

# WSCUC Interim Report

## INSTRUCTIONS

Interim Reports are limited in scope, not comprehensive evaluations of the institution. The report informs the Interim Report Committee about the progress made by the institution in addressing issues identified by the Commission.

The Interim Report consists of two sections:

- Interim Report Form and Appendices
- Additional Required Data (as specified on the Additional Required Data form)

Please respond completely to each question on the following pages and do not delete the questions. Appendices and Additional Required Data will be uploaded as separate attachments.

WSCUC is no longer using Live Text for receiving Interim Reports. Institutions will use a free Box.com account to upload the report. Instructions for creating the Box.com account and uploading the report will be provided by email.

## REPORT GUIDELINES AND WORD LIMITS

Because the number of issues reported on varies among institutions (the average is four to six issues), the length of a report will vary. However, a typical interim report ranges from 20 to 60 pages, not including appendices. Narrative essays responding to each issue should be no more than five pages each. **The total number of pages of appendices supporting the report should be no more than 200 pages** unless agreed upon in advance with the institution's staff liaison. Be sure that all attachments follow a consistent naming convention and are referenced the same way at appropriate places within the narrative. Please name them so that it is clear what they are and what section they refer to, with cross referencing in the narrative. For example, "Attachment 2-1: Mission Statement", would be used for Criterion 2. Attachments are preferred as PDFs.

Institutions that provide excessive information in their report will be asked to resubmit. You may wish to consult with your staff liaison as you prepare your report.

Some tips for providing evidence to support your findings:

- Put yourself in the place of a reviewer: what is the story that you need to tell? What evidence supports your story? What is extraneous and can be left out?
- Provide a representative sample of evidence on an issue, rather than ALL of the evidence.
- Consider including an executive summary or the most relevant points of supporting evidence, rather than the entire document.
- If you are referring to a specific page or set of pages in a document, include only those pages, not the entire document.

- If you are providing an excerpt of a document, include the title of the document, and a table of contents and/or a brief narrative to put the excerpt in context.
- If you provide a hyperlink to a web page, make sure the link takes the viewer directly to the relevant information on the page. Do not make your reviewer search for it.

### **REVIEW PROCESS**

A panel of the WSCUC Interim Report Committee (IRC) will review the report, typically within 90 days of receipt. Representatives of your institution will be invited to participate in the conference call review to respond to questions from the panel. Your WSCUC staff liaison will contact you after the call with the outcome of the review, which will also be documented in a formal action letter.

### **OUTCOMES OF THE REVIEW**

After the review, the panel will take one of the following actions.

- **Receive the Interim Report** with recommendations and commendations—No follow up required.
- **Defer action** pending receipt of follow-up information—The panel has identified limited information that may be submitted in a short period of time, such as audited financial statements or the outcome of an upcoming meeting of the board. The panel may authorize the WSCUC staff liaison to review these materials without the full panel being brought together again, depending on the nature of the supplemental information.
- **Request an additional Interim Report**—Issues reported on were not adequately resolved or need continued monitoring.
- **Request a Progress Report**—A progress report is less formal than an Interim Report and is reviewed only by the WSCUC staff liaison. A progress report may be requested when institutional follow-up on one or two relatively minor areas is desired.
- **Receive the Interim Report with a recommendation that the Commission sends a site visit evaluation team**—Serious, ongoing issues involving potential non-compliance with WSCUC's Standards and Criteria for Review may require follow-up in the form of a Special Visit. Note that the IRC panel makes a recommendation for a visit, and the Executive Committee of the Commission or the full Commission decides on whether or not to require the visit.

# Interim Report Form

Please respond to each question. Do not delete the questions. Insert additional pages as needed.

**Name of Institution:** University of California - Riverside

**Person Submitting the Report:** Steven G. Brint, Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education and Accreditation Liaison Officer

**Report Submission Date:** February 27, 2015

## Statement on Report Preparation

**Briefly describe in narrative form the process of report preparation, providing the names and titles of those involved. Because of the focused nature of an Interim Report, the widespread and comprehensive involvement of all institutional constituencies is not normally required. Faculty, administrative staff, and others should be involved as appropriate to the topics being addressed in the preparation of the report. Campus constituencies, such as faculty leadership and, where appropriate, the governing board, should review the report before it is submitted to WSCUC, and such reviews should be indicated in this statement.**

In his role as Accreditation Liaison Officer and Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education, Steven Brint was responsible for editing and submitting this report. Jill Kern, Director of Director of Evaluation and Assessment, drafted the text on assessment of undergraduate programs and general education. Kevin Esterling, Associate Dean of the Graduate Division and Professor of Political Science, drafted the part of the report devoted to graduate program assessment. Matthew Hull, Associate Vice Chancellor for Resource Planning and Budget, provided the three-year budget model, which was approved by Chancellor Kim Wilcox; Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Paul D'Anieri; and Vice Chancellor for Planning & Budget and Chief Financial Officer Maria Anguiano. Christine Victorino, Assistant Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education, and Gary Coyne, Principal Research Analyst in the Office of Evaluation and Assessment, provided critical input, feedback, and research during the preparation of this report.

Vice Provost Steven Brint circulated this report for input and approval from the following senior administrators and faculty leaders prior to its submission to WSCUC: Paul D'Anieri, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost; Maria Anguiano, Vice Chancellor for Planning & Budget and Chief Financial Officer; Bryce Mason, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Planning & Budget; Kevin Esterling, Associate Dean of the Graduate Division and Professor of Political Science; Jose Wudka, Chair, Academic Senate; and Ken Baerenklau, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy.

## **List of Topics Addressed in this Report**

**Please list the topics identified in the action letter(s) and that are addressed in this report.**

This report addresses the following issues articulated in WASC's May 2013 Interim Review Committee action letter:

- I. Assessment of Undergraduate Programs
  - A. Academic Program Review
  - B. Program Evaluation
  - C. Assessment
    1. History
    2. Efforts to Bolster UCR's Assessment Program
      - Funding
      - Meta-Assessment
      - Assessment Advisory Committee
      - Program Assessment Enhancements
- II. Assessment of General Education
  - A. Written Communication
    1. University Writing Program Assessment
    2. Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)
  - B. Quantitative Reasoning
    1. Survey of GE Faculty
    2. Math Task Force
  - C. Oral Communication
    1. Research
    2. Professional Development Workshops
    3. Course Offerings in Oral Communication
  - D. Critical Thinking and Information Literacy
- III. Assessment of Graduate Programs
- IV. Strategic Planning, Priorities, and Growth

## **Institutional Context**

**Very briefly describe the institution's background; mission; history, including the founding date and year first accredited; geographic locations; and other pertinent information so that the Interim Report Committee panel has the context to understand the issues discussed in the report.**

The University of California at Riverside (UCR) is one of ten campuses of the University of California, widely recognized as the preeminent public university system in the world. UCR admitted our first students in 1954, and WASC<sup>1</sup> accredited the campus two years later.

The University's mission statement is as follows:

The University of California, Riverside serves the needs and enhances the quality of life of the diverse people of California, the nation and the world through knowledge – its communication, discovery, translation, application, and preservation. The undergraduate, graduate and professional degree programs; research programs; and outreach activities develop leaders who inspire, create, and enrich California's economic, social, cultural, and environmental future.

In keeping with this mission, UCR seeks to provide our diverse student body with faculty-mentored opportunities to participate in world-class research and creative activities, to prepare undergraduates for graduate school and professional careers, and to develop students to serve as future leaders of the state and nation.

In fall 2014, the campus enrolled 18,782 undergraduates and 2,887 graduate students and had a ladder faculty of nearly 700. Students and professors were housed in seven colleges: the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences; the College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences; the Bourns College of Engineering; the Graduate School of Education; the School of Business Administration; the School of Medicine; and the School of Public Policy. The latter two are new. The School of Medicine admitted its inaugural class in 2013-14, and the School of Public Policy will admit its first master's students cohort in 2015-16.

Recent rankings of American universities based on their academic excellence and contribution to students' upward social mobility have consistently placed UCR at the top. The University ranked first in *Time* magazine's (2014) application of President Obama's college rating system, based on the criteria of access, affordability, and graduation. The University was second in the most recent *Washington Monthly* (2013) university standings, which considers social mobility, including enrollment of low income students, net price, and better-than-predicted graduation rates. And UCR placed high on all measures of distinction in the New American Foundation (2013) report on "next-generation universities"—namely, diversity, access, cost-effectiveness, and research productivity.

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<sup>1</sup> Reflecting the Commission's name change in July 2014, this report refers to WASC when referring to the Commission prior to this date and WSCUC when referring to it after.

While proud of our accomplishments, UCR is firmly committed to continuous improvement through institutional learning and reflection. Two processes designed to spur learning and reflection—assessment and strategic planning—are the focus of this Interim Report.

## Response to Issues Identified by the Commission

**I. Assessment of Undergraduate Programs.** Data-driven decision making is a fundamental feature of UCR's Office of Undergraduate Education's (UE's) operating practices and culture. Committed to the collection and analysis of evidence of the degree to which our educational objectives are being met at the campus, college, and program levels, UE employs a three-pronged approach to the appraisal of academic programs' educational effectiveness: academic program review, program evaluation, and assessment. Evidence generated by each is used to inform resource allocation decisions and the design of interventions to enhance student learning. Before turning to assessment, the following discussion will briefly describe the first two methods of academic program appraisal in order to flesh out more fully how UCR engages in the ongoing enhancement of educational effectiveness through institutional learning processes.

**A. Academic Program Review.** Nearly a decade ago the campus established a program review process conducted by the Academic Senate Committee on Educational Policy (CEP). In 2005-06, CEP engaged external review teams to evaluate UCR's nine life sciences departments. Based on this experience, CEP established a [formal review process](#) for undergraduate programs, which entails program self-study and the appointment of an external review team. CEP's policy is to review each program once every seven years.

As the [undergraduate program review procedures](#) indicate and the excerpt from the English Department's program review dossier illustrates ([Appendix I-1](#)), programs are required to include assessment data and to describe the curricular or other reforms they have taken based on these data in Section III of their self-study report. Thus, the CEP subcommittee and external committee charged with reviewing the program consider the program's assessment of student learning in their evaluation. The link between program review and assessment reinforces the value both processes have for enhancing educational effectiveness.

To close the loop on program review findings, the CEP chair and at least one senior administrator (e.g., college divisional dean, college associate dean, Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education) meets with program representatives to craft an action plan to address the areas that the program review found are most in need of improvement, set the time line for the plan, and identify the resources needed to accomplish it. Each spring quarter the CEP audits the implementation efforts of programs reviewed in the previous year. When programs fail to put in place all aspects of the plan, the CEP recommends follow-up actions to the program and informs appropriate campus administrators.

In 2014, CEP completed three program reviews (i.e., Creative Writing; Earth Science; and English) after having found the programs in compliance with their action implementation plans. It had seven open reviews in various stages of the process (i.e., Media and Cultural Studies; Physics and Astronomy; Political Science; Theatre; Business Administration; Chemical and Environmental Engineering; and Computer Science and Engineering). Examples of improvements to undergraduate education based on program review findings include a new

practice of conducting longitudinal assessment of English majors' writing using a uniform rubric across courses and the standardization of assessment practices across the two departments that oversee the computing engineering major.

**B. Program Evaluation.** The Office of Undergraduate Education (UE) routinely uses carefully collected statistical analyses of the educational effectiveness of the programs under its purview to make resource allocation decisions. To fulfill this function, UE has employed a Director of Evaluation and Assessment since 2005. More recently, UE has hired a full-time Principal Research Analyst to provide statistical analyses in support of program evaluation activities.

The Office of Evaluation and Assessment (OEA) designs and conducts studies to evaluate the impact of UE's academic support programs on student learning. These programs are the Academic Resource Center (ARC), which offers a wide range of educational support services; University Writing Program; Undergraduate Research; University Honors Program; Summer Sessions; and Study Abroad. Examples of evaluation studies include an examination of the relationship between participation in the ARC's Early Assist Program—a program that provides remedial instruction to students identified early in the quarter as being at risk of failing one or more courses—and course grades; a comparison of learning outcome achievement between students enrolled in the third of the GE program's three required English composition courses and those taking upper-division writing intensive courses in their major instead; and the impact of participating in a first-year learning community on outcomes such as GPA, the likelihood of passing UCR's entry-level writing requirement, time to major declaration, and retention. Program evaluation reports can be found at <http://ueeval.ucr.edu/reports.html>.

To ensure the success of new programs, UE implements them on a pilot basis with the evaluation of their educational effectiveness as a condition of the pilot. Those that yield promising data are rolled out on a larger scale. When programs do not meet expectations in well controlled evaluation studies, they are redesigned or phased out. Recent evaluations using program participants and matched samples of non-participants showed high levels of success for certain programs (i.e., Supplemental Instruction, College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences Learning Communities, and Early Assist pilot program). They have, therefore, been scaled to support more students. By contrast, evaluations of others (i.e., Tutorial Assistance Program, Summer Bridge, and College of Humanities and Social Sciences Learning Communities) have generated less positive outcomes. These programs are in a redesign or pilot phase based on the redesign.

**C. Assessment.** Assessment is the third component of UCR's educational effectiveness appraisal system. At UCR, assessment activities are faculty-led, locally-owned, and discipline-specific; and our approach to assessment abides by these principles.

**1. History.** Programs have been conducting assessment and submitting annual reports to the Office of Evaluation and Assessment (OEA) since the 2009-10 academic year. See [Appendix I-2](#) for an exemplar. All undergraduate departments have program learning outcomes



(PLOs), which are available to the public on UCR's website at <http://ueeval.ucr.edu/assessment/learningoutcomes.html>.

Because learning outcomes assessment was a new activity and one that places an additional burden on faculty members' already heavy workloads, departments' compliance was uneven during the first three years, as is typical of institutions when they first implement these processes.<sup>2</sup> By 2014, however, all of UCR's 41 departments submitted an annual assessment report to OEA. Thirty-two of the reports (80%) addressed all four stages of the assessment process: (a) articulation of learning outcomes, (b) assessment of learning outcomes using evidence, (c) analysis and reporting, and (d) formulation of a multi-year assessment plan and use of evidence for program improvement. Eighty percent of our departments have a curriculum map.<sup>3</sup>

Departments are using their assessment results to improve learning. For instance, assessment results helped convince the Sociology Department to reduce the required statistics course's student-teacher ratio from 70:1 to 60:1 in order to provide more individual guidance to those having difficulty learning quantitative methods. The significant improvement in students' grades between 2013 and 2014 suggests that the intervention had a positive impact on learning. The Music Department used a UE-funded Assessment Improvement Grant to hold two daylong off-site faculty retreats in which participants revised student learning outcomes in music performance, assessed the quality of undergraduates' individual and ensemble performances, and decided on curricular changes.

**2. Efforts to Bolster UCR's Assessment Program.** Since receiving the action letter, the Office of Undergraduate Education (UE) has devoted considerable resources to bolstering assessment.

- **Funding.** UE has awarded over \$50K during the past two years for undergraduate educational enhancement and assessment with plans for an additional \$58K to be disbursed during the next year. These awards have been made through three grant programs: assessment improvement grants, capstone development grants, and instructional innovation grants.

In 2013-14, UE allocated \$10K for assessment improvement grants. Four of these \$2.5K grants were available to departments seeking to (a) hold a retreat to improve their student learning outcomes, assess student work, or develop curricular revisions or recommendations; (b) send faculty to a conference that focuses on pedagogy, learning outcomes, or curriculum design; or (c) provide faculty with a stipend to undertake assessment activities.

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<sup>2</sup> Miller, M. A. (2012, January). *From denial to acceptance: The stages of assessment* (NILOA Occasional Paper No.13). Urbana, IL: University for Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment. Retrieved from <http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/documents/Miller.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> The Office of Evaluation and Assessment will be working with departments with missing maps to submit them as part of the annual assessment report in June 2015.

The Office also made \$50K available on a competitive basis for 10 departments (i.e., awards of up to \$5K each) to develop, improve, or assess a capstone. The Office of Undergraduate Education is committed to increasing the number of programs offering capstones on campus because such courses provide an opportunity for upper-division students to integrate, deepen, and extend the knowledge and skills they have obtained through the coursework in their major. Moreover, UE appreciates that capstones can serve as the basis for the assessment of program learning outcomes.

In addition to the assessment improvement and capstone development grants, UE has budgeted at least \$20K annually for faculty to use for instructional innovation and course assessment. In 2014, 11 faculty members received a combined total of more than \$28K through this program.

At the conclusion of the grant period, recipients of all three grant types are required to submit a report in which they articulate student learning outcomes and evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention on student learning.

- **Meta-Assessment.** To strengthen the quality of academic program assessment, the OEA put in place the practice of “meta-assessment.” OEA staff review the previous year’s assessment reports with a rubric ([Appendix I-3](#)), provide feedback to departments ([Appendix I-4](#)), and submit a memo to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost (EVC/P) and Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education (VPUE) that summarizes programs’ assessment activities ([Appendix I-5](#)). In 2014, faculty collaborated with Office of Evaluation and Assessment staff in the meta-assessment process; OEA plans to expand the number and diversity of faculty involved in this endeavor in the future.

- **Assessment Advisory Committee.** In winter 2015, the Office of Undergraduate Education (UE) convened a joint administration-faculty Assessment Advisory Committee (AAC), composed of associate and divisional deans, seven members of the Academic Senate, and UE administrators and staff. The AAC’s charge is to provide recommendations to the campus on matters that include organizational structures to formulate assessment policies and oversee the assessment of academic programs and general education; ways to augment the involvement of the Academic Senate and associate/divisional deans in assessment; the review of general education to meet new WASC requirements; the consideration of institutional learning outcomes; and methods to evaluate the state of assessment at UCR.

- **Program Assessment Enhancements.** A central focus of the Office of Evaluation and Assessment (OEA) is the enhancement of academic program assessment. OEA seeks to develop systems, processes, and structures to facilitate how faculty and departments conduct assessment. The aim of OEA’s efforts is to make assessment a more useful, engaging, and cogent activity for faculty.

In addition to helping to clarify structures to institutionalize assessment, the Office of Evaluation and Assessment will launch an educational program for faculty. Starting in the spring 2015 quarter, OEA staff will deliver a workshop series for faculty and staff that will cover topics such as how to (a) write assessable program learning outcomes; (b) develop culminating student products; (c) create and use rubrics; (d) analyze and interpret assessment data; and (f) incorporate WSCUC's "five competencies" in courses required for the major.

To supplement the education delivered through the workshops, OEA staff will continue to meet with departments to discuss their assessment plans. Other educational initiatives include the development of a UCR Assessment Handbook and web-based resources, with step-by-step directions on how to undertake each stage of the assessment cycle.

#### Appendices for the Assessment of Undergraduate Programs

[Appendix I-1: Program Review Self-Study Report Excerpt](#)

[Appendix I-2: Undergraduate Program Assessment Report Exemplar](#)

[Appendix I-3: Meta-Assessment Rubric](#)

[Appendix I-4: Sample Assessment Feedback Letter](#)

[Appendix I-5: Meta-Assessment Memo for EVC: 2013-14](#)

**II. Assessment of General Education.** UCR has made important strides in General Education assessment. The campus's GE efforts have focused on the five WSCUC core competencies. To inform the campus about the competencies, the Office of Evaluation and Assessment created a page on its public [website](#) devoted to them.

UE conceptualizes GE as two-tiered. The first tier is composed of the lower division courses that students take to fulfill their breath requirements. Writing and math courses that students typically complete in their freshmen or sophomore years exemplify how two of the core competencies—written communication and quantitative reasoning—are built into the first tier of the GE curriculum. The second tier is made up of the GE competencies that students refine in the courses they take in their major. An upper-division course in economics that requires students to apply their math skills to a practical problem and write a policy paper based on their quantitative analysis illustrates how the same two GE competencies may be honed in the second tier.

In 2012, the chair of the Academic Senate Committee on Education Policy (CEP) and the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education convened a working group, the General Education Assessment Committee, to develop a plan for GE assessment. The following year, the Office of Undergraduate Education (UE) consulted with the Chair of the Academic Senate and CEP regarding a plan to assess the five competencies in both tiers. The plan is to have UE inaugurate curricular, assessment, and evaluation activities centered on one competency each year leading up to UCR's WSCUC reaccreditation application in 2017-18: (1) written communication (begun in AY 2012-13), (2) quantitative reasoning (begun AY 2013-14), (3) oral communication (begun AY 2014-15), (4) critical thinking (AY 2015-16), and (5) information literacy (AY 2016-17). Activities are phased in during the year the competency is inaugurated.

The projects associated with the assessment of the three competencies that have been launched to date are described below.

**A. Written Communication.** UCR began its GE assessment efforts in 2012-13 by focusing on written communication.

**1. University Writing Program Assessment.** In 2012, UCR undertook a rigorous assessment of the effectiveness of our General Education writing requirement, which was written up in "[University Writing Program Assessment Report](#)" and summarized in the Survey Brief: General Education Requirements: Preparatory English and the Final Writing Course ([Appendix II-1](#)) and disseminated to stakeholders. Two studies comprised the assessment. One, called the Preparatory English Study, focused on student learning in the first of the required three-course writing sequence (i.e., ENGL 1A in the ENGL 1A, 1B, and 1C sequence). The other, called the Final Writing Course Study, examined learning outcome achievement in the required sequence's third course (ENGL 1C).

For the Preparatory English Study, a team of 10 English department faculty used a rubric on which they were trained and calibrated to assess a random sample of students' essays written prior to and at the end of ENGL 1A. At least two faculty members assessed each of the 150 essays included in the study. Statistical analyses showed that scores on the end-of-course essays were significantly higher than on the entrance exam essays, indicating that ENGL 1A improved students' writing.

A similar methodology was used for the Final Writing Course Study except that only final exam essays were scored—that is, no pre-test was administered. Seven participating faculty rated 140 essays to determine the degree to which students successfully demonstrated six of the writing programs' nine learning outcomes. The results showed that on average students approached or attained satisfactory levels of achievement on all six. In an effort to engage in continuous improvement, the University Writing Program slated the three PLOs on which students fared less well—that is, research, organization, and style—for educational enhancement efforts. To this end, the University Writing Program is working with those who teach English 1C to address students' skills in these areas. A follow-up assessment will be undertaken to determine the effectiveness of the intervention.

**2. Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC).** In 2009-10, the Academic Senate approved a pilot project to allow students who earn grades of C or higher in English 1B to take a Senate-approved writing-intensive course ("W-course") in place of English 1C. W-courses are upper-division classes that simultaneously deliver content in a major and teach discipline-specific writing skills. The number of written pages assigned to students in writing intensive courses approximates that assigned to those in English 1C.

In Dec. 2013, the Director of the University Writing Program submitted a report ([Appendix II-2](#)) on WAC to the Academic Senate's Committee on Education Policy for a review of the pilot. Also

a component of the Senate's evaluation was the Final Writing Course Study, described in the "[University Writing Program Assessment Report](#)." As part of this study, the rubric scores of final essays written by students in English 1C and in W-courses were compared. The English department faculty members who assessed the essays were blind to whether the essays were produced by English 1C or a W-course students. Statistical analysis of the rubric scores found no differences between students in the two conditions on all learning outcomes, which suggests that that W-courses are equally effective as English 1C in enhancing students' writing.

**B. Quantitative Reasoning.** Quantitative reasoning was the second of WSCUC's five core competencies on which UCR focused our GE assessment efforts. A concentration on quantitative reasoning began in the 2013-14 academic year.

**1. Survey of GE Faculty.** To kick off the assessment of this competency, the General Education Assessment Committee developed a questionnaire designed to generate data on the prevalence of quantitative reasoning instruction in the GE curriculum. The Committee surveyed faculty who taught the most popular GE courses during the three previous academic years and obtained responses from 138 faculty members describing 60 courses. As summarized in "Survey Brief: General Education Requirements: Quantitative Literacy and Oral Communication" ([Appendix II-3](#)), the findings showed that 75% of the courses required students to interpret the meaning of numbers presented in tables or the results of calculations; 70% required them to do calculations; and 66% required them to use equations. The report concluded that UCR's GE curriculum provides adequate opportunities for students to hone their quantitative reasoning skills.

**2. Math Task Force.** Two divisional deans from the College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences convened a committee of faculty and administrators, namely, the Task Force on Introductory Math, to focus on how to improve introductory mathematics course completion in an effort to retain students, particularly in STEM majors, and improve four-year graduation rates.

Two studies were commissioned to support the Task Force's work. The Office of the Registrar calculated the D/F/W (i.e., failure) rates of all introductory math courses from fall 2011 to spring 2014 to enable the committee to identify the courses posing the greatest challenge to students so these may be targeted for change efforts. The Office of Evaluation and Assessment drew on information from UCR's Student Information System to plot the various pathways students take to complete the GE math requirement and to correlate these pathways with pass rates in subsequent courses.

Strategies the Task Force have explored to improve course completion include decreasing the size of discussion sections; using adaptive learning systems to increase student interaction during discussion sections; developing discipline-specific calculus course sequences (e.g., calculus for life science majors); spreading the pre-calculus course (Math 8B) over two quarters; and offering summer catch-up courses. The Task Force on Introductory Math plans to solidify its recommendations by the end of AY 2014-15 and to submit them to the EVC/P.

**C. Oral Communication.** Oral communication is the third of the five competencies to which UCR has turned our attention. UE inaugurated the 2014-15 academic year by sending the Director of Evaluation and Assessment to the [WSCUC Retreat on Written and Oral Communication](#) in November so that UCR could learn how other institutions are defining, teaching, and assessing oral communication.

The campus is using the following methods to seed oral communication in the undergraduate curriculum as a core baccalaureate competency: research, professional development workshops, and new course offerings.

**1. Research.** Research has consisted of researching peer institutions, surveying faculty who teach GE courses, and conducting an inventory of UCR program learning outcomes.

The Office of Undergraduate Education (UE) investigated how the other UCs have or plan to embed oral communication in their curriculum. This research was conducted by reviewing institutions' websites and surveying assessment professionals at the UCs. What we learned was that the campuses employ a variety of approaches, though what appears most common at present is to deliver oral communication education in the majors rather than as part of stand-alone GE courses.

In addition to examining how the other UCs are teaching oral communication, UE studied the prevalence of oral communication in tiers one and two of our curricula. To determine the extent to which our GE courses afford opportunities for oral communication skills development, the General Education Assessment Committee queried the GE faculty using the same survey it distributed regarding quantitative reasoning ([Appendix II-3](#)). The results revealed that 27% of the courses included in the study had a required oral communication assignment and an additional 24% offered optional activities, including presentations, debates, and interviews. Based on these results, UE concluded that, unlike quantitative reasoning, oral communication instruction is not sufficiently widespread in the GE curriculum. UE, therefore, sought resources from the EVC/P to expand its offerings in this area and succeeded in obtaining them. As described below, at least 1350 new seats will be available to students in oral communication courses in 2015-16.

To ascertain the prevalence of oral communication in UCR's majors, UE reviewed departments' PLOs to identify those that include this competency. We found that 25 of our 41 departments (47%) have at least one relevant PLO. The 25 departments are roughly equally distributed among the College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (seven departments), College of Humanities and Social Sciences (10 departments), and Bourns College of Engineering (eight departments). UE will conduct a more thorough inventory of the degree to which oral communication is currently embedded in academic programs by requiring departments to describe in their 2014-15 annual assessment report what oral communication teaching and assessment is currently taking place in their courses.

**2. Professional Development Workshops.** UE expects to work with faculty from the Department of Theater, Film, and Digital Production (TFDP)<sup>4</sup> with expertise in public speaking to offer workshops to UCR faculty on oral communication. These workshops would focus on topics such as how to define oral communication skills in the major, how to teach oral communication skills, and how to design experiential exercises. The aim of this effort would be to increase the capacity of faculty in all disciplines to deliver education designed to enhance students' mastery of this competency. OEA would supplement these workshops with training in strategies faculty members can use to assess discipline-specific oral communication skills in their classes (e.g., sample assignments, development and use of rubrics).

**3. Course Offerings in Oral Communication.** UCR is pursuing a two-tier approach to the delivery of oral communication education to our undergraduates. In 2015-16, we will offer three new 450-person sections of public speaking—that is, one per quarter. The EVC/P has agreed to provide funds to the TFDP Department to hire an instructor and two graduate teaching assistants to teach each section. Pending the results of the evaluation of the course's effectiveness, the EVC/P may convert the instructor position into a 1.0 FTE faculty member dedicated to oral communication.

UCR also plans to support programs with courses that simultaneously deliver content in the major while teaching students the skills to engage in the discipline's distinctive forms of public speaking.

**D. Critical Thinking and Information Literacy.** In 2015-16 and 2016-17, the Office of Undergraduate Education will turn its attention to the remaining two competencies, critical thinking and information literacy, respectively. An institutional inventory has found that 86% of departments have a PLO related to critical thinking and 57% have one pertaining to information literacy. We plan to assess whether this is sufficient to ensure that our students graduate with the level of skills that UCR faculty deem satisfactory.

At the same time that the Office of Undergraduate Education is phasing in a focus on the five competencies, the Academic Senate's Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) is reviewing its role in the design, delivery, and assessment of GE. The committee's decision to exercise leadership on behalf of the GE curriculum promises to further catalyze efforts to enhance the quality of the general education that UCR provides its students. We anticipate that CEP's role in overseeing GE and its assessment will be a central focus of the GE discussion in UCR's 2017 self-study report for reaffirmation of WSCUC accreditation.

#### Appendices for the Assessment of General Education

[Appendix II-1: Survey Brief: GE Requirements: Preparatory English and the Final Writing Course](#)

[Appendix II-2: Report for the Senate Review of WAC](#)

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<sup>4</sup> UCR does not have a department of communication. The theater faculty members are those on campus with expertise in public speaking.

### [Appendix II-3: Survey Brief: GE Requirements: Quantitative Literacy and Oral Communication](#)

**III. Assessment of Graduate Programs.** UCR is a research-intensive university where graduate training is one of the core components of its mission. The University has nearly 50 graduate programs, which span the arts and humanities; social sciences; physical, life and agricultural sciences; and professional programs, including medicine, engineering, business, and education. Our faculty members are internationally recognized leaders in their disciplines.

Peer review processes in the disciplines provide an important source of data about the quality of our graduate students' training. Since 2009, 65 UCR students have received National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships totaling \$9.1M in funding. UCR's graduate programs scored high on the most recent (2010) [National Research Council rankings](#). Of the 27 UCR doctoral programs evaluated, 14 ranked in the top third nationally and eight were in the top quartile.

The [program review process](#) affords an opportunity for continuous improvement among UCR graduate programs. The [Academic Senate's Graduate Council](#) conducts a rigorous program review of each graduate program every seven years. Like the undergraduate program process, the review consists of two parts: a self-study and an external review conducted by faculty in the field from peer institutions. The process is designed to ensure that UCR delivers excellent graduate training and to provide feedback to enhance programs' educational effectiveness. The consequences for programs that do not meet the Graduate Council's expectations for quality and fail to respond to the recommendations for improvement are serious: programs are placed in moratorium and barred from admitting new students.

To complement these processes, the Graduate Division inaugurated learning outcomes assessment in 2011 with an email ([Appendix III-1](#)) from Joseph Childers, Graduate Dean, to deans, department chairs, program directors and advisers in the Division. Upon Dean Childers's request, departments articulated program learning outcomes and formulated assessment plans, which they submitted for review to the Associate Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs. The associate dean provided extensive feedback on each plan, which departments subsequently revised. By the 2012 spring quarter, all programs submitted a plan that was approved (100% compliance).

In 2013, Graduate Division administrators asked departments to complete one round of assessment based on their approved plan by the end of the 2014 spring quarter. To support this undertaking, the associate dean provided assessment training to small groups of faculty graduate advisors—that is, the faculty who oversee the graduate programs. In these sessions, he explained that the goal of assessment is for faculty to collect credible information about students' mastery of their discipline's skills and knowledge base so that faculty members could critically evaluate the graduate training they provide and improve how they educate students.

What was further emphasized in the assessment training is that doctoral education has outcomes assessment built into its program design. Students must pass written and oral exams



that demonstrate their mastery of program learning outcomes—that is, their knowledge of their discipline; analytical capacities; expertise in research design, execution, and analysis; and ability to talk and write about their work effectively. The associate dean explained that assessment required documenting the activities that programs routinely undertake to evaluate students' learning.

To enable programs to share best practices, the Graduate Division created an online portal in April 2014 for departments' assessment reports to which all faculty graduate advisors have access. Programs were asked to upload their reports to the portal by the end of the spring 2014 quarter. Forty-one of 45 (91%) programs have done so to date. See [Appendix III-2](#) for an exemplar. The Office of Evaluation and Assessment reviewed the Graduate Division departments' assessment reports and found that 84% (34) conducted at least one round of data collection and 53% (18) interpreted the data to make program improvements.

The next step in the development of the Graduate Division's assessment efforts is the formalization of a structure that ensures the participation of all programs in assessment, confirms that assessment leads to continuous improvement in graduate education, and enables the process to be sustainable. Clarifying the respective roles of the Graduate Division's academic administrators and the Academic Senate's Graduate Council will be key to formalizing the structure. Key stakeholders, including the Dean of the Graduate Division, Associate Dean of Graduate Academic Affairs, Chair of the Academic Senate, Chair of the Academic Senate's Graduate Council, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education/ALO, and Director of Evaluation and Assessment are scheduled to meet in March to begin discussions on the role that the Graduate Council should play in the ongoing assessment of UCR's master's and doctoral programs. We anticipate that the infrastructure for overseeing graduate assessment will be institutionalized in advance of UCR's 2017 WSCUC accreditation re-affirmation self-study report.

#### Appendix for the Assessment of Graduate Programs

[Appendix III-1: Dean Childers's Email re: Assessment of Graduate Programs](#)

[Appendix III-2: Graduate Program Assessment Report Exemplar](#)

**IV. Strategic Planning, Priorities, and Growth.** Despite the contraction of California's economy at the time when UCR's initial Interim Report was submitted, the strategic plan's prediction of increased student enrollment has proven to be accurate. Between fall 2012 and 2014, UCR's student body grew from 21,005 to 21,669 (source: <http://sara.ucr.edu/>). One reason for the growth is the counter-cyclical relationship between the unemployment rate and higher education enrollment; when economic conditions are difficult for young people, more attend college to prepare themselves for the future.<sup>5</sup> Another reason is the stepped-up recruiting of

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<sup>5</sup> Long, B. T. (2015). The financial crisis and college enrollment: How have students and their families responded? In J. Brown & C. Hoxby (Eds.), *How the financial crisis and great recession affected higher education*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Downloaded from <http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic1232989.files/BLong%20-%20The%20Financial%20Crisis%20and%20College%20Enrollment%20-%20July%202013.pdf>

well-prepared graduate and international students, led by our engineering, science, and business colleges. Graduate students and international students each increased by 17% between fall 2012 and 2014 (source: <http://sara.ucr.edu/>).

The School of Medicine (SOM) has provided much new energy to the campus, as the Interim Review Committee's May 2013 action letter suggests. The SOM's division of clinical medicine employs 10 full-time and 48 part-time clinical faculty. Its biomedical sciences division has 18 full-time faculty and benefits from the continuing involvement of five emeriti faculty. The teaching staff is supplemented by 200 community physicians who comprise the volunteer clinical teaching faculty. The inaugural class of 50 students began its studies in fall 2013, and another 50 enrolled the following year. Many faculty members in the life sciences, social sciences, and public policy are engaged with the SOM through interdisciplinary research.

The UC Board of Regents appointed Kim A. Wilcox to be the ninth chancellor of the University of California, Riverside on August 8, 2013. Upon his appointment, Chancellor Wilcox affirmed his commitment to the vision put forth in the campus strategic plan, [UCR 2020: The Path to Pre-eminence](#). Because the small size of UCR's faculty (i.e., approximately 700) has posed a significant obstacle to our attaining membership in the Association of American Universities, which is *UCR 2020's* cornerstone goal, the chancellor has launched an aggressive campaign to hire 300 new faculty over the next five years. This growth plan has already yielded the recruitment to the faculty of two researchers with extramural support in the tens of millions of dollars and Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist, Jane Smiley.

Chancellor Wilcox has enhanced the vision put forth in *UCR 2020*. To the goals the plan puts forth, he added that of raising four- and six-year graduation rates by 15% while maintaining the campus's current levels of racial-ethnic and socio-economic diversity. The [Graduation Rate Task Force Report](#), issued in January 2014, provides a blueprint for how the institution can meet this goal, which Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education/ALO Steven Brint has been charged with implementing. In support of this goal, UCR became a founding member of the [University Innovations Alliance](#) (UIA), a group of 11 large public research universities dedicated to raising graduation rates while reducing completion gaps between majority and minority students. The Alliance has a budget of \$11.6 million and is jointly supported by six major philanthropies and campus matching funds. Vice Provost and ALO Brint is the campus liaison to UIA, and Chancellor Kim Wilcox is on the UIA executive board.

To support the strategic plan, Vice Chancellor for Planning & Budget and Chief Financial Officer Maria Anguiano launched the Resource Allocation and Budget Redesign Initiative in Nov. 2014. As she explained in an email to department chairs and key administrators ([Appendix IV-1](#)), the initiative aims to improve the alignment between the campus's strategic priorities and funding

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allocation decisions by establishing a transparent incentive-based budgeting process that rewards departments that advance the institution's progress toward the goals outlined in *UCR 2020*. In addition, Vice Chancellor Anguiano has created a timeline of UCR's major strategic initiatives ([Appendix IV-2](#)) to ensure that the campus is on track to fulfilling the objectives enumerated in the plan by 2020.

Going forward, the University of California Board of Regents has approved a [five-year plan](#) starting in AY 2015-16 to establish yearly tuition and fee increases of no more than 5% for all students contingent on the State allocating an expected 4% increase to UC.

[Appendix for Strategic Planning, Priorities, and Growth](#)

[Appendix IV-1: VC Anguiano's Email re: UCR's Resource Allocation and Budget Redesign Initiative](#)

[Appendix IV-2: Timeline of Strategic Initiatives](#)

## Identification of Other Changes and Issues Currently Facing the Institution

**Instructions:** This brief section should identify any other significant changes that have occurred or issues that have arisen at the institution (e.g., changes in key personnel, addition of major new programs, modifications in the governance structure, unanticipated challenges, or significant financial results) that are not otherwise described in the preceding section. This information will help the Interim Report Committee panel gain a clearer sense of the current status of the institution and understand the context in which the actions of the institution discussed in the previous section have taken place.

**Leadership Team.** UCR has a visionary new leadership team. The UC Board of Regents named [Kim A. Wilcox](#) its ninth chancellor in August 2013. Having served as Michigan State University's provost for nearly a decade, Chancellor Wilcox has brought outstanding experience and energy to the campus. In December of that year, he brought on [Maria Anguiano](#) from the University of California Office of the President to serve as UCR's Vice Chancellor for Planning and Budget and CFO. The following July, Wilcox appointed [Paul D'Anieri](#) Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost. Prior to his appointment, D'Anieri had served as the dean of the University of Florida's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences since 2008.

The three new members of the leadership team share a strategic focus on student success. Reflecting this emphasis, UCR volunteered to participate in WASC's Undergraduate Student Success and Graduation Rate Dashboard Pilot in fall 2014. In addition, the campus hosted the University of California's Undergraduate Completions Conference in January 2015, which centered on how to improve graduation rates and time to degree.

Other new senior administrator hires include Ron Coley, who joined UCR in July 2014 as Vice Chancellor for Business and Administrative Services, and Bryce Mason, who began his tenure as Assistant Vice Chancellor of Strategic Academic Research and Analysis in April 2014. Coley served as associate vice chancellor at UC Berkeley and is leading an effort to enhance UCR's organizational excellence. Mason directed Loyola Marymount University's institutional research function and oversees UCR's. He develops complex predictive models (e.g., forecasting student enrollment) that support the integration of academic and capital planning.

**Office of Undergraduate Education.** The Office of Undergraduate Education (UE) has made its commitment to improving assessment a priority in its hiring decisions. In the last two years, UE brought on board experienced assessment professionals. Christine Victorino, Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education (AVPUE), served as Pitzer College's Director of Academic Assessment before joining UCR. Jill Kern, Director of Evaluation and Assessment, was the Director of Assessment at Christopher Newport University, a selective public liberal arts college in Virginia. In addition, Gary Coyne was hired for a one-year appointment as a full-time Principal Research Analyst to focus on UE's evaluation projects. Gary was UCR's previous Interim Director of Evaluation and Assessment.

## Concluding Statement

**Instructions:** Reflect on how the institutional responses to the issues raised by the Commission have had an impact upon the institution, including future steps to be taken.

In summary, UCR has specifically responded to WASC's May 2013 action letter as follows:

- Undergraduate Program Assessment: All of our undergraduate departments are now assessing their programs and submitting annual learning outcome assessment reports.
- General Education Assessment: UE has collaborated with faculty leadership from the Academic Senate to evaluate the general education curriculum in connection with three of WASC's core competencies: written communication, quantitative reasoning, oral communication, and to pilot new course offerings.
- Graduate Program Assessment: The Graduate Division has completed a cycle of learning outcomes assessment, in which departments have collected data and made recommendations for program improvements.
- Strategic Planning: In line with the *UCR 2020 Strategic Plan*, the campus has already seen growth in student enrollments and has committed to increasing the number of faculty in the next three years. The Office of Planning and Budget has initiated alignment between campus strategic goals and funding allocation decisions. Moreover, the University of California Board of Regents has approved a five-year plan starting in AY 2015-16 to establish yearly tuition and fee increases of no more than 5% for all students contingent on the State allocating an expected 4% increase to the University of California.

The action letter also helped facilitate further assessment activities, including UE's allocation of approximately \$100K to support new program assessment and capstone experiences; the development and offering of faculty professional development workshops related to assessment; and the implementation of meta-assessment activities. In addition, serious campus-wide discussions among Academic Senate leadership, faculty, and senior administrators have begun to formalize the governing structure vis-à-vis assessment and program review. These practices have begun to bear fruit as programs implement changes to bolster student learning based on their assessment results.

More broadly, the campus has embarked on an ambitious plan to improve graduation rates and student success – another area of emphasis for the Commission. Based on the recommendations of the Graduation Rate Task Force Report and in partnership with peer research institutions constituting the University Innovations Alliance, UCR will pilot initiatives such as predictive analytics, adaptive learning systems, and other student success interventions (e.g., [Finish in 4 campaign](#)) to raise four-, five-, and six-year graduation rates by 15% for the 2017 entering cohort. UCR looks forward to detailing the progress of these activities in our next institutional WSCUC re-affirmation self-study report in 2017.

## Appendices

Appendix IA-1: Program Review Self-Study Report Excerpt

Appendix IA-2: Undergraduate Program Assessment Report Exemplar

Appendix IA-3: Meta-Assessment Rubric

Appendix IA-4: Sample Assessment Feedback Letter

Appendix IA-5: Meta-Assessment Memo for EVC/: 2013-14

Appendix II-1: Survey Brief: GE Requirements: Preparatory English and the Final Writing Course

Appendix II-2: Report for the Senate Review of WAC

Appendix II-3: Survey Brief: GE Requirements: Quantitative Literacy and Oral Communication

Appendix III-1: Dean Childers's Email re: Assessment of Graduate Programs

Appendix III-2: Graduate Program Assessment Report Exemplar

Appendix IV-1: VC Anguiano's Email re: UCR's Resource Allocation and Budget Redesign Initiative

Appendix IV-2: Timeline of Strategic Initiatives