

# Report of the WASC Visiting Team

## Capacity and Preparatory Review

### The University of California, Riverside

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Visit: March 12 - 14, 2008

#### **In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Reaffirmation of Accreditation**

##### ***Team Roster***

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

## **SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT**

### **IA Description of Institution and Visit**

The University of California, Riverside is one of ten campuses of the University of California. It began admitting its first undergraduate students in 1954. Classified today by the Carnegie Foundation as a Research University with Very High Research Activity, UCR enrolled 14,973 undergraduates and 2,214 graduate students in 2007. UCR also enrolls one of the most diverse undergraduate populations in the United States. Organized into three colleges—the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences; the College of Natural and Social Sciences; and the Bourns College of Engineering— and two professional schools--the A. Gary Anderson Graduate School of Management and the Graduate School of Education---UCR offers 80 undergraduate majors, 44 Master’s programs, and 40 Ph. D. programs. UCR’s six-year graduation rate for students (entering in 2000) is 63.6%. In spring 2008, the university senate at UCR approved the establishment of a Medical School at UCR.

A team from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges visited the University of California, Riverside on March 12 - 14, 2008 to conduct the capacity and preparatory review site visit. In addition, one team member visited UCR’s Palm Desert Campus on March 11, 2008. As team members prepared for these visits, they reviewed the self-study documents provided by the university and while on site met with administrators, faculty, staff, community members, and students to solicit additional insight about UCR’s capacity to meet its educational mission. Prior to the visit, a secure email account was established so that members of the UCR community could contact the site team with any concerns they wanted to share. The assistant to the team chair

monitored the email account, read all messages, reviewed them with the team chair and the WASC staff liaison, and brought a number of messages to the attention of the entire team. The issues raised in these messages were discussed by the team during its visit, and the team's knowledge of these same issues contributed to this report.

The team acknowledges the collegiality of all with whom they met at UCR and the Palm Desert campus. The team's meetings were useful and productive. The team is particularly grateful for the participation of Acting Chancellor Robert Grey and for the assistance of David Fairris, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Patsy Oppenheim, Undergraduate Education Assistant Vice Provost, and Robert Gill, Executive Assistant to the Chancellor.

### **IB Quality of the Capacity and Preparatory Report and Alignment with the Proposal**

The University of California, Riverside submitted its Institutional Proposal to WASC on October 11, 2005 and it was approved on December 6, 2005. In the proposal, UCR identified three themes—Learning within a Campus Culture of Diversity, Growing and Improving Graduate and Professional Programs, and Improving Undergraduate Student Engagement, Experience, and Learning Outcomes—that were also central to the Capacity and Preparatory Report completed before the site visit.

The Capacity and Preparatory Report prepared by UCR is organized to address each of WASC's four standards and special attention is paid to the three themes already noted. The report thus aligns with the proposal. While the report provides data and evidence to support UCR's capacity for educational effectiveness, it is primarily descriptive rather than analytic. *The visiting team recommends that as UCR moves*

*forward in the reaccreditation process more attention is focused on self-reflection, inquiry and the identification of data that lead to enhanced insight as to how UCR can continue to meet the goals it has set for itself.*

### **IC Response to Previous Commission Issues**

A WASC site team visited the University of California, Riverside on February 10-13, 1998. Subsequently, the WASC Commission recommended in July, 1998 that UCR address and resolve three concerns: (1) Alignment of planning objectives and fiscal constraints; (2) Assessment, Curriculum and the Quality of Instruction; and (3) Faculty Development.

The C&PR report provided by the university addresses all three of these concerns and describes steps that have been taken in each of these areas. However, particularly with regard to the second concern noted above, the report acknowledges that while progress has been made in strengthening academic programs, “more work is needed.” The team concurs and will reinforce in its recommendations the importance of making significant progress through a focus on student learning.

## **SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY UNDER THE STANDARDS**

### **Standard I: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Outcomes**

The University of California at Riverside’s formal mission statement is the mission statement adopted for the University of California system as a whole ([www.universityofcalifornia.edu/aboutuc/missionstatement](http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/aboutuc/missionstatement)). However, the visiting team found that faculty and staff of the University of California, Riverside have a strong,

shared sense of their institution's values, character, and purpose that many believe distinguishes it from most of its sister institutions within the UC system. As one individual with whom the team met noted, "We do not have a mission statement but we are mission driven." This sense of mission includes a deep commitment to diversity, decided attention to undergraduate education, and a determination to improve the institution's standing in the higher education community. Additionally, constituent components of UC Riverside including the College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, the Bourns College of Engineering, and the A. Gary Anderson Graduate School of Management have adopted their own mission statements. *The visiting team suggests that the institution consider drafting a campus-specific mission statement to guide future strategic planning processes.* (CFR 1.1)

The University has managed well its substantial enrollment growth over the last decade. Institutional objectives are recognized throughout the institution stemming from former Chancellor France Córdova's seven key goals which remain the institution's stated purposes. However, the University does not have a Strategic Plan to guide its ongoing planning and decision-making efforts, and the team believes such a plan will be critical to guide UCR's future efforts. The absence of such a plan makes it difficult to evaluate institutional achievements as part of the University's desire to create a "culture of evidence." (CFR 1.2)

The leadership of the institution is currently in the hands of an Acting Chancellor, yet there seems to be a sense of collegiality and effective leadership with many faculty and staff pointing to the successful institutional approval of the new medical school as a prime example of shared governance. (CPR 1.3)

The evidence provided in the preparatory review documents and during the team visit indicates that the campus meets WASC's expectations for the integrity-oriented CFRs (1.4-1.9) of Standard One. Faculty leaders maintain that the institution respects academic freedom. Students and non-academic appointees have clear and fair pathways for grievances. Although this report will discuss diversity (CFR 1.5) at length later in the report, the team will note here that UCR collects, analyzes and makes available relevant data regarding the diversity of its students and workforce. In order to promote a civil campus culture, the campus has developed Principles of Community. UC Riverside maintains a professional and candid relationship with WASC. Campus catalogues, websites, and brochures truthfully reflect curricular offerings.

Some students at the Palm Desert campus, however, voiced concerns about the differences between the curricula advertised about the MFA and MBA programs and the actual courses offered and faculty affiliated with the campus during its first year of operation. Given the newness of this endeavor and turnovers in leadership of these degree programs, the team recognizes these discrepancies as understandable but unfortunate by-products of a start-up academic operation. The team *strongly encourages the leadership of these programs to clarify the courses offered in the programs taught at the Palm Desert campus, what faculty teach those courses and are available to students, and to advertise this information accurately.* (CFR 1.7)

## **Standard II: Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions**

UCR has a strong infrastructure for teaching and learning. It offers great breadth at the undergraduate level, with roughly 80 majors and 50 minors across three colleges.

As described elsewhere in this report, UCR is making a concerted effort to increase its graduate and professional programs and now offers more than 80 graduate degree programs. Schools and programs provide clearly defined degree requirements, admissions requirements, and expected levels of achievement at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Academic advising, which has received considerable attention from UCR over the last two years, is another way that students learn about degree requirements and expectations. Three undergraduate students with whom the team met indicated that syllabi provide excellent information about what instructors expect of their students. (CFRs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3)

Although UCR, like most research universities, employs a large number of instructors who are not on the tenure track, almost all tenure-track faculty members are engaged in teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Quality of teaching and mentoring is a component of faculty reviews for tenure and promotion at all stages of the career track. Students are invited to evaluate the quality of the courses in which they enroll, and these evaluations contribute to the academic personnel process. (CFRs 2.1, 2.5)

UCR is remarkable among research universities for its deep commitment to undergraduate education. The team was told that new faculty orientation emphasizes this value. A variety of innovative initiatives are underway, including learning communities and other first-year programs, a revamped writing program, integration of instructional technology in general assignment classrooms, and integration of information literacy training (provided by the library) into disciplinary and GE instruction. UCR also offers a number of programs and workshops to help faculty improve their teaching skills. Most of

these programs are offered through the Office of Instructional Development, such as the Scholarship of Teaching series. (CFR 2.11, 2.13)

As UCR develops more graduate programs and increases the number and percentage of graduate students, the institution may be challenged to sustain its commitment to undergraduate education. Certainly growth in graduate education is not intrinsically harmful to undergraduate education; quite the reverse can occur through opportunities for undergraduates to work with graduate students and faculty in research and service learning; the more visible presence of graduate students also offers role models to undergraduates and keeps the option of post baccalaureate education quite apparent. The visiting team thus applauds the focus on undergraduate research. It is clear that, through the Symposium for Undergraduate Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity, a broad range of research courses, and many other course-related assignments, many students are engaged in undergraduate research. (CFR 2.9)

Based on discussions and a review of several program review reports (both graduate and undergraduate), the team perceives the process as rigorous, constructive, and well informed by a variety of data, both quantitative and qualitative. Because the process is “owned” by the Senate, faculty buy-in is strong. In addition, UCR has conducted a number of useful program evaluations, which shed light on the effectiveness of educational programs outside the departmental structure, such as learning communities. Analyses of survey data have been used to explore issues such as students’ use of time, enabling faculty and academic administrators to compare student-self-reports against institutional expectations and goals in that regard. (CFR 2.7)



The administrators and many of the faculty members with whom the team talked with were well aware of UCR's undergraduate graduation rates, and data are widely available on the web and in paper reports. Because of time constraints, the team had little opportunity for sustained discussion about how UCR is responding to the data. A number of programs, including the first-year programs, are intended to increase retention, and graduation rates are on an upward trajectory. There is a large movement of students from CNAS and Engineering into CHASS, which leads to lower graduation rates for those colleges. (In other words, the percentage of students who start in these colleges and finish in the same college is far lower than the percentage of students who start in these colleges and finish at any UCR college or major.) The limited time the team had on campus and the richness of the meetings did not allow in-depth exploration of the issue, but *the team urges UCR to assure that retention and graduation rates for both undergraduates and graduate students continue to receive close attention.* (CFR 2.6, 2.10)

UCR's efforts to develop student learning outcomes and to assess the extent to which such outcomes are achieved are in the early stages of development except in those programs, such as engineering, where professional accreditation standards require an attention to learning outcomes. Institutional efforts to develop a "culture of evidence," marked by the establishment of learning objectives and assessment to determine if objectives are being achieved, are at a nascent stage of development. While the Provost and Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education expressed a commitment to moving the institution forward in this area, many of the administrators and faculty with whom the team met reported that they were not involved in developing learning objectives or assessing learning outcomes. More than one administrator, including senior

administrators said, when asked about these topics, “That’s not my responsibility.” Both Chancellor Grey and ALO Fairris stated that they were aware that UCR had work to do in this area. (CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 4.7)

The faculty members with whom the team met were largely uninvolved in – and many were unaware of – the WASC expectation that programs develop learning outcomes and measure student success against those outcomes. Several academic administrators noted that the faculty has demonstrated little enthusiasm for these tasks. This scarcely makes UCR unique, and the institution has taken some steps to inform and engage faculty, such as offering a seminar series on the Scholarship of Teaching. Stronger and more pro-active steps are needed to engage faculty in the process of articulating desired outcomes and assessing student success. (CFR 2.4, 4.6, 4.7)

An exception to this general observation is that faculty in schools and disciplines subject to disciplinary accreditation are knowledgeable about and accepting of student learning assessment – this includes Engineering, Management, and Education. As noted in UCR’s capacity and preparatory report, the faculty in these programs can serve as leaders and models for others.

*The team believes that the program review process already in place offers an important opportunity to integrate student learning objectives into a systematic, credible, and faculty-owned process, one with a strong feedback loop to programs and the expectation that findings will be acted upon. Because evidence of student learning would greatly enrich program reviews, the Senate should consider adding this component to program reviews.* The Office of Undergraduate Education and the Institutional Planning office provide a standardized set of statistics to all programs undergoing review (e.g.,

enrollment, student characteristics, diversity). The office is considering supplementing these data with selected survey results that shed light on student attitudes and experiences. (CFR 2.7)

In addition to program-level teaching and learning, UCR is the first UC institution to administer the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), an outcomes assessment that is increasingly widely used. While only a small number of students participated in the CLA, it stands as a distinctive effort to understand student learning outcomes across the university. If results of the pilot test are perceived as useful and credible, the CLA could be introduced on a broader scale so that results can be disaggregated by program.

Despite these and other laudatory efforts to assess and improve teaching and learning at UCR, the team found little evidence of *systematic* efforts to engage faculty in developing learning outcomes and then to assess the extent to which such outcomes are being achieved. Nonetheless, developing and assessing learning objectives are challenging tasks that compete with many other UCR needs, goals and initiatives. The team learned that eight to 10 departments (beyond those who have already done so for other accreditations) are beginning to develop student learning outcomes and should have completed assessments within a year to 18 months. Others, however, have not begun the process. Thus, the team was concerned by the apparent absence of a clear and widely understood plan to move UCR from the current situation marked by great unevenness across programs to a desired future characterized by a broad implementation of SLO's and assessment. (CFR 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 4.6, 4.7)

One of the individuals submitting comments via the team's confidential email expressed a similar concern. "This campus has a significant problem in determining just

what assessment means as it relates to student learning outcomes. This lack of understanding (separating assessment for improvement vs. assessment for accountability) is the result of the campus not cultivating a community of practice of any significance. What progress that has been made is disjointed and dispersed among too many units and initiatives are done without true faculty governance or any cohesiveness of purpose.”

During the educational effectiveness phase, UCR is expected to have empirical evidence of student learning and to demonstrate that faculty and administrators have reflected on the meaning of the evidence and integrated it into instruction, support services, planning, and decision making. *To reach that point, the team recommends that UCR move more aggressively and systematically to: (a) establish Student Learning Objectives at the program level; (b) assess the extent to which the learning objectives are being achieved using direct methods of assessment; and (c) demonstrate that results are then applied in a cyclical process of institutional self-assessment and self-improvement.* (CFRs 2.4, 2.6, 4.6, 4.7)

Since the last WASC review, UCR has seen tremendous growth and the university leadership has very appropriately devoted itself to managing that growth. Now that the growth rate has slowed, faculty and administration have an opportunity to reflect on the quality of education, with particular focus on whether programs are achieving their stated goals.

As a mature research university, UCR has a long history of valuing scholarship and teaching and, prompted also by its land-grant status and other factors, rendering service to its surrounding communities. What has changed in recent years is a more systematic and concerted effort to substitute for the “simple” objective of teaching with

the more complex and challenging mandate of evaluating the effectiveness of that teaching effort by focusing also on actual student learning, as already discussed. This ongoing effort has the potential to move UCR to be more aligned with the traditional research/scholarship and service objectives. There are efforts to define scholarship more broadly and to speak to the “scholarship of teaching.” Thus, “Scholarship of Teaching: 2007/2008 Schedule,” produced by the Office of Instructional Development, highlights numerous programs, some featuring outside experts, that seek to impart new strategies for reaching today’s generation of “new learners.” Further, an “Instructional Innovation & Excellence Grants” program awards grants for four categories of activities. These workshops grants suggest a campus commitment to bring innovations into the classroom to enhance student learning (i.e., outcomes). (CFR 2.9, 3.4)

UCR has in recent years bolstered its attention to student success and engagement, thus building on a long-standing commitment of the university. Perhaps the most visible change has been the creation of the office for Undergraduate Education, which coordinates and oversees many student success initiatives while also collaborating across campus with other academic units and with student affairs. Equally important has been the establishment of a Student Success Task Force that developed many recommendations, all of which have been or are in the process of being addressed. (CFR 2.11)

This sustained attention to student success has had demonstrable results. The team was impressed to learn, for example, that nearly 33% of freshmen are connected to formal learning communities. Many others, such as those in engineering, are also

engaged through activities that connect students to their academic goals. The University has also used supplemental instruction to increase student success and has developed math and writing programs aimed at ensuring that students meet the entry requirements in those areas for work in their major. This strategy appears to be working. Of the students entering the university each year without having cleared their entry-level writing requirement, 97% have done so by the conclusion of the freshmen year. (CFR 2.10)

The team was also impressed with the collegial relationship between student affairs and academic affairs. While the Office of Undergraduate Education has been engaged in its activities, the Division of Student Affairs has used feedback from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), the University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES), and its own surveys to obtain data for determining how to enhance student programs and services. One individual with whom the team spoke noted that “the whole organization is incredibly strategic about student success.” This, too, is resulting in ongoing activities aimed to further advance student achievement. The team learned that the use of Blackboard is pervasive and that it is being used to begin developing an early warning system for students encountering academic difficulty in their course work. This system, which UCR will pilot soon, will enable the Learning Center to contact students having difficulty so that they are fully aware of the resources available to them. All of these initiatives are noteworthy and the team recommends that UCR continue with these and other efforts related to student achievement. Individuals with whom the team met acknowledged that the University needs to enhance academic advising. (CFRs 2.10, 2.12, 2.13)

**Standard III: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Sustainability**

This is an era in which numerous campuses—public and private—are undergoing profound restructuring of academic staffing through greater reliance on non-tenure track appointments. UCR, however, has held to a remarkably steady and traditional course in regard to these patterns. As described in the capacity and preparatory report prepared for the WASC review, “With a very few exceptions, all campus ladder rank faculty are full-time, devoting their full efforts to teaching, research and service” (p.21). The number of off-track faculty are given as 269 (lecturers, visiting, and adjunct faculty) compared to 646 “ladder faculty.” These numbers of off-track appointments are closely monitored.

The sufficiency of the number of faculty members to instruct a student enrollment that has grown very rapidly, most emphatically at the undergraduate level, in recent years, is in some dispute. Despite the common UC policy that is intended in the main to channel UC funds to campuses so that faculty-to-students ratios are generally the same across the system, there appears to be some dispute, according to some faculty members, as to just how comparable those ratios are from campus to campus. It is a given that such ratios would vary—widely in some cases—depending on the level and type of academic program on a given campus. But the team heard that academic lines at UCR are commonly “captured” for other purposes so that the resulting ratios, “on the ground,” are commonly much higher than the 18.7:1 ratio that is said to be the overarching UC policy. *The visiting team recommends that the UCR leadership and faculty examine how these*

*ratios are calculated so that these very important numbers can be compared fairly from one campus to another and to assure the sufficiency of the faculty to serve the growing size of the student body and the increasing array of programs. (CFR 3.1, 3.2)*

UCR has a very diverse student body. The numbers of underrepresented minorities have grown impressively although the proportion is lagging among post-baccalaureate enrollees, as discussed elsewhere. The University has also acknowledged that increasing the diversity of the faculty is critical. In fact, diversity-related progress has been underscored as one of the campus' overarching themes: In "A Framework for Diversity" (2004), one "key goal" is "to diversify our faculty, staff and graduate population," adding boldly that "UCR will be a preeminent research university that has diversity as one of its measures of distinctiveness."

Some progress in faculty appointments to meet this key goal has been achieved, yet there remains a long way to go if this ambitious goal is to be realized. The data reviewed by the visiting team revealed modest gains in the number of minority faculty at the university occurred between 2002 and 2006. During that period the percentage of full-time minority faculty increased from 23.1% to 27.4%. This represents some progress in the space of four years, yet the effort clearly must be sustained if the campus is to feature a faculty that comes closer to reflecting the composition of the student body and the surrounding community. In recent years, that effort has benefited from a dedicated staff and creative and relevant programs as reflected in various materials. Especially notable are efforts to mount a faculty recruitment and hiring program with many tools available in a faculty "toolkit." (CFR 1.5, 3.2)



Other challenges remain significant, however. In recent years, while progress is evident in the hiring of a more diverse faculty by race/ethnicity, the progress in hiring more women faculty has been modest. The proportion of female “ladder rank faculty and ladder rank equivalents” increased only from 25.7% to 28.8% between 2002 in 2006. (CFR 3.2)

Two members of the team met with staff from Academic Planning and Budget (Institutional Planning, Budget and Resource Analysis, Capital and Physical Planning, Real Estate Services, and Audit and Advisory Services). The fiscal and physical resources appear to be aligned appropriately and are adequate for the campus. Certainly the rapid growth in enrollment has put some pressures on the campus, but this group and others agree that the campus building is catching up with the growth. Information resources and the library as well as information technology are coordinated with other parts of the campus and are supported. The Chair of the Senate Planning and Budget Committee and the Chair of the Senate participate in planning and budget meetings, supporting an integrated approach to campus planning. Of particular interest at this time is the unknown impact of the potential budget reductions throughout the UC system. Finance staff believes that UCR has been well-managed and that the campus can manage a moderate budget reduction without affecting campus productivity or enrollment. The team is confident in this assessment of UCR’s ability to address these budgetary challenges. (CFRs 3.5, 3.6, 3.7)

The ten UC campuses are governed by a Board of Regents and do not have independent boards. The only campus-wide board is the Foundation Board of Trustees. The team did not meet with these trustees or engage in conversations about how this

group supports the mission of UCR. There are a number of advisory boards/committees that represent the community. *UCR should consider ways to secure external input through advisory boards.* While a research university cannot be “all things to all people” and is responsible not only to its regional population, UCR has grown as the region has grown and the undergraduate student body is representative of the demographics of the Inland Empire. *It is important for the campus to remain fully engaged with the region and through that engagement determine how best to respond to regional needs.* (CFRs 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11)

UCR has a strong shared governance history and the Faculty Senate participates in many decisions. At the same time, the team learned that many faculty members do not have a broad understanding of the accreditation process or the importance of faculty engagement in the process. *The team believes that it will be important to include more faculty members and department chairs in the planning and decision-making processes, particularly as the campus moves toward developing and refining student learning objectives and assessment processes.* (CFRs 3.11, 4.7)

#### **Standard IV: Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement**

The University of California, Riverside is currently without a meaningful strategic plan; however, Acting Chancellor Grey has begun a strategic planning process that will lay the groundwork for the campus and the next chancellor as they move to establish priorities and realize goals. As part of this process, each dean has prepared a plan and those plans have been gathered centrally. It is critical that these plans become the basis

for a broader review of campus goals and objectives as well as strategies for achieving the goals. *The team was unanimous in recommending that this planning process start immediately and not wait for a new chancellor to arrive.* The process must include all constituents—faculty, staff, students, and community members. Given the close relationship UCR has with the local and regional community and because the plan for the medical school was predicated on regional need, the overall strategic plan must also take into consideration the needs of public education, economic development, and community service. UCR has extensive data that can be supplemented with state and regional data to determine the academic programs that will address regional needs. At the same time, UCR must see itself as a national research university and plan academic programs that will serve national interests and build on the historic strengths of the campus. Planning should also consider the Palm Desert campus and future outreach programs. (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)

UCR has generally strong institutional research with a core Institutional Planning office in Academic Planning and Budget and specialized functions in a variety of academic and administrative offices including Student Affairs, the Graduate Division, Undergraduate Education, and the Provost's Office. The CPR data portfolio and other appendices clearly demonstrate the IR capacity, and the team room contained additional analyses on topics such as admissions, graduation and retention, and teaching workload. (CFR 4.5)

From the WASC capacity review perspective, one of the most important services that IR provides is supporting the program review process by supplying a standard set of data for self-studies. This service is useful in itself and contributes to the integrity and

value of the review process; it also provides a base to integrate more empirical data and analysis into program review, specifically related to the assessment of student learning.

(CFR 4.4)

Through an Institutional Research Coordinating Group, institutional researchers across campus share their activities with one another, leverage projects and analyses to serve the University, seek to avoid redundancies, and work toward greater efficiency in IR. To enhance assessments of institutional quality, the IRCG has identified several sets of comparison institutions (each serving a different focus, such as admissions, research, etc.) and is beginning to consider the performance indicators that should be compared across these groups. (CFR 4.4)

Additionally, the Office of Institutional Planning has developed a web-based Course and Instruction Reporting System, which enables users to produce and review a number of reports about faculty teaching activities at both the individual faculty and program levels of analysis. For example, data can be retrieved in an easily readable format about a given faculty member's graduate student instruction, participation on dissertation and thesis committees, and undergraduate teaching including the types of courses taught (lecture, seminar, etc.). At the departmental level, the System provides comparison tables for number of courses, enrollment, student credit hours, year average instructional FTE, and courses taught per instructional FTE. (CFR 4.4)

As with most universities, a variety of offices conduct surveys. Some surveys, such as UCUES and CIRP, are multi-campus studies that take a broad look at the student experience; others are more focused. The surveys have addressed a wide variety of

issues, sometimes superficially, leaving room for improvement in survey analysis and reporting. For example, one survey report in the team room is a multi-page set of frequency tables for each item in a survey. This compilation of survey results fails to “tell a story,” and thus does not inform campus planning and program development. Another report offers some cross-tabulations but the reasons for the selected comparisons and the intended use of the results are unclear. On the other end of the continuum, a new series of research briefs offers (hard copy and web) short analyses that combine multiple data sources to shed light on a specific issue. The first of this series addresses student time use, such as time spent working and time spent studying outside of class. The research brief notes that “the reports are meant to raise more questions than they answer,” and they indeed show promise as catalysts for institutional self-reflection around issues of importance to the educational enterprise. (CFR 4.5, 4.7)

To improve the usefulness of surveys, the IRCG is currently planning to store survey data (item level) in a shared repository that analysts from many different offices can access. This will enable analyses of the same survey dataset for different questions or needs; it also enables analysts to combine data from different surveys, match it to the student database, and conduct sophisticated studies. It also will boost quality control, as analysts discover the strengths and weaknesses of different data sets. This effort can become an exemplar of institutional cooperation and efficient use of survey results. The team encourages the IRCG to continue its efforts. (CFR 4.4)

IR professionals at UCR are also involved in program evaluation. For example, an evaluation of UCR’s first-year experience programs used both survey results and data from the Student Information System to assess the effect of these programs on retention.

Results have been released for review to a small group, with wider dissemination to follow. The evaluation will be a focus of a spring summit and is expected to lead to some modifications in the programs. (CFR 4.6; 4.5, 4.4)

At least some IR staff members have been trained in assessment and are ready to work with faculty. At this time, however, the institution does not appear to be far enough along in developing measurable learning objectives to create much demand for these IR services. As UCR gears up in this area, the demands on IR will grow, and more resources, or a different distribution of effort, will be needed. (CFR 4.6, 4.7, 4.8)

*Perhaps the most important challenge facing the campus with regard to assessment and research is to put information into the hands of decision-makers and/or those who are in a position to act on the data.* This is a critical component of the “culture of evidence” that WASC encourages. Institutional researchers and analysts can respond to this culture, and they can nurture it by providing excellent and relevant reports, but campus leadership must affirm the value of empirical data and analysis, especially as it applies to teaching and learning. (CFR 4.6, 4.7, 4.8)

### **SECTION III – MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The visiting team is impressed with the energy, commitment, and ambition of the University of California, Riverside. The campus has undergone significant changes in recent years, as demonstrated by the dramatic growth in the in enrollment and, more recently, by the commitment to establish a medical school. Both of these changes are symptomatic of a large sense of purpose and a connection to Riverside and San Bernardino counties. UCR, perhaps more than other UC campuses and because of its

historic extension activities, also has a mission of outreach to the community. While these significant changes have been underway, and their impact will be felt for years to come, the university has also made progress in securing research dollars and in hiring a cadre of faculty that will continue the trajectory toward increased recognition for the historic mission of teaching and the increasingly important mission of research.

The team wishes to applaud the spirit of cooperation during this time of transition in leadership and to congratulate Acting Chancellor Grey for his stewardship. The spirit of cooperation the team witnessed came through in its meetings on campus, but is also evident in the unanimous Senate vote to approve a medical school and plans for additional professional programs such as a Master's and Ph.D. in Public Policy.

UCR has other notable strengths and the visiting team was impressed with several key initiatives. Many programs, for example, have been instituted within the past few years to support a quality teaching and learning environment. Among these are undergraduate engagement activities recommended by the Student Success Task Force and overseen by the office of Undergraduate Education, including a freshman year experience, learning communities, supplemental instruction, an improved advising and early warning system, and a focus on undergraduate research.

UCR has also expanded the office of the Executive Vice Chancellor to focus attention on diversity, personnel planning, and conflict resolution. These critical initiatives have led to campus engagement in diversity workshops, and greater attention to increasing diversity through hiring practices, which is critically important for UCR's future.

The team's advisory statements and suggestions are italicized in the previous pages of this report. The team's major findings and recommendations, three of which are in response to the three themes the university has identified for its review, are noted below:

1. *Strategic Planning*: There is a need for the inclusive and comprehensive strategic planning process that has already begun. (CFRs 1.1, 1.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3) This planning process should build on the quality planning that led to the proposal for the medical school and should incorporate the ways that this new initiative will complement existing programs.
2. *Student Learning and Assessment*: The time between now and the Educational Effectiveness review is critical in developing student learning outcomes and measures of assessment. This process must include developing means of educating faculty about "best practices" in assessing learning. Most programs will have to show that they are engaging in assessment and the team will expect to see that a number of departments are assessing student learning and making informed judgments based on that information. The institution must move beyond the planning stage with regards to assessment to the implementation phase. (CFRs 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 4.6, 4.7)
3. *Diversity*: The team urges the University to continue to support efforts to diversify the faculty and monitor the hiring of faculty in all disciplines and at all ranks. The team further recommends that the University to set benchmarks for achieving a faculty that more closely reflects the student body both in terms of ethnicity and



- gender. The University should be able to demonstrate concrete steps being undertaken to achieve the goals that have been set. (CFRs 1.5, 3.2)
4. *Expanding Graduate Programs*: To ensure success of the goal to expand graduate and professional programs, the team recommends that the University carefully align expectations with an analysis of current resources and explore supplemental funding. The team recommends setting fundraising goals, providing support to meet those goals and ensuring that the campus continues to grow its advancement activity. Finally, the team recommends that the goals set by advancement closely reflect the goals being identified through the strategic planning process. (CFRs 3.5, 4.1, 4.2)

#### **SECTION IV – PREPARATIONS FOR THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT AND REVIEW**

The team was pleased to see the progress that UCR has made in moving from the institutional proposal stage of WASC accreditation to the capacity stage. As noted throughout this report, UCR has addressed the themes it identified as key for its reaccreditation and in one area in particular, student engagement, much has been done or is underway to address issues of educational effectiveness.

The team was concerned to learn, however, that the committee for the educational effectiveness review was planning to meet for the first time in the 2007-2008 academic year after the CPR site visit. It is advantageous for educational effectiveness initiatives, particularly those related to student learning, to be advanced throughout the reaccreditation process. This is particularly important in relation to student learning outcome assessment. The team recognizes that helping faculty to embrace a culture focused on student learning is time consuming and that it

can be difficult and, at the same time, the team believes that this is the area where the most work is needed before the educational effectiveness visit. This is where the University needs to apply its greatest effort in preparation for educational effectiveness review.