4. Approach for the Preparatory Review

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. Membership of the Institutional Capacity Subcommittee includes key members of the newly formed Institutional Research Council. The Institutional Capacity Subcommittee is defining and expanding the components of the campus data portfolio, especially as the portfolio informs the Special Themes that will be investigated by the Educational Effectiveness Subcommittee. It is reviewing the ways in which campus units and leadership access and use data to reach conclusions and to design strategies for improving student learning. It is planning improvements in the whole process of data collection, analysis, and distribution, including development of a comprehensive longitudinal student database.

During 2005-06 the campus will conduct a detailed review of its compliance with the WASC Standards, using its current data portfolio and other evidence at hand, and will extend and refine the data portfolio in light of that review. Preliminary assessments of the WASC Standards suggest that the greatest effort will be expended with respect to 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] (especially CFR 2.7 [Program review]), Standard 3 [Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Sustainability], (especially CFR 3.4 [Faculty Development Activities]), and Standard 4 [Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement] (especially CFRs 4.4 – 4.8 [criteria associated with Commitment to Learning and Improvement]).

The campus intends to structure its Preparatory Review around the Special Themes being investigated as part of the Educational Effectiveness Review; these Themes are discussed in more detail in the next section. The campus will cross-reference the results of the Special Themes review to the WASC Standards.

Expected outcomes of the Preparatory Review and Preparatory Review Report are set forth under Section **2. Description of Outcomes**, above.

The campus is committed to the activities outlined in this section of the Proposal and will be pursuing them in earnest during the 2005-06 academic year.

5. Approach for the Educational Effectiveness Review

The Educational Effectiveness Subcommittee will conduct the Educational Effectiveness Review, with progress reports to the Steering Committee, and will draft the Educational Effectiveness Report for action by the Steering Committee. Membership of the Subcommittee includes representatives of three key Academic Senate committees (the Graduate Council, the Undergraduate Council, and the Educational Policy Committee), as well as key administrators, staff, and students. It will attempt to broaden the degree to

which members of the campus community are involved in and committed to the assessment of student learning, through sponsorship of special workshops and visiting consultants and reports on successful campus assessment programs.

Early in the process of planning for reaccreditation the campus identified the Special Themes approach as the most productive Educational Effectiveness Report model, especially since the Special Themes could be linked to recently completed academic planning and enrollment management task force efforts and reports. The Educational Effectiveness Subcommittee will conduct a comprehensive study of three Special Themes.

The identification and definition of the three themes (see below) resulted from feedback regarding iterative postings of possible Special Themes topics on the campus reaccreditation website, discussion of possible Special Themes at a campus retreat, and discussion and evaluation of the Special Themes by the WASC Steering Committee and the subcommittees. All three Special Themes extend recent campus planning efforts and task forces and follow up on the recommendations of these task forces. The Special Themes represent the issues of greatest educational concern to the campus, as discussed under Section **1. Institutional Context Statement**, above. All of the Special Themes will contribute to the culture of evidence and related learning; both components of the third Special Theme focus particularly on student learning.

The three Special Themes are as follows:

(1) **Learning within a Campus Culture of Diversity**

The campus has a long history of commitment to high achievement by a diverse student body. The goals of this study are to articulate, measure and evaluate learning outcomes within a diverse undergraduate student body, so the campus might play a leadership role in higher education as a model for incorporating diversity into a research university setting. The focus is on learning about diversity as well as the learning process in a diverse environment. The study would include such dimensions of diversity as ethnic, racial, religious, sexual orientation, economic, English as a Second Language, parental education, and learning styles. It would include increasing the degree to which members of the campus community develop better understanding of the religions, cultural histories, sexual orientations, and other cultural dimensions of other groups and devising ways of assisting members of the campus community to bridge cultural differences. It would also include ways in which the learning process should be modified to take advantage of and address the challenges of a diverse student body. Although the campus probably has a more diverse faculty, staff and graduate student population than most research universities, the study would also focus on possible ways of increasing the diversity of those groups and using that diversity to further develop the campus culture of diversity and the employment opportunities of graduate students.

Researchable questions involved in Theme 1 include determining (1) the degree to which exposure to diversity contributes to understanding of differences and ability to achieve broad success in a diverse environment, (2) the ways in which we can demonstrate that diversity serves as a pathway to excellence in individual and group performance, (3) determining if successful strategies for increasing the diversity with respect to one parameter (e.g., ethnicity) are applicable to increasing the diversity with respect to other parameters, (4) the role of experiential learning (tutoring, etc.) in expanding the understanding of diversity, (5) ways of encouraging cultural sensitivity in the teaching and learning process, and (6) the degree to which experience with and understanding of diversity increases the employment and educational outcomes of undergraduate and graduate students.

The methodology includes (1) a detailed review of the literature on diversity and excellence; (2) data collection and analysis to quantify the diversity of undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and staff in a number of the dimensions of diversity and then a comparison of the levels of diversity with those of other campuses and institutions; (3) surveys of attitudes and experiences before and after efforts to develop approaches to dealing with the challenges of diversity, increasing understanding of differences, and developing respect for others; and (4) experimentation with new approaches to recruiting and retaining a more diverse graduate student body, faculty, and staff.

(2) Growing and Improving Graduate and Professional Programs

The campus has been attempting to increase the number and quality of its graduate and professional programs and students, but the percentage of graduate and professional students has declined because of the much greater increase in numbers of undergraduate students. The goal is to identify and promote best practices in graduate and professional program development and graduate and professional student success. Activities would include identifying the parameters and processes of successful graduate and professional programs and generalizing these to other programs, with special attention to interdepartmental graduate programs; identifying successful graduate and professional students and determining the reasons they are successful; and improving the recruiting of graduate and professional students.

Researchable questions involved in Theme 2 include (1) identifying and promoting best practices in graduate and professional program development and graduate and professional student success, (2) determining the strengths and weaknesses of interdepartmental and interdisciplinary graduate programs relative to departmental, more specialized programs, (3) devising ways of increasing the success of interdepartmental and interdisciplinary graduate programs, (4) discovering the best ways in which to expand professional education and programs on the campus, and (5) developing better strategies for graduate and professional student recruitment.

The methodology includes (1) a detailed review of the literature on graduate and professional student performance, (2) a detailed review and comparison of UCR's

graduate and professional program reviews and assessments, (3) detailed analysis of graduate and professional student performance at UCR, (4) surveys and other data collection efforts to identify financial and other challenges to more effective recruitment of graduate and professional students and development of strategies to overcome these challenges, and (5) development and testing of approaches to creating new graduate and professional programs and increasing the quality of students admitted to all graduate and professional programs.

The general procedure for review of graduate and professional programs is as follows: Information about the program, including a mission statement, program recruitment materials, program rules and regulations, faculty CVs, student statistics, degrees awarded statistics, and student placement data, is gathered by the Graduate Division in cooperation with the program under review. A three-member external review team is selected by the Graduate Council after consulting with the program under review and directors (e.g. Department Chairs) of comparable programs at other UC campuses. Typically, the external review team consists of eminent scholars in the discipline or profession under review, with at least one a member of the faculty at another UC campus. The information collected by the Graduate Division, along with the report of the previous external review team, is provided to the new external review team in advance of a three-day site visit. During this visit, the review team meets with students and faculty associated with the program, with College and Graduate Division Deans, and with the Graduate Council review committee. The external review team then provides a detailed evaluative report to the Graduate Council. The Graduate Council then issues a set of "findings and recommendations." The graduate program must then respond to this Graduate Council report, typically by proposing changes in program rules, procedures, or direction of development. When the Graduate Council is satisfied by the program's response, the review process is closed. Each graduate or professional degree program is reviewed via this process every five to seven years.

The above process normally involves the Educational Effectiveness indicators set forth in the document Required Data Exhibits to Support the Institutional Proposal, Special Visits, and Progress Reports, but those indicators may not be explicitly or separately identified.

(3) Improving Undergraduate Student Engagement, Experience, and Learning Outcomes

The first part of this theme involves defining the faculty's aspirations for undergraduates at the level of individual programs as these relate to aspirations at the university and general education levels; developing means of measuring the degree to which undergraduates are meeting these aspirations; and devising curricular and co-curricular means of improving the degree to which undergraduates are achieving these aspirations. The goal is to have learning outcomes clearly defined, measured and evaluated at the level of the institution, general education requirements of

undergraduates, and individual majors or programs at the undergraduate and graduate level.

The second part of this theme is improving the first year experience of the heterogeneous group of undergraduate students at UCR, with a particular focus on the difficult transition from high school to college. This includes such subtopics as assessing and refining summer bridge programs and other approaches to addressing deficiencies in student preparation for college-level work, especially basic writing and mathematics skills areas; improving the performance of students in entry-level courses in majors, especially majors in science and technical fields; assessing integrative approaches to breadth requirements and expanding the successful aspects of them; developing ways of engaging students more completely in curricular and extra-curricular activities; and assessing and improving academic advising for freshmen. It also includes refining the campus comprehensive review criteria for admission of freshmen to improve the success rate of those admitted, as well as defining the characteristics of the students most likely to succeed at UCR and for whom UCR would be the best UC campus for them to attend (including their response to campus efforts to smooth their transition and maximize their success), followed by establishment of ways to contact and attract such students as applicants.

The first part of Theme 3 (defining the faculty's aspirations for undergraduates at the level of individual programs and developing measures of attainment of the aspirations at all levels) is critical to subsequent assessment efforts and is the first priority in the Educational Effectiveness process. It will be accomplished through mutual engagement of the administration and the Academic Senate, including such activities as discussion in key Academic Senate committees, town hall meetings, and broad solicitation of faculty feedback at the level of individual programs, general education, and the institution as a whole, including the development of metrics for assessment and subsequent collection and analyses of data and the design and implementation of curricular and co-curricular strategies of implementation.

Researchable questions involved in the second part of Theme 3 include (1) identifying the activities and programs in which successful freshmen at UCR are engaged [e.g., role of freshmen discovery programs, the Learning Center, various extra-curricular activities], (2) identifying the impediments to freshman success at UCR; (3) discovering and developing strategies to overcome these impediments [e.g., encouraging students to complete the University of California Entry Level Writing Requirement (formerly known as the Subject A requirement) before enrolling as freshmen]; (4) discovering patterns of student success at UCR that can be used by the Undergraduate Council to refine the criteria used in the comprehensive review of applicants for freshmen admission, and (5) defining the characteristics of those students most likely to succeed at UCR and for whom UCR would be the best UC campus for them to attend and then developing ways of attracting them to UCR.

The methodology includes (1) a detailed review of the literature on the freshman experience and performance, (2) collection and assessment of data on freshman

student performance at UCR, (3) development and assessment of various strategies for improving freshman success at UCR, and (4) development and assessment of various strategies for attracting more of the students the campus can best serve.

The Educational Effectiveness Subcommittee will conduct a detailed review of the WASC Standards in parallel with that conducted by the Institutional Capacity Subcommittee, paying particular attention to the same Standards and Criteria. The Educational Effectiveness review of the Standards will focus particularly on the definition of student learning outcomes and the measurement of educational effectiveness, especially as discussed in Standard 4 [Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement].

There have been detailed campus reviews of graduate and professional programs, including external review teams, for many years, using the kinds of educational effectiveness indicators described in the document Required Data Exhibits to Support the Institutional Proposal, Special Visits, and Progress Reports. These educational effectiveness assessments are supplemented by specialized accreditation reviews in professional fields like business, engineering, and medicine. But UCR is just beginning a comparable system of review of undergraduate programs and majors. This effort will increase the quality assurance process for undergraduate programs.

The campus is still developing effective approaches to defining and measuring student learning for undergraduates, so it is premature at this point to indicate exactly how the campus will review and evaluate actual undergraduate student work and learning results and other key indicators in support of the undergraduate component of its Educational Effectiveness Review. The first part of Special Theme 3, above (fully defining the faculty's aspirations for undergraduates, developing means of measuring the degree to which undergraduates are achieving these aspirations, and devising curricular and co-curricular means of improving the degree to which undergraduates are achieving these aspirations) is a critical first step in that process.

The Educational Effectiveness Subcommittee will work closely with the Institutional Capacity Subcommittee, the Institutional Research Council, and Academic Senate committees in defining the Educational Effectiveness processes for undergraduates. The Subcommittee will encourage broader campus involvement in educational effectiveness by holding special workshops, scheduling visits by external consultants, showcasing successful campus efforts at defining and measuring educational effectiveness, and similar projects. The campus will also encourage departments to adopt or strengthen capstone courses and other summative, integrated processes for students completing the work in their major.

Expected outcomes of the Educational Effectiveness Review and Educational Effectiveness Report are set forth under Section **2. Description of Outcomes**, above.

The Educational Effectiveness Report will be submitted eighteen months after completion of the Preparatory Review Team visit.

6. Workplan and Milestones

The workplan and milestones are discussed in the two sections immediately above. A simple summary is set forth below.

Time Period	Work Plans and Milestones
Fall 2005 and Winter 2006	Detailed review of WASC Standards by Institutional Capacity Subcommittee and Educational Effectiveness Subcommittee; establishment of specific plans to address areas in greatest need of improvement Implementation of formal reviews of undergraduate programs and majors Workshops or educational consultant sessions on assessment of student learning
Spring 2006	Agreement on definitions of data elements in the University portfolio, assembly of the data in a common or linked database, and focus of the portfolio on the individual Special Themes Design and implementation of additional data collection processes (surveys, graduate follow up processes, etc.) Workshops or educational consultant sessions on assessment of student learning
Fall 2006	Completion of formal definition of faculty aspirations for undergraduates (Special Theme 3, part 1) Workshops or educational consultant sessions on assessment of student learning
Winter and Spring 2007	Implementation of at least a prototype of a web-based inquiry system that will provide all members of the campus with access to institutional data to answer a wide variety of questions about student learning. The system will respond to specific questions about student characteristics and performance, producing responses that are based on clearly defined data elements, measured at specified points in time, and integrated across different data collection systems. Implementation of expanded instructional development programs to improve understanding of student learning and faculty assessment of that learning.