

REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING TEAM
EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

TO

University of San Diego

February 29 - March 2, 2012

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Reaffirmation of Accreditation

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The team evaluated the institution under the WASC Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective evaluation for consideration and action by the institution and by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities. The formal action concerning the institution's status is taken by the Commission and is described in a letter from the Commission to the institution. This report and the Commission letter are made available to the public by publication on the WASC website.

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SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution and Visit

The mission of the University of San Diego (USD) states, "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." USD is guided by five core values consonant with its Catholic identity: 1) Academic Excellence; 2) Knowledge; 3) Community; 4) Ethical Conduct; and, 5) Compassionate Service. The WASC visiting team, on its visit of February 29 - March 2, 2012, had the opportunity to confirm the active manifestation of these values within the framework of educational effectiveness.

Located near San Diego Mission Bay, USD is a private, non-profit, residential institution of higher education enrolling more than 7,800 undergraduate, graduate, and law students, taught by 556 full-time equivalent faculty. USD offers more than 80 bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees through its six academic divisions: the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS); the School of Law; the School of Business Administration (SBA); the School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES); the Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science (SON); and the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies (KSPS). 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). USD has a total annual operating budget of \$327 million (84% funded by tuition and fees) and an endowment of \$327 million.

USD 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. The institutions merged in 1972 to form the University of San Diego. 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.

USD is known for its commitment to teaching, liberal arts, ethical values, and community service. As a Catholic university, USD has a mission and values emanating from the gospel and the Church's continuing commitment to intellectual, moral, social, and spiritual values. USD was recognized internationally as an Ashoka Changemaker campus in Fall 2011. Since the CPR visit, USD has committed to a new cycle of strategic planning, grounded in six strategic directions: 1) Student Learning and Outcomes; 2) Faculty Teaching and Scholarship; 3) Global Connections and Impact; 4) Catholic Character and Outreach; 5) Constituent Participation and Engagement; and, 6) Resource Enhancement and Economic Vitality. Two of these directions especially demonstrate the institution's continued active commitment to educational effectiveness and student success: Student Learning Outcomes and Faculty Teaching and Scholarship.

USD has an experienced and collegial leadership team. Mary E. Lyons, Ph.D., became the president in 2003 and Julie Sullivan, Ph.D., serves as Executive Vice President and Provost. She is also the Chief Academic Officer and Chief Budget Officer of the university. The executive leadership team is also comprised of Vice Presidents of Business Services and Administration, Mission and Ministry, Student Affairs, and University Relations.

USD has been fully accredited since 1956. As a merged institution, it was first accredited in 1973; since that time it has followed a regular cycle of reaffirmation visits, including 1982 and 1992. In 1992 the Commission had a positive report, with concerns expressed in areas of academic freedom, assessment, diversity, governance, library collections leadership transition, and program review. In a fourth year report, the Commission noted progress in the areas of diversity and assessment, with no comment on the other areas. In its most recent letter from the Commission in 2001 following a Fall 2000 site visit, the Commission noted progress in areas of academic freedom, institutional vision and purpose, and leadership. The general tenor of this review was highly positive, with commendations on the institutional stability in terms of finances, increased applications and selectivity, and growth as a comprehensive university along a teacher-scholar model. The three areas of concern were the continued need for more intentional action in the areas of diversity, assessment, and technology. USD selected these three areas as the themes through which they would pursue reaffirmation of accreditation. For this cycle, USD first submitted its proposal in May 2008, completed a successful Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) visit in October 2010, and continued with preparation for this, the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) visit.

Similar to the first visit, the WASC team found a welcome and cooperative USD community. Throughout the visit, the team met administrators, faculty, staff, and students who

were very engaged by the process and who demonstrated a sincere love and commitment to the mission and goals, as well as high expectations for education at the University of San Diego at both graduate and undergraduate levels. The WASC team especially noted the high level of activity and progress made in the short time since the CPR visit, and strongly affirms these efforts. The progress in many areas is tangible and valuable, and can serve as a model for other institutions. The WASC team commends the entire USD community for its commitment to addressing critical themes such as diversity and inclusion, assessment of educational effectiveness and creating innovative and modern learning spaces.

B. The Educational Effectiveness Review Report: Alignment with the Proposal, Quality and Rigor of the Report, and Tenor of the Visit

For its reaffirmation of accreditation, USD elected a theme-based institutional review, identifying themes raised as concerns in its prior accreditation cycle: 1) Defining, Evaluating, and Ensuring Educational Effectiveness; 2) Advancing Diversity in Structures, Climate, and Curriculum; and, 3) Creating and Sustaining Innovative Learning Spaces.

The WASC team was unanimous in finding strong alignment between the proposal, the CPR report, and the EER report. Adjustments to the themes, and overall report, were appropriate given the WASC CPR team findings. Additional subsections and appendices addressing WASC-required sections on the institution's response to the CPR recommendations, student success, and credit hour assurance were included. The report, in hard copy and electronic form, was thorough, organized, and well written; subsequently it was easy to read and very user-friendly with ample links to further evidence.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS UNDER THE STANDARDS

Theme 1: Defining, Evaluating, and Ensuring Educational Effectiveness

1. Progress since the CPR visit

The team commends USD for their commitment to and engagement with the assessment process. USD has made substantial progress in embracing assessment of student learning across the institution, moving from an emerging status in the CPR to a developed status in the EER based on WASC’s Educational Effectiveness Framework rubric (CFR 2.3). Major progress has been made in the areas of academic student learning outcomes in all three areas of 1) articulation, mapping, and assessment; 2) university assessment coordination and planning; and 3) comprehensive assessment in the student life area. Some progress has been made in the area of program review, with work yet to be done to fully embed program review across the institution at undergraduate and graduate levels and to complete the cycle from review to data-driven planning, resource allocation, and continuous improvement. Although many conversations and active engagement are happening, progress and direction are less clear with respect to attaining an enduring system for core curriculum review and revision (CFR 2.7).

2. Institutional Assessment, Coordination and Communication

The University Assessment Committee coordinated the successful implementation of the student outcomes assessment initiative, the development of program review guidelines and recent revisions, an initial review of information literacy, and a review of the cycle of survey administration. Moreover, the assessment committee has evolved to be a cross-unit, campus-wide committee that allows members to share concerns, review institutional data, make recommendations for change, and engage community stakeholders. It is another fine example of

educational effectiveness and coordination. The WASC Team conveys its admiration, as well as encouragement for continued work.

The Office of Institutional Research and the Center for Educational Excellence are also to be commended for the training and resources provided to the faculty as assessment of student learning has become a university-wide endeavor that is now evidence-driven (CFR 2.6). While it is not clear that the institution is assessing broad institutional goals, there is an effort to assess student learning outcomes such as writing and critical thinking across the curriculum (CFR 2.3).

During the CPR visit, the team found program learning outcomes to be stated but only occasionally articulated and mapped at the course level; in the intervening months, USD has demonstrated a clear understanding of the intent of the program level learning outcomes and these are now evident in every academic program. These learning outcomes are also demonstrated at the course level, where they are found in the syllabi and are used for assessment purposes (CFR 2.3). The faculty understands the relationship of the program learning outcomes to the course learning outcomes and is providing alignment between the two. Curriculum maps, assessment plans in the academic programs have been completed across the university (CFR 2.7).

The team conducted a review of four undergraduate long-term assessment plans. The plan in the Communications Studies program demonstrated evidence of student learning outcomes, a curriculum map, an assessment plan of when and where collection of data would take place, when analysis would occur, and how the data would be used. Rubrics have been created and calibrated. The analysis of the data by a departmental assessment team exhibited a sophisticated understanding of the information gathered and implications were generated, both for design of future assessments and for individual courses and curriculum. These student learning outcomes assessment efforts are a noteworthy example of how an institution embraces a

challenge, owns it and fashions it in ways most useful for its own campus culture. This is perhaps the strongest example of embedded assessment throughout the campus. Further review by the team of the assessment plans for the Spanish Program, Theology and Religious Studies and Chemistry and Biochemistry programs indicated the same level of engagement by the faculty in the assessment process.

Professional programs such as the Law School are also working at assessment of student learning. Law school curriculum and both program and course learning outcomes are prescribed by their accrediting body, the American Bar Association (ABA). Program learning outcomes are in place and the USD Law School faculty has 3 years of program level assessment. A faculty assessment committee in the Law School is actively reviewing results from the program learning assessments. The ABA is currently creating the course learning outcomes and should have them in place within the year (CFR 2.3).

Two additional professional schools are also demonstrating commitment to the assessment process adopted by USD (CFR 2.6). The School of Leadership and Education Science (SOLES) and the School of Business Administration both have engaged in assessment in their respective programs. SOLES programs in Education, Counseling, and Marital and Family Therapy all respond to state standards as well as those of program specific accreditors. Faculty work with the Assistant Dean for Assessment Support to maintain alignment between these groups. In the School of Business Administration, assessment of student learning revealed some gaps as students worked in teams. This understanding was incorporated into a curriculum revision and creation of leadership labs. Direct measures of student learning are gathered from internships in which graduate students participate and a review of the syllabi demonstrated rigor in these internships.

At the time of the CPR the team recommended that USD find ways to bring all the assessment from the various parts of the campus into a comprehensive plan for assessment, assessing the assessment plans (CFR 2.4). As the assessment process matures at USD, the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) has devised a rubric, the Assessment Annual Update Rubric, with which to assess the assessment plans created in their college. The results are then compiled in a document that summarizes the rubric frequencies and is the topic of collective discussion by the faculty assessment team. USD has taken collective responsibility for establishing and reviewing the attainment of their assessment expectations (CFR 2.4). In a document entitled “Assessment Update Evaluation Criteria” produced and discussed by the CAS A-Team, criteria were established with which to review the assessment plans created across the academic programs of USD (CFR 2.4). This document serves as a guideline for both the design of the assessment plans and the review of these plans.

3. Academic Program Review

The team commends USD for its serious attention to the recommendations made during the CPR visit regarding academic program review. At that time academic program review was at an initial stage with more attention needed. To date, USD has established a comprehensive, campus-wide academic program review process with guidelines that spell out the procedures that need to be followed (CFR 2.7). The Memo of Understanding and Action Plan serve as the foundation for review, planning and budget considerations at the level of both the program and the dean. The process additionally provides for internal and external reviewers to analyze the evidence of student learning (CFR 2.7). The process appears to be well understood by the campus community and there is willingness to participate in the process. The WASC CPR team recommended that USD consider how best to review library resource needs and information

literacy in the academic program review process for each program. Although initial conversations and a study is being conducted about information literacy in the disciplines, there is no evidence that library services, and information literacy, have been addressed in a systemic way (CFR 3.6).

Seven programs (Communication Studies, Music, Liberal Studies, Psychology, History, Biology, and Honors) have completed their self-studies and external visits, and received recommendations from the Academic Review Committee. Of these, four have completed drafts of their five-year plans. However, to date only one undergraduate program, Communication Studies, has completed the entire program review process through to the Memo of Understanding (MOU) and Action Plan stage. The results of the assessments, summarized in the Communication Studies program review, have been processed by the faculty and changes have been made to the curriculum as a result of this review. The faculty was resourced to make several curricular changes, adding a lower division method course as well as revising knowledge outcomes across several courses.

In a meeting with faculty from the programs currently under review, it was evident that learning is taking place. The Theology program realized that the capstone course needed revision, so consequently a new capstone course includes shorter assignments rather than one long thesis. Research skills and methods are now taught through the “Religion Café”. Data collected in the Chemistry and Spanish programs gave them a realization of what students know and what they needed to know (CFR 2.6, 4.7).

However, it was also apparent in additional program review documents provided in the team room and examined by the team, that results of assessment are missing and that recommendations are not made on evidence-based learning (CFR 4.6). The Music Program has begun their work and found that a stronger connection needed to be made between the student

learning outcomes and the reality of the careers that students will have as a result of their degree. The faculty rewrote the Mission Statement of the program as well as revised the student learning outcomes. The program has not completed the entire process, particularly including the integration of the review with institutional planning and budgeting (CFR 4.2, 4.6). Additional programs, Biology, History, Honors, Sociology, Math & Computer Science, Theology & Religious Studies, and Ethnic Studies are in varying stages of the program review process. Self-studies of the first programs participating in the review process did not include findings from assessment. USD reported that substantial revisions to the program review guidelines required Sociology, Math & Computer Science, Theology & Religious Studies, and Ethnic Studies to include assessment data and findings in their self-studies.

A data portfolio is provided by the Office of Institutional Research & Planning and is very appreciated by the programs currently under review. The Academic Review Committee is charged with a review of the program reviews that have been completed (CFR 2.7).

The team also praises the work of the graduate and professional programs in aligning their professional accreditation to the institutional program review (CFR 2.7). For these programs a process has been developed that is in its initial implementation. A document entitled “Sample Crosswalk for Accredited Programs” is used to align the professional accreditation to the USD program review process. The USD Program Review characteristics are listed, where they are located in the professional accreditation report and the documents to be used to complete the USD Academic Program Review. A review of the use of this document for the School of Leadership and Education Studies as well as the School of Business Administration demonstrated that the professional schools are taking the institution program review process

seriously. This document, while still in draft form, will be very useful as these professional programs work toward completing the USD academic program review.

USD also demonstrates a commitment to learning and improvement through the new program approval process recently adopted by the Board of Trustees. This new procedure includes the specification of student learning outcomes with an assessment plan, necessary library support and a teach-out plan (CFR 4.4). Review of the document also demonstrates the extensive involvement and needed signatures of all areas of campus in this approval process. Such a process will go far in maintaining academic standards and avoiding administrative surprises and problems.

The team recommends that USD continue its dynamic momentum in this process, by ensuring the completion of the remaining steps for the programs currently under review. The team also recommends that USD continue to consider the relationship between student outcomes assessment and academic program review; measurement of student learning is an integral part of the program review process and informs evidence-based decision-making about curriculum, resources, and program governance. The direct evidence and action plans should serve as the foundation for annual review, planning and budget consideration at the level of the program and the dean (CFRs 4.2, 4.3).

4. Core Curriculum

The undergraduate faculty continues the process of revising the core curriculum. This revision is an area of much work, energetic and at times contentious debate, and great potential. The WASC team met with committees directly involved in the work, associated committees such as the Diversity Curriculum Committee, and many faculty and administrators. At the open faculty meeting, this was the primary topic of conversation among the forty faculty who came to the meeting. It is important to acknowledge and affirm the substantial work of the many faculty

committees, the University Senate, the staff, and the faculty across the institution that have dedicated valuable time and energy to this work.

During the CPR visit, members of the community expressed concern and questions about the role of the various task forces, faculty committees, and senate in deciding what type of permanent structure will be created to oversee regular review of the core and how decisions about the core will impact programs, as well as the size and design model of the core. Many of those questions and concerns were equally present during the EER visit.

The faculty determined that a previous core revision in 2005 did not reach far enough and have continued in the revision. As an encouraging beginning, from the time of the last visit of the WASC team, the faculty has refined the list of learning outcomes, from more than 40 to 12.

At the time of the CPR visit, the WASC team recommended a full review of the core that includes a statement on the role of the core for all USD undergraduates, approval of learning outcomes, mapping of curriculum, consideration of models for the core, plans for assessment, and a decision on the formal governance of the core, including a review of the charge, membership, and authority of the Core Curriculum Committee (CFRs 2.2a, 2.3, 2.4, 2.7). The core revision now has become a key part of the President's Strategic Directions, approved by the Board of Trustees. An initial Core Curriculum Task Force attended an AAC&U Institute on General Education and Assessment in June, 2011 and worked over the summer to complete the Core Action Plan as their guiding document. The Core Action Plan contains three parts. Part One includes the Core Proposal and the Core Charter, both a rough draft and a final draft of the new core. Part Two articulates a vision Statement and Measures of Success. Part Three outlines the foundation for the Year One discussions.

This Core Action Plan was put into place in fall, 2011 with the appointment of the Core Planning committee. As this committee endeavors to implement the Core Action Plan, they have

created a timetable for completion of their work. During the first year, discussions have centered on the core principles that will guide this revision. These principles are to come to the Senate for approval during the remainder of the current academic year. In the second year, the revision will focus on building the core where a detailed model will outline the components of the core curriculum. The third year will see the transition to the revised core, with a view to implementation in the classroom in year four.

The USD community can take pride in this work, as well as in the high level of dialogue occurring in the many faculty forums that have taken place. Faculty expressed appreciation for this dialogue, as well as the cross-disciplinary conversations, which in many ways are themselves noteworthy outcomes of any core revision process. Many of the other recommendations have yet to be addressed (CFR 2.2a). The WASC team strongly recommends continued and timely attention to these necessary steps for assuring the educational effectiveness, and continuous improvement, of general education at USD (CFRs 2.2a, 2.3, 2.4, 2.7).

5. Student Affairs Assurance of Educational Effectiveness

Student Affairs personnel have taken a thorough and broad-based approach to addressing educational effectiveness, and are to be commended for their commitment to adopting data-driven processes for continuous improvement (CFRs 2.11, 2.13). Directors and staff in the area have invested resources to learn about assessment methods, compare USD's plan to peer institutions, promote staff professional development, and align initiatives to institutional strategic priorities. Moreover, Student Affairs professionals and Academic Affairs faculty are working together on initiatives. This is an area in which Academic Affairs and Student Affairs professionals should be proud of their collaborative efforts on such programs as Torero Days, Living Learning Communities, and the preceptorial curriculum. This is another example of how

pooling resources, as well as shared vision, can result in positive change for student learning. Moreover, it helps the entire community when curricular, co-curricular, and support offices better understand each other and work with a common purpose. The initial correlations between these programs and first-year retention and satisfaction are very promising.

Student Affairs hired assessment professionals to assist with a widespread professional development plan for all area staff, and to coordinate the efforts of continuous improvement. Student Affairs has completed learning outcomes, mapping within units, and an assessment plan. They have also developed a website to archive progress in this area and showcase best practices. Overall, the attention paid to educational effectiveness by this unit, as well as its integration into the work of the University Assessment Committee, serves as an excellent model for other institutions.

Theme 2: Advancing Diversity in Structures, Climate, and Curriculum

1. Progress since CPR visit

USD's Proposal for its reaffirmation of accreditation included advancing diversity in structures, climate, and curriculum, a topic that had been raised during the 2001 Commission letter and that reflects Theme Two of the self-study for the EER. The 2011 letter from the Commission after the CPR review indicated that USD had "addressed all...themes seriously and made substantial progress in each area [of the three addressed in the 2001 letter]." The Commission concurred in 2011 with the CPR Visiting team's conclusion that USD had placed much deserved attention on a number of initiatives (hiring practices, student recruitment and retention, campus climate, curriculum, the creation of the Center for Inclusion and Diversity (CID), etc.) and that since many of these initiatives were recent, there had been no time to analyze their "effectiveness or even their reach." The Commission stated that by the time of the EER, "USD should be able to show some evidence of the impact of the initiatives that have been

developed to enhance diversity, to promote success of diverse students, faculty and staff, and to create a positive climate for the whole USD community (CFRs 1.5, 2.10, 3.1, 3.2).” This is particularly important since USD, through the President's Advisory Board on Inclusion and Diversity (PABID), has been planning on how to promote diversity since the 2008-2009 academic year. USD's progress since the CPR visit is mixed; although many faculty and staff are working to support diversity initiatives, there is still a substantial lack of shared vision, coherence and coordination which is keeping the institution from having fully embedded systems to address priorities or achieve widespread institutional improvement.

2. Coordination of Diversity Efforts

USD is to be commended for emphasizing the topic of diversity in the accreditation reaffirmation process; a topic that matches its Mission statement as they endeavor to create “...a diverse and inclusive community” together with the other components of USD’s Mission of supporting academic excellence, providing a Catholic, liberal arts training, and forming ethical and compassionate leaders. Furthermore, USD is to be commended for declaring as one of its Core Values a commitment to an inclusive and collaborative community, as stated in its mission, “...accentuated by a spirit of freedom and charity, and marked by protection of the rights and dignity of the individual...” that should create “an atmosphere of trust, safety and respect in a community characterized by a rich diversity of people and ideas.”

The WASC CPR team observed that significant efforts had been made to identify and support faculty, students and staff who differed in terms of their gender and/or their ethnic/racial background. The WASC team also noted that less attention seemed to have been given to other aspects of a community’s diversity such as socio-economic status, generational history, national origin, sexuality, physical ability, religion, etc. This is important for any institution of higher

education and particularly for one located in the middle of a truly multicultural environment that as a Roman Catholic institution wishes to highlight its academic excellence and preparing ethical and compassionate leaders in an inclusive environment, as USD's Mission mandates. Indeed, the WASC CPR team encouraged USD to adopt the wider perspective of diversity and to reflect such understanding in its EER Self-Study. During the EER visit, the WASC team was impressed by the efforts made by LGBTQ faculty and allies to develop strategies to educate peer faculty and administrators and to develop relevant courses for all students. These efforts, often undertaken without external support, are an excellent example of USD's dedicated faculty.

As was true during the CPR visit, the WASC team was informed of the development and continued implementation of a number of strategies and activities and the solidification of some of the many committees that have been created to support diverse faculty and students. It was difficult to understand how the various groups and committees interact with each other and how duplication of efforts is prevented. Important efforts have taken place in this regard such as the transfer of some interventions from the Black Student Retention and Recognition Committee (BSRRC) to Student Support Services (SSS), but other groups seem to exist without a clear goal or directives from the administration. The Center for Inclusion and Diversity (CID) is undergoing a change in leadership although it was not clear as to what its new goals would be, not because of lack of faculty leadership but because of seeming lack of direction from the administration. The CID has recently funded the All Nations Institute for Community Achievement (ANICA) as a way of supporting the experiences of American Indians on campus. ANICA has been active in defining its mission and developing a number of activities that can have an important role in supporting diversity at USD. As the WASC CPR team noted, the relative youth of these diversity-related initiatives has not produced solid evaluation data. USD and the CID in particular, are encouraged to develop strong evaluative components to better

guide program development and implementation and to justify program sustainability. While a center such as CID can serve to advance and support the diversification of USD, the WASC team was unable to identify the goals that the administration is hoping for as they search for a new director.

The WASC team continues to be concerned about the lack of program evaluation in many strategies dealing with diverse students, with the exception of evaluation of the summer bridge programs, an effort for which faculty and staff should be congratulated.

The WASC team observed with concern that ethnic diversity among full-time faculty (in terms of the percentage of white faculty) has not increased between 2006 (79.6%) and 2011 (79.4%) although the total number of full-time faculty has increased by 10.7% in the same period of time. When data for 22 years provided by the Provost Office is analyzed, the percentage of white faculty at USD has decreased by only 9.9 percentage points. In the same five years (2006-2011), the percentage of women in the full-time faculty has increased by 3.2 percentage points, from 43.3% in 2006 to 46.5% in 2011. These are modest gains. The WASC CPR team encouraged USD to analyze the gender and ethnic/racial composition of its workforce in terms of San Diego's workforce availability and to evaluate the effectiveness of its recruitment and retention efforts in order to continue to properly diversify its workforce (CFR 3.2). The WASC team continues to recommend that USD strengthen its recruitment process to more rapidly diversify the faculty.

USD is to be commended for having hired a team of academically strong, dedicated and committed diverse faculty, though few in number, who understand the Mission of the University and work tirelessly to support students in their personal and academic growth. The WASC team would like to recommend that USD find ways to properly recognize these efforts, to more rationally allocate workload (to eliminate in as much as possible the "minority effort tax" that

diverse faculty experience all over the country), and to find ways to make these activities part of tenure and promotion considerations. The overall goal should be to diminish exhaustion and prevent burnout and ultimately to retain and support these excellent scholars (CFR 3.1, 3.2).

The WASC team recognizes the importance of having created a more centrally located office for Ethnic Studies faculty (away from a trailer) and encourages USD to continue highlighting the important contributions that ethnic/racial minority faculty and staff make to a university striving for excellence within the Roman Catholic tradition. Increasing the diversity of the administration needs to complement increases in faculty, staff and student diversity.

3. Diversity in the Curriculum and Co-Curriculum

The WASC team was not made aware of efforts to address in the curriculum or co-curriculum the other areas of diversity recommended during the CPR visit. The WASC team wishes to again underscore this need that was a frequently mentioned theme in meetings with faculty and students. The redesign of the Diversity ("D") requirement in the core can provide such an opportunity and USD is encouraged to consider ways to widen perspectives and improve the "D" requirement following clear and assessable learning outcomes and guaranteeing consistency in coverage across courses. Since the CPR visit, a "Diversity Curriculum Committee" was established to review the "D" requirement and recommend changes, all of which occurred. Yet, the conversation about the "D" requirement happened distinct from the conversation of core curriculum itself. Thus, whereas there is great lively debate occurring about the purpose, size, and type of core all USD students will experience, it appears the conversation of the "D" requirement has happened in a vacuum, causing a symbolic if not real marginalization. This is another example in which the purpose and scope of work, as well as coordination, between committees, task forces, and centers is unclear. USD is encouraged to

find a means to integrate the ample work of the Diversity Curriculum Committee into the ongoing conversation of core curriculum for all students.

4. Student Success

USD has made a conscientious effort at increasing the gender and ethnic diversity of its students (CFR 2.10) and the institution is to be commended for those efforts. The WASC team acknowledges the increase in male students in the last five years (from 39.9% in 2006 to 44.7% in 2011). Also noteworthy is the increase in the diversity of the student body measured in terms of percentages of white students which decreased from 65.4% (2006) to 57.3% (2011). The WASC team wishes to commend USD for the success of these recruitment strategies and for the creativity shown at advancing student diversity (for example, the ANICA initiative with American Indians in the San Diego area).

USD is to be congratulated for maintaining a fairly high retention rate of freshman students in the last few years and for implementing a series of creative strategies to retain all students and particularly those at risk. Many of these strategies have been developed after analyzing relevant data from various offices and this process demonstrates attention being given to “closing of the loop” in planning. Nevertheless, the WASC team is particularly concerned about the differential success rates of some underrepresented students (particularly African Americans).

The data presented in the EER Self-Study on retention are analyzed in greater detail in another part of this Report but it should be noted that data for 2002-2004 entering freshman students show an important gap in 6-year graduation rates for African Americans (average of 60%) compared to whites (average of 75%) although the number of entering African Americans is substantially low (for example, 15 in 2002 and 9 in 2004). Noteworthy is the fact that the

average 6-year graduation rates for the two largest ethnic minority student groups are high and fairly similar to that of whites: Latinos (72%) and Asian Americans (74%) for the same 2002-2004 period. At the same time, USD is to be commended for achieving parity in the 6-year graduation rates for men and women (average of 74% for the three entering cohorts of 2002-2004).

The enrollment data reported to IPEDS for graduate degrees show that consistently, women outnumber men and whites outnumber individuals from other ethnic/racial groups. USD may want to pay particular attention to further diversifying graduate program enrollments in order to provide graduate students the benefits inherent in a diverse learning environment (CFRs 2.10, 4.4).

The WASC team commends USD for supporting Pell Grant recipients in remaining in school as demonstrated by a one-year retention rate of 88.9% compared to 87.5% for all freshman for Fall 2010 entering students. While a number of strategies to improve retention and on-time graduation have been implemented, their evaluation is still preliminary with the exception of the summer bridge program that shows impressive results. USD is encouraged to analyze how best to support African American students and other students at risk because of their diverse characteristics by using multipronged approaches and to support successful programs. The WASC team would like to recommend a clear definition of goals for each strategy, appropriate planning (to eliminate the “haste” identified by the BSRRC), the use of quasi-experimental designs to identify the results of the various strategies as well as more longitudinal data (as recommended by the BSRRC) and more complex data analyses (e.g., logistic regressions). The differences in performance between athletes and non-athletes is extremely worrisome and USD should pay attention to how these students are better served not as athletes but as students.

5. Institutional Climate

During the CPR visit, USD reported an evaluation of institutional climate. In that survey, women and LGBTQ students reported feeling that the campus was not a welcoming environment. The WASC team recommended that USD continue to search ways in which the institution could become "...even more a community in which God is seen in all people and in all things and where all human beings deserve respect and love." The WASC team commends USD for strengthening, in the time since the CPR visit, some of its groups and committees and for supporting the activities developed by faculty to train peers and staff on ways to improve the classroom and overall university environment. The WASC team feels that future success in this area will depend on properly defining and strengthening the role of existing structures, conducting reliable measures of institutional climate, and implementing a number of the recommendations proposed by various faculty and staff groups.

Another critical area for climate is support for faculty from under-represented backgrounds. As noted above, faculty of color and LGBTQ faculty and allies are working assiduously to improve the climate for students, and are to be commended for their efforts. During both visits, faculty and staff from underrepresented groups reported feeling stretched in service requirements and pressured to accept those requests while being underappreciated by the administration. The WASC team often heard from underrepresented faculty, students and staff concerns about the administration's level of understanding of the experiences of being a diverse individual in a predominantly white environment. As mentioned by one faculty member, "it is hard to be here"—USD may want to develop ways in which to make the institution feel like a welcoming and supporting environment.

During the last few years, USD has implemented a number of strategies to improve institutional climate for students including the design of a special course (Education 379), support services at SSS, the Center for Inclusion and Diversity (CID), targeted assignment of diverse students to preceptorial courses, etc. Unfortunately, it is difficult to gauge the effectiveness of these strategies since most of the evidence available is indirect self-reports in surveys rather than direct measures of effectiveness. As recommended above, USD may wish to enlist the support of faculty and staff experienced in assessment, program evaluation and institutional research to identify through multidimensional approaches how effective these strategies have been. USD may also want to do an analysis of accessibility of services particularly the SSS where some of its facilities are located far from the “heart” of the campus. Indeed, some ethnic minority students reported the difficulty in reaching those services when commuting to campus and wished they were more centrally located.

Theme 3: Creating and Sustaining Innovative Learning Spaces

1. Progress since the CPR visit.

In the CPR visit, the WASC team commended USD on its substantial progress since the last WASC reaffirmation of accreditation, noting, "USD's progress in the capacity of its network and information technology is impressive and exemplifies USD's commitment to continuous improvement (CFRs 3.7, 4.6)." The only suggestions for this area were that USD consider modifications to this theme to include learning outcomes for technology and coordination of academic classroom technology priorities with the institutional technology plan. Since the CPR visit, USD has begun to address the WASC recommendations for a longer-term approach that aligns budget and needs in this area. Moreover, they have continued to use the initial self-study

and lessons learned, not only about technology, but also about learning spaces, to expand and institutionalize the practice of regular and sustained attention to space improvement.

2. Technology and Innovative Learning Spaces

USD's entire work in this regard has been stellar (CFR 3.7). First, they took WASC recommendations about technology from a prior review and expanded the theme to include overall classroom quality, with an overarching vision of contemporary learning evidenced by the title of the theme, "Creating and Sustaining Innovative Learning Spaces." Second, they conducted a thorough self-study, including necessary stakeholders, and allowing faculty conversations of technology-enhanced pedagogy to drive the recommendations. Third, they instituted the "classroom crawl" in which teams of stakeholders evaluated learning spaces informed by a list of criteria including space capacity, furniture, lighting, and technology. Fourth, they have made data-driven improvements to fourteen general use classrooms. This initiative in improving learning spaces has continued since the CPR visit and there are plans for it to continue in the future (CFR 3.7).

In response to WASC CPR recommendations, USD has developed four outcomes for technology, including 1) technology makes course content accessible to students at all times, 2) technology promotes communication between student and instructor, and among classmates, 3) technology facilitates active learning pedagogy, and 4) technology enhances student teamwork and collaboration on projects. This process is in the early stages, and the data for the measures have not been collected. Rubrics and means of assessment are being finalized. USD has also developed a flow chart that demonstrates the stages of classroom review, deliberation, and allocation of resources for improvement. Integrated into these discussions are student learning outcomes and faculty priorities for contemporary pedagogy, demonstrating an alignment between academic program review and planning and space utilization (CFRs 2.7, 3.7).

3. Library Capacity

The CPR WASC team recommended that "attention be paid to the capacity of the library, in terms of personnel, collections, and facilities, and that an audit of academic resources be included in both new program proposals as well as the academic program review (CFRs 3.6, 4.8)." In the EER report, USD acknowledges the need for a comprehensive evaluation to better understand how the library can serve current students and faculty. Some initial observations have begun in terms of a facilities expansion to Copley Library, although there are no concrete plans in place.

Under the direction of the new university librarian, USD has worked on a reorganization plan to address collections, personnel and facilities. New quiet zones and study zones have been established, with longer hours of operation during final examination periods. The library staff is also working with other units on campus to identify different spaces that could be converted to quiet and study zones during these periods. The WASC team acknowledges the improvement, and encourages continued activity in this area, and the further integration of library resources in institutional planning, for facilities as well as collections and staffing.

SECTION III. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW AND THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

The WASC team expresses its appreciation to the USD community for its cooperation during the EER visit. The WASC team identified the following areas of findings for commendation and recommendation:

1. Commendation on the reaffirmation of reaccreditation review. The team commends USD for the well-thought and well-written report for this Educational Effectiveness Review (CFR 1.3). USD embraced the recommendations that emerged from the prior reaccreditation process and developed these into three themes aligned with their own priorities and strategic plan. USD is to be commended for its commitment to best practices and making high quality changes that are data-driven and sustainable.

2. Commendation and recommendation on leadership and collaboration. The many points of collaboration between faculty, staff, and administration are noteworthy. The WASC team especially wishes to affirm and commend the strong leadership of the institution and the WASC steering committee, and each of the teams that were developed to complete the analysis of the four WASC standards and three themes. The WASC team commends the ability of all stakeholders in achieving coherence and consistency in priorities and decision-making.

The team recommends that continued attention be paid to collaboration and coordination on initiatives related to the three themes, and especially core curriculum revision and diversity-enhancing initiatives.

3. Commendation on student outcomes assessment. USD has made substantial progress in embracing assessment across the institution. This is especially true at both the program and the course level. The institution has completed a university-wide initiative

at developing learning outcomes per program, curriculum maps, and assessment plans, which are now at the implementation stage. The Office of Institutional Research and the Center for Educational Excellence have also completed much work, providing resources and training to faculty so that the data collection and analysis are truly disciplinary-driven. These student outcomes assessment efforts are a noteworthy example of how an institution embraces a challenge, owns it and fashions it in ways most useful for its own campus culture. This is perhaps the strongest example of embedded assessment throughout the campus.

4. Commendation on Student Affairs. The WASC team found great progress in the area of Student Affairs assessment. Systems for educational effectiveness are well embedded throughout the unit. Student Affairs personnel are to be commended for their substantial work in adopting a data-driven approach. This is another area in which academic affairs and student affairs professionals should be proud of their collaborative efforts on such programs as Torero Days, Living Learning Communities, and the preceptorial curriculum. This is a fine example of collaborative work focused on how pooling resources, as well as shared vision, can result in positive change for student learning.

5. Commendation on Credit Hour Assurance. USD is to be commended for its approach to evaluating, assuring, and documenting the credit hour equivalencies for both undergraduate and graduate programs. The data are clear and present well USD's compliance with this WASC expectation.

6. Commendations and Recommendations for Academic Program Review. The team commends USD for its serious attention to the recommendations made during the CPR visit, including the continued attention to the review guidelines and steps of program review, and the adoption of campus-wide academic program review guidelines. The team also praises the work of graduate and professional programs in aligning their professional accreditation

to the institutional program review. Finally, the team wants to acknowledge the positive collaboration between academic programs and administration in completing the first steps of the program review process: the self-study, the external review, and the review by the Academic Review Committee.

The team recommends that USD continue its dynamic momentum in this process, by ensuring the completion of the remaining steps. To date, few programs have completed the action plan; even fewer (only one) have been able to complete the entire process with an agreed-upon final action plan that contains resource and timeline projections.

The team also recommends that USD continue to consider the relationship between student outcomes assessment and academic program review; measurement of student learning is an integral part of program review and informs evidence-based decision making about curriculum, resources, and program governance. The team recommends that attention to information literacy and library needs be considered in this review and action planning. These action plans and direct evidence serve as the foundation for annual review, planning, and budget consideration at the level of the program and dean (CFRs 4.2, 4.3).

7. Commendation and Recommendation on library services and information literacy. The team appreciates the initial efforts to address the prior WASC recommendation on information literacy. The information literacy project can serve as a strong foundation for continued work. The team recommends that continued attention be paid to how information literacy can be embedded in both undergraduate and graduate curriculum for all students, and the academic program review process. The WASC team commends the Copley Library staff and the administration for the attention they have paid to improving personnel and facilities of the library, as well as the increased involvement by library staff in curricular initiatives. The efforts to improve capacity should continue as integrated components of the newest strategic directions.

8. Commendations and Recommendations on comprehensive university assessment. The University Assessment Committee has completed substantial work since the CPR visit. This committee coordinated the successful implementation of the student outcomes assessment initiative, the development of program review guidelines and recent revisions, an initial review of information literacy, and a review of the cycle of survey administration. Moreover, the assessment committee has evolved to be a cross-unit, campus-wide committee that allows members to share concerns, review institutional data, make recommendations for change, and engage community stakeholders. It is another fine example of educational effectiveness and coordination. The WASC team conveys its admiration, as well as encouragement for continued work.

9. Recommendations on core curriculum. The Core Curriculum revision is an area of much work, energetic debate and great potential. The team recognizes the substantial work of all who have dedicated valuable energy to this issue. At the time of the CPR, members of the community expressed questions about the management and direction of the core; these concerns remain. Confusion also remains about the role of the various task forces, faculty committees, and senate in deciding what type of permanent structure will be created to oversee regular review of the core and how decisions about the core will impact programs, as well as the size and design model of the core.

The CPR WASC team recommendations in this area were many, from vision and purpose of the core to evaluation plans to long-term governance. Progress has been made in the review of the learning outcomes, which were refined to twelve (12). Likewise, an initial action plan establishes a timeline for completion, but without an agreed-upon articulation of specific philosophy, outcomes, or associated curriculum. The USD community can take pride in this work, as well as in the high level of dialogue occurring in the many faculty forums that have taken place which in many ways are

themselves noteworthy outcomes of any core revision process. Many of the other recommendations have yet to be addressed, however. The WASC team strongly recommends continued attention to these necessary steps for assuring the educational effectiveness, and continuous improvement, of general education at USD.

10. Commendations and Recommendations on Diversity initiatives.

The WASC team commends USD for emphasizing the topic of diversity in the accreditation reaffirmation process and for the significant efforts made and strategies put in place to identify and support faculty, students and staff that differ in terms of their gender, sexuality, and/or their ethnic/racial background. USD is to be commended for having hired a team of academically strong, dedicated and committed diverse faculty who work tirelessly to strengthen USD and support students. The Team first recommends that USD find ways to properly recognize these efforts and to consider how these activities might inform tenure and promotion considerations.

The WASC team also recommends continued attention to other aspects of diversity such as socio-economic status, generational history, national origin, sexuality, physical ability, and religion. As part of this attention, USD should consider its review of the diversity requirement for the core, and how the diversity learning outcomes and their assessment are integrated into the broader core revision.

The WASC team congratulates USD for its recent improvements in first-year retention and for implementing strategies to retain all students, especially those most at risk. However, the WASC team remains concerned about disaggregated data on student success, especially for African Americans. The WASC team recommends continued attention to data assessment for these groups, and evaluation of the strategies recently implemented.

Although USD has directed various task forces, committees and standing offices to address these needs, it should continue to consider how these efforts are coordinated, and how the

Office of Institutional Research can archive and report on annual data across the many groups dedicated to this work.

USD is to be commended for its response to the CPR visit, when concerns were raised by members of the community about institutional climate. Since the CPR visit, USD has taken action to educate faculty and train peers to improve classroom and campus environment. Future success in this area will depend on strengthening the role of existing structures (e.g., the CID), conducting reliable measures of institutional climate, and implementing a number of the recommendations proposed by various faculty and staff groups.

11. Commendations and Recommendations on Technology and Innovative Learning Spaces

USD is to be commended for bringing together people from across the university to improve the learning environment of their classrooms. This is an area of substantial progress throughout the CPR and EER visits. It also serves as model for strategic and inclusive action. Real change has occurred since the WASC reaccreditation recommendation ten years prior. USD is to be congratulated for their achievements, and for the new technology learning outcomes and processes for continued attention and alignment of needs to budget allocations. The team recommends that USD continue the process of evaluating the new learning outcomes, and making data-based decisions on its learning spaces.

Team Report Appendix
CREDIT HOUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Institution: USD
 Kind of Visit: EER
 Date: Feb 29 – Mar 1, 2012

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report for all CPR, EER and Initial Accreditation Visits. Teams are not required to include a narrative about this matter in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings and Recommendations section of the team report.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)	Verified Yes/No
Policy on credit hour	Does this policy adhere to WASC policy and federal regulations?	Yes
	Comments: Policy is described for undergraduate, graduate and online, hybrid courses.	
Process(es)/ periodic review	Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)?	Yes
	Does the institution adhere to this procedure?	Yes
	Comments: Policy is reviewed through the Provost Office, a committee of two individuals. The course schedule is monitored to be certain that every class not fitting the standard pattern is reviewed. One individual reviews every course not fitting the standard pattern. All other courses are monitored to certify that all classes meet for the requisite amount of time. Documentation for internships, independent studies, practica, studio work was reviewed.	
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours?	Yes
	Comments: USD has a policy that 55 minutes in class for approximately 14 weeks; this calculation is included in the institutional Credit Hour policy.	
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses	What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? USD offers hybrid courses, and syllabi were reviewed for the hybrid courses. No purely online courses are offered. How many syllabi were reviewed? 4 What degree level(s)? Master's. The undergraduate programs have no online or hybrid courses. What discipline(s)? Business	
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded?	Yes
	Comments: The syllabus spells out the type of work that the student will be doing for credit. The amount of rote work is limited by terms in the syllabus.	
Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet	What kinds of courses? Independent studies courses in the undergraduate programs; internship courses. How many syllabi were reviewed? 6 What degree level(s)? Undergraduate, graduate What discipline(s)? Business, various (for independent studies).	

for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated)		
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded?	Yes
	Comments: In each case the list of readings was extensive and the assignments were substantial.	