

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE  
PROPOSAL FOR WASC ACCREDITATION  
Submitted October 11, 2005; Approved December 6, 2005

### **1. Institutional Context Statement**

The University of California, Riverside campus continues to have one of the most diverse undergraduate student bodies of any research university in the country, from the standpoint of race, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic background, and family experience with higher education. Our percentage of minority students in the total student body (47%) is exceeded by only three American Association of Universities (AAU) institutions, and our percentage of minority students among undergraduates (71%) exceeds the percentage of every AAU institution. But our percentage of minority students among graduate students (20%) is exceeded by 10 AAU institutions, and our faculty and staff are much less diverse than our undergraduates. The campus community (especially undergraduate students and staff) provides outreach and support activities to the diverse, surrounding community, and the diversity of the campus is a distinct asset in this process. The campus is addressing ways of maximizing the benefits of its diverse undergraduate population and increasing the diversity of other components of the campus.

The campus has made a strong commitment to expanding its culture of evidence focused on student learning outcomes. A new Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Programs has been appointed. He took part in the establishment of an Institutional Research Council, composed of individuals involved in institutional research across the campus, which is planning and coordinating the comprehensive collection, analysis, and dissemination of data on student learning outcomes and the related culture of evidence. One focus of this effort is the freshman experience at UCR – how effectively the campus is meeting the preparatory, curricular and co-curricular needs of its freshmen; how their first year can be improved; how the campus can attract more of the students it can best serve; how patterns of student success at UCR can be used by the Undergraduate Council to refine the criteria used in the comprehensive review of applicants for freshman admission; and how the campus can best define, contact, and attract as applicants those students most likely to succeed at UCR and for whom UCR would be the best UC campus for them to attend. The freshman experience is a primary focus because of the crucial role it plays in the subsequent success of undergraduates at UCR.

Another major project the campus plans to initiate is the formal definition of the faculty's aspirations for undergraduate students at the individual degree program levels, comparable to the aspirations defined for undergraduates in general and for general education (e.g., 2005-06 UCR General Catalog, Page 44). These aspirations underlie the design of the curriculum and influence the co-curricular programs, but they have not been explicitly stated in all programs. In addition, measures need to be developed that assess, at all levels, the degree to which aspirations are being achieved, and mechanisms need to be established that analyze the results and use that information to increase student learning. This process will expand the campus conformity with Standard 1 [Defining

Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives] (especially Criterion for Review (CFR) 1.2 [Educational objectives are clearly recognized throughout the institution]), Standard 2 [Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions], and Standard 4 [Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement].

The campus has conducted a preliminary review of the four WASC Standards and has identified areas of focus for the coming years. In addition to the aspects of Standards that will be addressed by formal definition of faculty aspirations for undergraduates (see above), the campus will pay particular attention to the following Criteria for Review (CFR): 2.7 [Program Review], 3.4 [Faculty Development Activities], and 4.4 - 4.8 [criteria associated with Commitment to Learning and Improvement].

The last UCR Self-Study for Accreditation, submitted in January 1998, was an experimental study focused on the role of undergraduate education in a research university that was planning for growth from an enrollment of fewer than 10,000 students to an enrollment of 15,000 students. During the intervening seven years the campus has reached a fall enrollment of over 17,000 students, but the growth has been almost entirely in undergraduate students. There are 6,708 more undergraduates (an 80 percent increase) and only 498 more graduate students (a 33 percent increase). As a result, the campus is seriously addressing the need to achieve a better balance of undergraduate and graduate/professional programs and students through a focused plan to increase the number, quality and diversity of its graduate and professional programs and students. The campus has also reached the point where it can no longer accommodate all qualified applicants for freshman admission and is initiating selective admissions through a process known as comprehensive review. In addition, such infrastructure elements as academic support systems and types and numbers of classrooms may not have kept pace with the rapid growth in enrollment.

The last Commission action letter concerned further planning for and monitoring of enrollment growth. Now that the campus has reached a stage of more moderate growth, that action letter is less relevant. The first review of campus programs by the Substantive Change Committee took place in April 2005 and resulted in approval: plans to offer graduate MBA and MFA programs at what will become the Palm Desert campus of UCR. At WASC's request the campus did not submit an Interim Report following its last Reaccreditation Review, but was placed directly into the new cycle of Reaccreditation under the 2001 WASC Handbook of Accreditation.

## **2. Description of Outcomes**

The campus has established a WASC Reaccreditation Steering Committee with two subcommittees: Institutional Capacity and Educational Effectiveness.

- A. The Institutional Capacity Subcommittee will conduct the Preparatory Review, with progress reports to the Steering Committee, and will draft the Preparatory Review Report for review and action by the Steering Committee. The plan of work of the Subcommittee is found under Section 4. **Approach for the Preparatory Review,**