Questions were designed to gauge:

 • importance and understanding of the goals of GE,

• helpfulness of GE courses in realizing gains in selected learning areas,

• attitudes and experiences with GE courses,

• sources of information regarding GE requirements,

• self-reported learning gains in selected areas,

• rating the quality of instruction in GE courses, and

• awareness of the current student learning outcomes for the GE categories.

(UCI CPR, 15)

The analysis of the results (1,582 responses, representing an approximately 40% response rate from a random sample) was underway at the time of the CPR visit and will be shared with CEP during 2011.

C. Theme 3: Academic Program Review

UCI selected academic program review as its third theme (CFRs 2.7 and 4.4). In its last affirmation of accreditation (July 6, 2001), the Commission commended the University for its program review system with its "strong record of using its results to improve academic programs." Rather than resting on this strong track record, however, the campus articulated two goals to further improve and refine the existing progress: (1) to integrate the assessment of undergraduate student learning outcomes; and (2) to develop a mechanism to assess the APR process on a regular basis.

The campus's academic program review process is overseen by the Academic Senate through the Academic Program Review Board (APRB), which is comprised of five faculty members, the chair plus two representatives each from the Graduate Council and the Council on Educational Policy. Administrative support is provided by the school undergoing review and the central campus administration. The process demonstrates a commitment to shared governance characterized by a faculty driven process with strong administrative support and institutional commitment (CFR 4.1, 4.7).

Reviews are conducted at the school level and incorporate findings of departmental reviews within the school that take place concurrently. As part of the process, the school undergoing review prepares a self-study addressing both undergraduate and graduate issues, as well as the quality of the faculty and strategic

directions for the future. The process is data driven, with data elements at both the school and department level provided centrally by the Office of Institutional Research or by the unit undergoing review. These include student credit hours, faculty workload, retention and graduation rates, degrees awarded by gender and ethnicity, graduate student financial support and placement rates, budget expenditures, staff resources and other indicators. A strength of the process is the utilization of data from the University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES), a UC-wide survey of all undergraduates, which includes indicators on satisfaction, academic engagement and challenge, campus climate and student self-reported learning gains on a variety of outcomes such as analysis and critical thinking, writing, quantitative skills, research skills, and understanding of a specific area of knowledge. The data elements utilized in the review process demonstrate a commitment to establishing a data-driven culture of evidence and improvement (CFR 1.2, 2.10, 4.3, 4.5 and 4.6).

The campus is committed to incorporating direct evidence of student learning into reviews going forward. The team underscores the importance of allowing units undergoing review maximum flexibility in defining appropriate learning goals, identifying strategies for measuring outcomes, and developing appropriate protocols for sharing evidence of student learning with key participants in the program review process. The team also notes that several stakeholders in the review process identified potential opportunities to develop a more collaborative culture around sharing of data and evidence to better support units undergoing review, and the team suggests these be pursued as appropriate. Similarly, the team suggests that the outcomes of reviews be shared with

key campus stakeholders who would benefit from this information in their respective areas.

An external review committee, identified based on nominations from the school and its programs, conducts an on-site review (CFR 4.8). A charge letter defines key areas for review including the quality of the faculty, undergraduate and graduate programs, diversity, administrative structure, and governance issues (CFR 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.8, 2.9). The Academic Program Review Board continues to refine both the composition of external reviewers and the content of the charge letter to yield the appropriate balance of attention at the department and school level, as well as a realistic scope of issues for review. The committee conducts an on-site visit whose duration is typically two to three days, with opportunities to meet with all of the unit's key constituencies; it ends with a briefing for the Provost. The committee's formal report is reviewed by unit undergoing review and is then sent to the Committee on Educational Policy and the Graduate Council for comment. The reviews result in substantive and actionable recommendations and include appropriate follow-up by the Academic Senate and by deans. In addition, results of the reviews are shared with the Provost and are being used increasingly in academic and budget planning (4.1, 4.2 and 4.3). Follow-up reports are submitted three years after the review.

The campus has made progress on the two goals it set for itself for this theme, and has positioned itself well for the EER.

In the area of student learning outcomes, the campus has researched best practices at other institutions and articulated areas of concern in its own process including lack of clarity about purpose, lack of information about how results are being used, lack of

evidence that assessment of student learning is being assessed at the undergraduate level, and a lack of evaluation of the review process itself. The team requested supplemental materials to determine the extent to which evidence of student learning was incorporated into the current procedures and protocols. Sample charge letters to the reviewers provided by the campus include specific questions about student learning outcomes, including the appropriateness of the student learning outcomes and the extent to which they are evaluated and the results of that evaluation used to improve teaching and learning. Units undergoing review will need to determine the best strategies for incorporating evidence of student learning outcomes into their self studies in ways that are both sustainable and useful. (CFRs 2.3, 4.3)

The campus has piloted a self-assessment of its review process with the review of its School of Social Sciences. It administered two surveys to assess the extent to which the review achieved its goals: one to the external reviewers and one to the school's faculty and staff. As a result of this assessment, the APRB has developed a set of recommendations which were implemented beginning in 2010-11. These include enhancing the departmental emphasis, focusing the self-study on undergraduate and graduate programs and the strengths and research activities of the faculty, narrowing the charge to the reviewers, using the site visit schedule more efficiently, and improving the quality of the data and the coordination of communication between the OIR and the unit. The team notes that further assessment of a broader sample of schools will be needed. The institution intends to conduct continued assessment to determine if these changes are effective.

D. Student Success

UCI engages in systematic monitoring of key indicators of student success and uses comparative peer data to benchmark its progress. Data is evaluated at the aggregate level and is also disaggregated by sub-groups, including underrepresented minority groups (see CPR Data Exhibits 1.1.A.1 through 3.2.d.3) (CFR 2.10). This data is transparent to the university community and is made available on the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) website. The institution also makes publicly available information on enrollment, retention, and graduation data disaggregated by appropriate demographic categories and tracks achievement, satisfaction (UCUES student survey), and campus climate to support student success. This information is publicly available conveniently on the assessment web site (http://www.assessment.uci.edu/undergraduate/) (CFRs 1.2, 2.4, 2.10, 4.3). It is also available on the "Prospective Students" tab from the UCI home page under the College Portrait document (http://www.oir.uci.edu/portrait/uci-college-portrait.pdf) (CFR 2.10).

UCI's overall four-year graduation rate is 65% which places it at a favorable 8th out of 34 within the AAU public university peer comparison group. The overall six-year graduation rate is 82%, which ranks it 12th out of 34 in this same peer group. A complete list of the peer comparison group can be found on page 6 of the 2010 UCI Strategic Indicators Report (http://www.oir.uci.edu/campus/20100916-uci-strategic-indicators-2010.pdf).

UCI prepared a separate essay to address the 2008 changes to the WASC Handbook for Accreditation relating to student success and achievement. The essay reported on the institution's analysis of academic achievement and success of transfer

students, a theme it identified due to the importance of this sub-population within California's Master Plan for Higher Education and the continued growth of the transfer student body at UCI. The institution was able to effectively conduct the analysis by accessing its robust data base and bringing to bear the analytical capabilities of the Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Assessment and Research.

While the study was prompted by issues that were thought to have affected the success of transfer students, it also resulted in a number of findings that can improve success for all students. Although transfer and direct admit students earn comparable cumulative GPAs, transfer students performed more poorly in upper-division writing courses on every dimension assessed. The institution is considering additional studies of student learning using direct assessment measures. The study also found that upper-division transfer students are less likely to report large learning gains compared to upper-division direct admits on a number of academic and personal development outcomes, suggesting that differences in reported learning gains may be influenced by the differences in the students' initial entry into UCI. The study also found that both transfer students and direct admits consistently complete fewer than 15 credits per quarter, suggesting to the institution that its normal progress requirements are being ignored and current requirements need to be better implemented or amended.

Lastly, the study has made the institution acutely aware that for students of both groups, academic progress is hindered by mental and personal problems. The 2008 UCUES survey revealed that 59% of responding students indicated that being depressed, stressed or upset either occasionally, frequently or all of the time were obstacles to their progress. The institution recognizes that it should consider expanding its advising and

counseling services building on its recent wellness and mental health outreach efforts to address this issue.

Comprehensive student data

The analysis of transfer students examined the relationships between student achievement and success with a number of demographic and other characteristics for transfer students as compared to students who were directly admitted to UCI. The analysis drew upon the comprehensive data base on students collected and regularly reported by the UCI Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Assessment and Research Studies, which was able to disaggregate results by various background characteristics and make comparisons. Data is collected on admissions selectivity; aptitude test scores; grade point averages of incoming students; students receiving financial aid; retention rates; graduation rates, and; degrees awarded (CFR 1.2). Data are disaggregated by school and sorted by gender, ethnicity and by direct or transfer students (CFR 2.10). In its analysis of transfer students, comparisons between direct admits and transfer students were possible because of the existing student data base. Moreover data not regularly collected but required for special studies can be effectively collected from appropriate sources and processed as was done in the transfer analysis. The team was impressed with the level of rich data that was effectively collected, analyzed and disaggregated. Student experiential data for UCI is collected and analyzed regularly through the systemwide UCUES survey conducted in the spring of every even numbered year (CFR 2.10). Participation in this survey facilitates comparison of student satisfaction at UCI with other universities in the UC system.

Organization and programs focused on student success

UCI has a strong organizational focus on student achievement and success. The Division of Undergraduate Education and its Office of Assessment and Research Studies, working in conjunction with Student Affairs, Summer Session and Admissions, administers programs directed at assuring the academic success of undergraduate students with a focus on freshmen and transfer students. In addition to broad undergraduate based functions and programs such as academic advising, honors, study abroad, the division also administers programs directed at freshmen and transfer students including: First Year Integrated program; UCI majors course; Undecided/Undeclared Advising; Freshman Seminar; Student Support Services (targeted at first-generation, low-income students, and students with disabilities); Transfer Seminars and the Transfer Student Center. The Transfer Student Center also allows for transfer student leadership and participation opportunities within the greater UCI community; for example, the Center sponsors a transfer student mentor program. The team found this robust array of student support programs designed specifically for transfer students impressive and an indication of the breadth and depth of the institution's commitment to assuring student success on both curricular and co-curricular levels for all students.

During the site visit, the team found out about two relatively new initiatives designed to aid in transfer student orientation, integration, retention, and success. DUE, in cooperation with Student Affairs, is developing two similar summer bridge programs, one of which is made possible by scholarship monies awarded to students with financial need and/or who are first-generation students. These residential summer programs incorporate curricular elements that allow students to sharpen writing skills while

learning about research, to make curricular progress within their major, and to build a cohort centered around leadership and outreach activities. All of these aspects are predictors of student success, and the team encourages those involved in these bridge programs to track longitudinally the success of these student groups in comparison to their transfer student peers (who do not participate), freshman peer groups who also participate in early start programs, as well as incoming freshman who do not. Additionally, because a relatively small percentage of transfer students are able to take advantage of these programs for many and varied reasons, the visiting team encourages UCI to continue its efforts in other valuable high impact activities that may require less funding and staffing, such as the required orientation for transfer students, or a minimal-credit course similar to what may already be in place for new first-quarter freshmen, but geared to the needs of transfer students.

Across the nation, at UCI and within the UC system, transfer student applications from community colleges are increasing rapidly (16% increase for UCI for AY 2011 applications). UCI has done a commendable job of communicating and conducting outreach with area community colleges in multiple ways. Meetings are held bi-annually with local area community colleges where stakeholders discuss and compare strategies for transfer success. UCI has also shared its newly-developed General Education writing rubric with community college partners so they can use this tool to help better prepare students for writing courses at UCI. All parties involved seem to be highly engaged, and most importantly, committed to student success.

The study undertaken as part of the UCI CPR Report on Transfer Student Success is, as stated in the commendation section of this report, well-designed, methodologically

sound, timely, and enlightening. It has already led to recommendations that have been acted upon. In a national climate of increased attention and encouragement toward transferability, UCI is in a position to make a significant contribution. The team highly encourages those involved in this valuable research project to share its findings.

E. Other Considerations

In its WASC CPR report, UCI acknowledges the change in context to the Institutional Proposal presented in December 2009 because of the deteriorating state budget. The institution further noted however that those conditions were not severe enough to undermine its capacity. More recently, the Governor's budget proposal for the state included further cuts to the University of California system (Governors Budget Summary 2011-2012 p.148). Given the continuing changes in budget outlook for UCI, some comments relative to resource sustainability are appropriate.

Faculty and staff resources

Instructional faculty at UCI consisting of regular teaching faculty, lecturers and other faculty increased from 1,374 FTE in Fall 2001 to 1,653 FTE in Fall 2010, or by 20.31% (UC Statistical Summary of Students and Staff 2001 – 2010). By contrast, student enrollment increased from 17,980 FTE students excluding health sciences in Fall 2001, to 26,864 for Fall 2010, or by 49.4% (UC Statistical Summary of Students and Staff 2001 – 2010). Also, the data indicates that instructional faculty resources generally kept pace with enrollment until Fall 2006 and appear to have been on a downward trend thereafter.

The slower pace of growth in instructional faculty compared to enrollment has led to a significant increase in teaching burden measured in student teacher ratios since Fall

2001, with the more significant increases occurring during the current period of California's budget shortfalls. In Fall 2001, the ratio of FTE enrollment to FTE instructional faculty was approximately 13:1. That ratio has increased to 16.25:1 for Fall 2010. The severity of the current budget crisis in California could result in even higher student/teacher ratios in the near future which could threaten educational quality at UCI.

With regard to the complement of full-time to part-time faculty, between Fall 2001 and Fall 2010, the ratio has been maintained at approximately 75% fulltime and 25% part-time (CFR 3.2) (data Exhibit 4.1.A.1).

Overall, staff positions at UCI continue to increase each year. Total staff positions falling in the PSS classifications numbered 6,731 FTE in Fall 2001 and 7,968 FTE for Fall 2010, an increase of 18.4% (UC Statistical Summary of Faculty and Staff 2001 – 2010). Clerical and allied personnel actually decreased during this period from 1971 FTE to 1,710 FTE. Although technology has allowed productivity gains by staff, layoffs and decisions not to fill vacant positions due to budget cuts have resulted in the overall decrease of staff FTE.

Personnel policies and procedures

Personnel policies and procedures for UCI faculty and staff have been developed to authorize and facilitate implementation of policies issued by the UC Office of the President (UCOP). Under this structure of administrative authority, the UCI Academic Personnel Procedures Manual has its basis in the UC Academic Personnel Manual. Similarly, personnel procedures adopted at UCI for staff members are based on UC personnel policies for staff members. Academic personnel policies and procedures at UCI institutionalize policies and procedures covering: appointments; academic personnel

records; academic personnel review process; salary administration; administrative faculty; merit increases; and sabbatical leaves.

Policies and procedures for staff employees cover recruitment; appointments; salary; classification of positions; incentive awards; leaves, and; employee development (CFR 3.3) (UC Human Resources and Benefits Personnel Policies for Staff Members).

Of particular note is the attention given to professional development for UCI faculty and staff (CFR 3.4). Resources that have been made available include: "A Handbook of Advice for Tenure Track and Tenured Faculty" published by the UCI Office of Academic Personnel; the professional development fund for lecturers and teachers of special programs; Electronic Education Environment (EEE), a collaboration of UCI Division of Undergraduate Education, UCI Libraries, Office of the Registrar and Office of Information Technology (CFR 3.6); UCI Office of Human Resources training website for all UCI employees; and, the UCI Teaching, Learning and Technology Center, which focuses on improving teaching and learning through innovative pedagogy and teaching technology.

Diversity

The data indicates that since its last accreditation review in 2001, UCI has increased the diversity of its teaching faculty in terms of both gender and ethnicity which facilitates achievement of its educational objectives (CFR 3.2). In Fall 2001 approximately 28.8% of their full-time teaching faculty were female. The proportion of female full-time faculty slowly but steadily increased each year to the current level of 34.5 % (Data Exhibit 4.1.B.1).

The data also indicates slight changes in ethnic diversity over the same period. The proportion of white non-Hispanic full-time teaching faculty decreased slightly between Fall 2001 and Fall 2010 while the proportion of all other categories except black non-Hispanic and American Indian/native Alaskan increased (Data Exhibit 4.1.C.1).

Revenue Base

UCI's revenue sources are diversified similar to other public comprehensive research universities. Operations are financed by state funds, tuition and fees, federal funds primarily for sponsored research and non-research activities, and fees and charges for educational and auxiliary goods and services (CFR 3.5) (Data Exhibit 5.1).

Over the period FY 2005-06 through FY 2009-10, UCI has been able to maintain annual growths in total revenues while keeping total expenditures below total revenues. (CFR 3.5) (Data Exhibits 5.1 and 5.2). More importantly, since FY 2005-06, the increase in revenue from sources that traditionally financed instructional activities at UCI, tuition and fees and state government funds, was significantly higher than the relative increase in student enrollment. Funds from state government and tuition and fees in total increased from $427,279,607 in FY 2005-06 to $536,522,122 in FY 2009-10, or approximately 25.6% (Data Exhibit 5.1). By comparison, enrollment at UCI increased from 23,276 FTE students in academic year 2005-06 to 26,864 FTE students in Academic Year 2009-10, or an increase of approximately 15.4% (UC General Campus Full-Time Equivalent Enrollments 2005-06, 2009-10).

Sustaining an adequate level of funding for instruction has been accomplished during this period by drastically shifting the burden of financing from the state's general taxpayers to UCI students. UCI funding from state government in FY 2005-06 was

$243,485,337. For FY 2009-10, state government funding was $274,327,676, or an increase of approximately $12.6%. By comparison, funding from tuition and fees at UCI grew dramatically from $183,794,270 in FY 2005-06 to $262,194,446 in FY 2009-10, or by 42.7%. The ratio of state to student funding at UCI in FY 2005-06 was 57% to 43%. By FY 2009-10, that ratio was 51% to 49%, where funding of a student's education at UCI is shared almost equally between the student and the California taxpayer. Moreover, the next largest increase in revenues during this period at UCI was from sales and services of auxiliary enterprises, a significant part of which are generated by charges to students for housing, food services, parking, bookstores, etc. Should the burden of financing the education of UCI students further shift away from state government to the student, the institution may have to address new expectations of students and their parents with regard to matters such as program quality and program offerings.

In the last several years, more students applied for and received financial aid at UCI. In 2005-06, 53.4% of undergraduate students received some form of financial aid. By 2009-10, 58.3% of undergraduate students at UCI received some form of financial aid (Data Exhibit 2.4). This increase can be attributed to several factors: (1) introduction of the Blue and Gold Opportunity Plan, ensuring that system-wide fees are covered for families with incomes less than $60K; (2) changes in the federal tuition tax credit, raising the income ceiling and increasing the length of eligibility from two years to four years; (3) Pell Grant expansion; and (4) augmentations to Cal Grants. To assure that students achieve academic success while meeting debt obligations, UCI has the capability to collect student data relative to financial aid (Data Exhibits 2.4); student success (Data

Exhibit 3.2.A.1., 3.2.B.1); and, comparisons with other institutions (UC Irvine Strategic Indicators, page 6).

Budget preparation and implementation

Operating budgets at UCI are prepared and executed under policies established by the UC system offices and internal policies of UCI. UCI policies include UCI Section 703-10, 11, 13, and14. Budgetary priorities when developing budget plans and requests at UCI are guided by "UC Irvine Strategic Indicators, September 15, 2010".

Integral to budget preparation is the participation of faculty (CFR 3.11). A standing committee of the UCI faculty senate is the Council on Planning and Budget. As prescribed by the senate, the duties of the council include: advising the Chancellor, executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, and campus administrative units on matters of planning, budget and resources allocation for both the short and long terms, and; initiates studies in planning and budget matters, conduct investigations and makes reports.

Adequacy of Facilities

Facilities on the main campus of UCI consist of 6,098,017 square feet of assignable space of which 2,614,536 square feet are assigned to student services; 1,810,160 square feet are assigned as academic space, and; approximately 590,156 square feet are assigned to academic support. The total available space represents approximately 97 % of the space standards established by the California Post-secondary Education Commission (Supplementary Exhibit VI B Budget, page 2).

The data indicates that facilities renewal has continued despite the state budget reductions. Over the last five years, construction in progress for UCI facilities were valued at $738 M in FY 2005-06; $781 M in FY 2006-07; $780 M $1.06 B in FY 2007-

08; $599 M in FY 2008-09, and; $571 M in FY 2009-10. Total valuation of UCI

buildings and improvements steadily grew from $1.5 B in FY 2005-06 to $2.8 B in FY

2009-10 (CFR 3.6) (Data Exhibit 5.4).

<u>Library resources</u>

      The institution recognizes the integral role of libraries in its educational and

research mission. Data on the annual valuation of its collections indicate that UCI has

been able to sustain its library resources through consistent, annual investments despite

state budget reductions (CFR 3.6). UCI library materials and library collections were

valued at approximately $235.3M in FY 2005 -06. Materials and collections were valued

at $285M at the end of FY2010 or an increase of 21.3% over this period. On average, the

institution has invested amounts equal to over 5% of its collections value each year (Data

Exhibit 5.4).

      UCI's culture of assessment extends to UCI libraries, which have made creating a

culture of assessment among its faculty and staff a priority to assure continuous

improvements in services. Assessment activities cover a range of topics including:

service quality; use of library space; use of collections; effectiveness of library research

skills sessions, and; information literacy (Supplementary Exhibit VI.C.1). In addition, in

Spring 2010, a broader campus level Library Task Force assessed the libraries' role in

supporting education and research priorities across the campus (CFR 3.6). This effort has

led to reviews of the current use of library space, interlibrary loan services and library

organizational structure.

      UCI faculty, students and alumni have widespread electronic access to library

resources including subject matter librarians. Electronic access to library materials and

collections are available through the institution's academic and administrative computing services. In order to facilitate response to the needs of faculty and students, the UCI library has organized its resource librarians by discipline and courses and has made this information available on-line through the Libguide program. In addition, approximately 500-700 skills instruction sessions administered by the UCI library have reached 11,000 - 20,000 participants each year.

Information technology resources

A full range of academic and administrative computing services are provided through the Office of Information Technology (CFR 3.7), established in June 2009 as a result of the campus decision to consolidate administrative IT organizations under a single administrative unit. (Academic units still retain their own IT departments at this time.) The office consisting of 240 personnel provides services to the UCI community including: financial systems development and implementation; information security; database management; research and graduate administration support; university advancement; web technologies; registration IT; financial aid IT.

As a relatively new and broad based organization, OIT is not without issues although these do not appear to adversely impact institutional capacity. Student groups have commented that navigating through the library website can be burdensome, some school websites are outdated and dormitories could greatly benefit from wireless internet access (UCI Self Review Under the WASC Standards 2008 -2009).

Organizational structures and decision-making processes

Functional responsibilities and lines of authority for UCI are clearly defined (CFR 3.8). UCI operates as one of ten campuses under the University of California system. The

governing board is the Regents of the University of California, which exercises oversight of the UC campuses through the office of the President (CFR 3.9). Lines of authority between the UC President and Chancellor of UCI flow through various system level functional offices including: human resources; academic personnel; budget and capital resources; financial services and accountability; business operations; academic planning, programs and coordination; academic senate; research and graduate education, and; health sciences and services.

Within UCI, offices responsible for administering and implementing policies and programs include the offices of the Chancellor, including the office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost; Vice Chancellor for Planning and Budget; Vice Chancellor for Research; Vice Chancellor for Administrative and Business Services; Vice Chancellor for Student Services; Chief Executive Officer for the UCI Medical Center; Deans; heads of academic units and organized research units.

SECTION III – FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

UC Irvine is a leading research university, and our visit confirmed its stature. The teams commend the leadership role the campus plays in developing a culture of student learning outcomes assessment in a research university context.

Theme One: Student Learning in the Major

Commendation: The campus demonstrates a broad commitment to assessing student learning across multiple disciplines, in all schools, and at all levels of the institution. Faculty have taken significant ownership of this effort, which will contribute to its

sustainability. Commitment from central campus has been forthcoming in the form of resources through assessment grants and dedicated staff that provides expert support to the academic units. The Academic Senate plays a leadership role through the CEP's Assessment Sub-Committee, which also contributes to the institutionalization of the effort. The team commends the campus for taking a faculty-driven approach that, through its flexibility, fosters faculty ownership and control over defining and measuring student learning outcomes.

Recommendation: Student Learning in the Major is a new initiative for the campus. The campus leadership, the Academic Senate and the academic units recognize that sustaining the initiative in this challenging budget climate will be an important task. Key components of the sustainability of the initiative include:

- → financial support as appropriate given other priorities of the university;
- → appropriate forms of recognition for those who are engaged in the work of assessment;
- → continued faculty ownership and broad engagement of the faculty as a whole;
- → flexible processes in place with the goal of incremental change (CFRs 2.4, 3.11, 4.6, 4.7).

Theme Two: General Education

Commendation: The Academic Senate has well-defined and appropriate educational goals at the categorical level for its general education curriculum and has created an appropriate organizational structure to facilitate the continuation of the assessment process. It has successfully completed a review of its undergraduate writing requirement and has already begun to implement improvements based on those findings.

Recommendation: The Senate recognizes that it needs to establish and communicate a formal process and timeline for the cycle of review for remaining categories and courses, if implementation is to proceed in time for the Educational Effectiveness Review (CFRs 1.2, 2.4, 3.4, 4.3 and 4.6).

Theme Three: Academic Program Review

Commendation: The campus has a well-developed Academic Program Review process for all of its schools, which is overseen by the Academic Senate. It is an evidence-based process, and there is a clear commitment to incorporate evidence of undergraduate student learning in future reviews. The results of the reviews have been used to make substantive changes in schools and programs and are also used by the senior administration in academic and budget planning.

Recommendation: The campus may benefit from exploring ways to continue to improve linkages between the Academic Senate driven process and support and decision-making in relevant administrative functions (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.6, 4.7). As the campus incorporates evidence of undergraduate student learning into the APR process, the team recommends that the institution continue to allow each unit to determine its own means and methods of assessment (CFRs 2.4, 3.11, 4.6, 4.7).

Theme Four: Student Success

Commendation: The campus does an excellent job of tracking key indicators of student success, disaggregating student data by appropriate demographic categories, benchmarking against appropriate peer institutions, and making data available to the campus community and the public. The University engaged in a detailed investigation of transfer student success, which has led to actionable recommendations that have already

been implemented. The research design and methodology are exemplary and could serve as models for other institutions. The team also commends the high level of collaboration and partnership both within the University and with California community colleges, which contributes to the success of this effort.

Recommendation: The team urges the campus to continue to use this approach for other areas of student success that it deems are priorities (CFRs 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6).

SECTION IV – **PREPARATIONS FOR THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW**

The Institution has made significant progress on the goals identified in the Institutional Proposal for the CPR. The campus is well-prepared to undertake the next stage of work for the Educational Effectiveness Review. The team urges the institution to sustain its efforts in all areas. In order to be successful in the EER, the institution should pay particular attention in the intervening months to establishing and communicating widely a formal process and timeline for the cycle of review for remaining categories and courses in its General Education curriculum and to developing a common understanding as to how course objectives within GE offerings can be communicated to students effectively.

The institution should also plan to make review of the Juris Doctoral program a special focus of the EER visit, as stipulated in the commission action letter dated March 2009.

The campus has made the WASC self-study goals a priority and remains committed to continuing to implement the goals that it has set. Given the challenging budget climate facing the campus, the team encourages the institution to remain flexible and willing to make modifications as it moves forward.