

Sonoma State University

Description of Contents of the Capacity and Preparatory Review Report and SSU Portfolio

The Capacity and Preparatory Review Report has been structured to fulfill the requirements outlined in the *WASC 2001 Handbook of Accreditation* as follows:

- I. Preface: Provides a brief overview of the university, its mission, programs, and accreditation status.
- II. Introduction: Describes the process by which the campus has engaged in the Capacity and Preparatory Review process.
- III. Changes in Context: Provides an overview of significant developments in the institution since the approval of the Institutional Proposal in spring 2006.
- IV. Reflective Essays: These essays – each written by one of the WASC faculty associates – reflect on the WASC Standards and the particular CFRs that were noted in the WASC Commission 5th year review letter, dated June 2004. Additionally, the university engaged in an exercise to identify additional CFRs that were of high importance to the institution, and the essays address these as well. Finally, the reflective essays provide the basis for the university's ability to engage in the educational effectiveness review and to meet the stated outcomes of that process.
- V. Conclusion: Provides a summary of the report, including strengths and weaknesses, recommendations and follow-up steps, and preparation for the Educational Effectiveness Review.

VI. Appendices

Appendix A: Provides a response to and progress report on how the university is addressing previous concerns identified in the Commission 5th year review letter.

Appendix B: Required data exhibits.

The [SSU Portfolio](http://www.sonoma.edu/aa/portfolio), located at <http://www.sonoma.edu/aa/portfolio>, has also been developed in accordance with recommendations in the *WASC 2001 Handbook of Accreditation*. Designed as a standing portfolio for the university, it includes the following:

- I. Institutional Proposal: “Educating the Whole Student: Sustaining SSU’s Mission in a Time of Change,” approved by the WASC Commission in the spring of 2006.
- II. Capacity and Preparatory Review Report: Submitted to WASC in December 2007.
- III. Required Data Exhibits.
- IV. Institutional Policies as required by the WASC Commission.
- V. Reaccreditation Review: Written commentary highlighting exhibits, data and evidence selected by Sonoma State University to illustrate our commitment to capacity and preparation for the educational effectiveness report.
- VI. Accreditation Review Steering Committee membership, agendas and notes.
- VII. Miscellaneous archived materials, including previous WASC Commission letters and reports.
- VIII. Interactive Forum Site: On-line discussion site for comment by the university community.

“Educating the Whole Student: Sustaining SSU’s Mission in a Time of Change”

Capacity and Preparatory Review Report

I. Preface

SSU Description and History

Sonoma State University is one of the 23 campuses of the California State University system. The CSU is a leader in high-quality, accessible, student-focused higher education. With 450,000 students and 46,000 faculty and staff, the CSU is the largest, the most diverse, and one of the most affordable university systems in the country. The CSU is committed to playing a vital role in the growth and development of California's communities and economy. Its graduates go on to make a difference in the workforce, and the CSU engages in research and creative activities leading to scientific, technical, artistic and social advances.

The CSU is funded by the State of California, and as a campus of the CSU, Sonoma State University receives approximately 85% of its funding through the state. Funding is based on incremental growth; therefore, the SSU budget is composed of base plus growth at a set marginal cost formula. As part of the CSU, Sonoma State University is funded through a system wide allocation process and must meet the enrollment targets set for it by the system in order to receive funding. Most of SSU’s employees – including faculty, staff and various other units – are employed under various collective bargaining agreements. All of these agreements are system wide and negotiated at the state level. Additionally, SSU must respond to requirements imposed by the California State Legislature, by Title V of the California Education Code, and by the CSU Board of Trustees, which governs the 23-campus system. All degree programs must be approved

by the Board of Trustees and incorporated into the Academic Plan of the university, which is subject to approval by the system office. All physical plant improvements, such as building renovations and new construction, must similarly receive system wide approval. Finally, SSU is frequently called upon to respond to system wide initiatives. Examples of these efforts include the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), which is discussed in the Reflective Essay for Standard 2, and the CSU Accountability Indicators, discussed in the Reflective Essay for Standard 4.

The California State Legislature established Sonoma State College in 1960. The college opened in temporary quarters in Rohnert Park in fall 1961 with an enrollment of 265 upper-division students. The college's elementary education, psychology, and counseling programs were the principal offerings. The college grew steadily, developing academic programs based in the traditional liberal arts and sciences as well as in career and professional programs. The college moved to its present 274 acre site in 1966. Located at the foot of the Sonoma hills in Sonoma County, the campus is approximately one hour north of San Francisco and 40 minutes from the Pacific Ocean. New facilities have been constructed and extensive landscaping has been accomplished over the years, creating one of the most attractive, modern and well-equipped campuses in the state. In 1978, university status was granted and the name was changed to Sonoma State University. The university now enrolls more than 8,300 students and offers 43 Bachelor's degrees, 14 Master's degrees, 10 teaching, specialist and service credentials, and one joint-doctorate in Educational Administration. SSU has five academic schools – Arts and Humanities, Business and Economics, Education, Science and Technology, and Social Sciences – and the School of Extended Education and the University Library.

SSU's mission is to prepare students to be learned men and women who:

- *Have a foundation for lifelong learning,*
- *Have a broad cultural perspective,*
- *Have a keen appreciation of intellectual and aesthetic achievements,*
- *Will be leaders and active citizens,*
- *Are capable of pursuing fulfilling careers in a changing world,*
and
- *Are concerned with contributing to the health and well-being of the world at large.*

SSU has been fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges since 1963. In addition, individual program accreditation has been granted by the American Chemical Society (ACS), the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), the National League for Nursing (NLNAC), the National Association for Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Programs in SSU's School of Education are approved by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) and the National Council for Accreditation for Teacher Education (NCATE). The School of Business and Economics has received initial accreditation status from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

The university is also a member of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC), an association of public colleges and universities whose primary mission is ensuring that a fine undergraduate liberal arts and sciences education is available to

students in the public systems of higher education. SSU is the only California member of COPLAC.

II. Introduction

Sonoma State University has been engaged in preparing for the WASC accreditation review visits since submission and approval of the university's Institutional Proposal in the spring of 2006. In anticipation of the Capacity and Preparatory Review visit in March of 2008, significant work has been done in developing the university's institutional presentation.

SSU established an Accreditation Review Steering Committee (ARSC) in spring 2005, which meets monthly to oversee the work on accreditation. Co-chaired by Dr. Eduardo M. Ochoa, Provost, and Dr. Andy Merrifield, Professor of Political Science, the committee represents a broad constituency of SSU faculty, staff, administrators and students. Following acceptance of the institutional proposal, the ARSC implemented a work plan to insure the timely completion of the first phase of accreditation, the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR). The following steps were taken:

1. In the fall of 2006, the university recruited and hired three faculty associates in the accreditation process: Dr. Diana Grant, Criminology and Criminal Justice Studies; Dr. Beez Schell, Kinesiology; and Dr. Andy Wallace, Philosophy, to assist in the accreditation process. Receiving one course release per semester for a three year period, these associates are responsible for developing the exhibits and data displays chosen by SSU to illustrate our capacity as an institution to meet the WASC standards and as preparation for the Educational Effectiveness Review; for writing the reflective essays

that form the basis of this CPR report; and for engaging with the campus community as it works toward the goals of the Educational Effectiveness Review.

2. The [SSU Portfolio](#) was developed to be the repository of all the information for the accreditation process. The SSU Portfolio is also a permanent place for the university to house data, reports, and other information for use by the SSU community in pursuit of continued educational effectiveness.

3. Key areas of concern were identified by ARSC after reviewing the results of the WASC exercise, “Worksheet for Preliminary Review under the Standards,” which was widely distributed to the university community. Those Criteria for Review (CFRs) that were identified as meriting special attention have been extensively reviewed and are commented upon in the reflective essays on each of the four standards.

4. The ARSC and Faculty Associates reviewed carefully the 5th year WASC Commission letter and team report and have responded to the specific concerns and the CFRs that were noted by the commission for special attention.

5. The first draft of the CPR report was made available early in the fall of 2007 to the university community for review and comment. Individuals, as well as faculty governance and other committees, were invited to provide feedback to ARSC for inclusion into a second draft, which was completed and posted for review in mid-November. Individuals were encouraged to use the WASC Accreditation Interactive Online Forum (on the SSU Portfolio website) to provide feedback, or to contact any one of the Faculty Associates or members of ARSC. The final draft was submitted to WASC in December 2007.

6. General discussion and communication about the WASC accreditation process has been advanced through several venues:

- a. WASC accreditation is a standing report at every Academic Senate meeting.
- b. The Faculty Associates, the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO), and the Associate Vice President for Institutional Research made presentations on the accreditation process to all of the academic schools and the library at the beginning of the fall 2007 semester.
- c. Additional presentations have been made upon request to individual academic departments and organizations.
- d. Presentations have been made to the Associated Students Senate.
- e. All interested faculty, staff and students were invited to two discussion sessions that were held in the fall of 2007 about the WASC accreditation process. Two additional open sessions will be held early in the spring 2008 semester, prior to the CPR team visit. These sessions, hosted by the ARSC and by the Co-Chairs of the Steering Committee, provide general information about the accreditation process as well as a forum for faculty, staff and students to ask questions, to provide feedback, and to become informed about the goals of accreditation.

III. Changes in Context

Since approval of the Institutional Proposal in March 2006, SSU's executive and financial leadership has remained stable, while the academic, student affairs, and development areas have experienced significant change and restructuring.

Dr. Katharyn Crabbe, who became Vice President of the newly merged division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management (SAEM) in 2005, retired in August 2007. She has been replaced on an interim basis by Mr. Matthew Lopez-Phillips, formerly Assistant Vice President of SAEM, while a search is conducted for a new Vice President for the division. Dr. Eduardo M. Ochoa, Provost, and Dr. Carol Blackshire-Belay, Vice Provost, continue in their respective positions. Dr. James Robertson, Dean of Business and Economics, and Dr. Les Adler, Dean of Extended Education, retired in August 2007. Dr. TK Clarke, formerly chair of the Department of Business, has stepped in as acting Dean of the School of Business and Economics, while Dr. Adler has agreed to continue to serve part-time as acting Dean of Extended Education, as searches are conducted. Finally, a new Vice President for Development, Ms. Patricia McNeill, has been hired after an extensive search. She assumed her position in July 2007.

Two additional changes in context that have arisen since the approval of the Institutional Proposal in the spring of 2006 merit discussion.

Dr. Tony Apolloni was removed from his position as Associate Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs in response to irregularities detected in the California Institute on Human Services (CIHS), which Dr. Apolloni also headed. Vice Provost Carol Blackshire-Belay is leading the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) on an acting basis, pending a reorganization of the ORSP and a search for a new

Associate Vice President. Mr. Joshua Schultz, Director of Sponsored Programs, continues to provide administrative support for this area.

Near the end of the spring 2007 semester, the SSU Academic Senate passed a resolution authorizing a referendum vote of no confidence in President Ruben Armiñana, which subsequently passed by a substantial margin. The resolution expressed concern about funding levels for instruction and academic quality, as well as the effective use of faculty governance. Following the vote, the CSU Board of Trustees expressed public support for Dr. Armiñana and his work at SSU.

Dr. Armiñana publicly acknowledged the no-confidence vote, stating, “I want you to know that I clearly heard your concerns and I share them regarding academic quality. I pledge to do what I can to address them.” The President, at the Faculty Convocation at the beginning of the 2007 academic year, also pledged “to communicate with you more often and more clearly regarding the challenges that face SSU” and to do a better job of funding the priorities of compensation, instruction and faculty development and classroom renovation, “including maintaining and improving an overall SFR similar to the CSU average.”

The President’s address has set the tone for a more positive, collaborative relationship with faculty governance in the new academic year, as well as a stronger emphasis on funding to support academic quality.

In addition to these changes in the institutional context, other significant elements are the construction of the Green Music Center and the budget picture for the California State University and its impact on Sonoma State University.

The Donald and Maureen Green Music Center, a public/private partnership, is under construction, including the concert hall, recital hall and music education building, with the academic wing and conference center expected to open in the fall of 2008, followed by the balance of the Center in the fall of 2009. Featuring an acoustically-superb concert hall, it will draw both master and student musicians, as well as audiences eager to experience their performances, set against the natural beauty of northern California's hills and vineyards. Sonoma State University is poised to become a major cultural resource for the North Bay area, thereby fulfilling its mission “to serve as an educational and cultural resource for people in the surrounding communities.”

While the Green Music Center construction proceeds, financing its construction has been challenging for the university. In the fall of 2006 the university sought and received from the CSU Board of Trustees a \$12.91 million revenue bond in order to meet the escalating costs of construction. Fundraising efforts continue in the private sector in a “Finale Campaign” with a target of raising an additional \$22 million, of which the first \$10 million has already been raised.

Sonoma State University’s share of the recent CSU budget cuts translates into a net loss over the past five years of over \$5 million, or 7% of the general fund budget. However, in 2007-2008, SSU is growing by 344 new FTES, which is resulting in new revenues of just over \$3 million. As part of its increased focus on academic quality, SSU has funded enrollment growth at an SFR of 18.9 to 1, which will result in 18 new, additional faculty positions to accommodate enrollment growth. In addition, \$200,000 has been allocated in new funds for faculty development as the first installment of a five-

year commitment to create a permanent, \$1 million Faculty Development Fund. (See Reflective Essay for Standard 2 for further discussion.)

The following reflective essays – each written by one of the WASC faculty associates – address the WASC Standards, particularly the CFRs noted in the WASC Commission 5th year review letter, dated June 2004. The essays also discuss additional CFRs that are of high importance to the university, identified through a self-review process conducted in the spring of 2006. Also, detailed information and evidence on each WASC Standard and each Criterion for Review (CFR) discussed in the essay can be found in the SSU Portfolio under the heading “Reaccreditation Review.”

