



# REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING TEAM PREPARATORY REVIEW

February 6-8, 2008

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Reaffirmation of Accreditation, Initial Accreditation or Candidacy Team Roster Gerald L. Bepko, Chair Martha M. Balshem Phillip L. Doolittle Gail Evans George Morten 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.

## **HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY**

# REPORT FROM THE WASC VISITATION TEAM

A campus summary, prepared by Jená Burges, Accreditation Liaison Officer and Greg Crawford, Chair of the WASC Steering Committee.

## Key Points and Action Items

### KEY POINTS made by the Visitation Team

- HSU has generally met the Four Standards for Capacity and Preparation.
  - HSU's Capacity and Preparatory Review Report is correct in stating that the campus has "a core of values around which there is broad consensus..." However "... it has been difficult to achieve clarity as to how these values should be realized in institutional structures and processes." Specifically:
    - There are too many committees for an institution of our size.
    - Budgeting and decision-making processes are complicated, and they favor the status quo over strategic priorities.
    - Curricular oversight is fragmented and incomplete.
    - The lack of an institution-wide structure for coordinating and analyzing data hampers our ability to understand problems.
  - The success of HSU will require fundamental changes to our culture. HSU must:
    - unite around a common vision,
    - develop processes and structures for making decisions about how to achieve that vision, and
    - use data for planning and evaluating progress toward that vision.
- ♦ at least one student learning outcome for each General Education Area
  - ♦ student writing proficiency
  - ♦ effectiveness of activities supporting underrepresented students
  - ♦ student achievement of the HSU Outcomes (the learning students have demonstrated as well as what they are prepared to do)
    - Quality Improvement data showing improvements in business operations
    - Emphasis on program prioritization, including making resource decisions based on campus priorities
- A clear plan for institutionalizing the HSU Outcomes
  - A better structure for curriculum oversight, especially in General Education
  - Progress toward improving the success of underrepresented students:
    - additional support (e.g., an Office/Director of Diversity, Equity and Retention)
    - expansion of unit-level activities.
  - A comprehensive revision of budget planning and management (assistance of an outside facilitator is strongly recommended)
  - Development of revenue sources, including targeted marketing efforts and additional investment in fundraising

### ACTION ITEMS

For the WASC Educational Effectiveness Review, now scheduled for Spring 2010\*, the Visitation Team expects the following:

- Progress toward developing a culture of evidence
  - Assessment results, along with evidence that the results have been used to improve student learning:
    - ♦ at least one student learning outcome for each major program

\* Due to the challenges presented by some of the issues we must deal with, the Visitation Team is suggesting that WASC delay HSU's Educational Effectiveness Review until Spring 2010, rather than conducting it in Fall 2009 as originally scheduled.

# HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY



## Introduction

A WASC Visitation Team including Gail G. Evans, Associate Dean of Curriculum, Undergraduate Studies, San José State University; George Morten, Assistant Vice President, Student Affairs, California State University, Channel Islands; Phillip L. Doolittle, Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration, University of Redlands; Martha M. Balshem, Special Assistant to the President for Diversity, Professor of Sociology, Portland State University; and Gerald L. Bepko, IUPUI Chancellor Emeritus and IU Trustee Professor made a Capacity and Preparatory visit to Humboldt State University (HSU) on February 6 – 8, 2008. Because of a health issue Martha Balshem did not actually participate in the on site visitation. She worked with the Team prior to the visit and was instrumental in creating worksheets to analyze the most important issues confronting HSU. While she did not participate in the on site aspects of the visitation, and thus had no role in the preparation of this report, the other four team members wanted her to be a part of the continuing process. This is because she played such an important role in the build up to the visit and because the team wants her to join in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

The team is grateful to President Rollin Richmond and the HSU community for the splendid hospitality shown to the Visitation Team during its visit. President Richmond is known to at least one member of the Team as an outstanding scholar and university leader. Prior to the visit, two members of the Team spoke by telephone with CSU.

Chancellor Charles Reed, and during the visit one member of the Team met with 2CSU Trustee Glen Toney. Both affirmed Rollin Richmond's excellent reputation within the CSU and believe, not surprisingly, that he is a valuable asset for HSU and the CSU. The Team also extends a very special thanks to Vice Provost Jená Burges and Jodie Baker from the Office of Academic Affairs. Their thoughtfulness, attentiveness, responsiveness, diligence, knowledge of the institution, as well as the WASC process, made the Visitation Team feel very good about the visit and the Team's work.

## Preparation for the Visit

The Visitation Team believes that the preparation made by HSU for the visitation is impressive, beginning with the proposal for the visit that focused on two themes: "Identifying Core Academic Expectations" and "Ensuring Academic Success for Underrepresented Minorities." After the proposal was approved, and in the process of preparing for the Capacity and Preparatory Review, HSU expanded on these two themes and prepared four essays

that developed the two themes in a more expansive way. The initial two themes became: "Working with the Campus Community to Articulate Greater HSU Expectations" and "Making Excellence Inclusive." Each is the subject of an essay in the materials HSU submitted. In addition, HSU prepared a third and fourth essay on these subjects: "Resource Planning: From Crisis to Community" and "Learning to Plan, Planning to Learn," the latter with a focus on initiating meaningful outcomes assessment.

The visitation team was taken by the candor and self-awareness shown by the HSU community. This was interpreted as a sign of strength and a healthy recognition of areas in which improvement would bring important benefits to HSU.

The visitation team also recognized the strengths upon which the HSU community can build. It is immediately apparent to any visitor that HSU has an extraordinary location with many attendant advantages. The unspoiled beaches, the spectacular natural beauty of the environment, the climate, and the low cost of living by California standards all contribute to make HSU more attractive. It is not surprising that HSU is fourth among CSU campuses as measured by entering student SAT scores and eleventh out of 529 institutions nationwide which are classified as master's institutions. Moreover, California is emerging as a microcosm of the world's diversity and will provide a very favorable environment for educational opportunities. Finally, HSU has historic strengths in the studies of the physical environment which will be important for the future. It is likely that the 21st Century will be defined by an increasing focus on sustainability and caring for our planet. These advantages, along with a capable faculty and staff who seem loyal to the institution, give HSU an opportunity to have a greater impact.

A critical ingredient to this future will be the degree to which HSU can come together, unite around its emerging vision, and sustain a process for making good use of data and for making optimal decisions about its future. If HSU is able to create a compelling common agenda for which there is broad support among its constituencies, it seems that HSU will rise in the CSU system, in drawing power, and recognition.

## The Visitation Team's Approach

The Visitation Team believes that the expanded agenda and the four essays set forth in the HSU documents represent a sound approach to the accreditation visit and commends HSU for the quality of its efforts to make optimal use of the WASC process. The four essays clearly focus on important issues confronting HSU.

In examining these essays and all the HSU materials the Team concluded that HSU is an institution with an impressive history and strong promise for the future. Through the examination of the four essays the Visitation Team was drawn into many aspects of HSU's work and, of necessity, was also drawn into an examination of the WASC standards. In the course of examining the thoughtful submissions of HSU, the large amount of information provided, and HSU's open and transparent approach, it became clear that HSU has generally satisfied the four WASC standards for capacity and preparedness. Accordingly, this report will address the WASC standards only to the extent that they are directly implicated in the four essays.

### History of Humboldt State University

Humboldt State's origins are in the Progressive Movement which emerged as part of U.S. History around the turn of the last century. The Progressives sought to alleviate problems created by the Industrial Revolution. In that spirit in 1913 California Governor Hiram Johnson signed the law establishing Humboldt State Normal School for the training and education of teachers and others in the art of instruction and governance of 5th public schools of the state. In 1921 this fledgling institution was renamed the Humboldt State Teachers College. The college began offering civilian pilot training in 1939, followed by a time in which World War II had a significant impact. In that period, courses of instruction included such things as "Wartime Conversational French," "Commando Physical Fitness," and "The War Today." In 1950 Cornelius H. Siemens, for whom the current administration building is named, became the president and served for 23 years. Much of the physical campus was built on his watch. For example, in 1957 five buildings were dedicated: the gymnasium, art and home economics building, wildlife building and facilities, music building, and the home management cottage. In 1968 more buildings were dedicated: the administration and business building (now Siemens Hall), language arts, the field house, the natatorium, a cafeteria, the health center, Redwood Hall men's residence and Sunset Hall women's residence.

The institution changed its name again in 1972 to California State University, Humboldt. In 1974, the same year Alistair McCrone was appointed president, the name was changed again to Humboldt State University.

HSU has a tradition of long serving presidents. In its 95 year history there have been only six presidents. Alistair McCrone honored that tradition by serving 28 years until 2002 when Rollin C. Richmond became the President.

### Identifying Greater HSU Expectations

In its Capacity and Preparatory Review HSU explained that it has "a core of values around which there is broad consensus; for example, commitments to environmental and social responsibility, to teaching and learning, and to student involvement in the campus and broader communities." The Review went on to say that "it has been difficult to achieve clarity as to how these values should be realized in institutional structures and processes." After its three day visit to HSU the WASC Team agrees with this assessment and applauds HSU's efforts to explore this terrain.

HSU attempted to achieve institutional consensus regarding University priorities through the creation of two strategic plans, one in 1997 and a second in 2004. Each of these plans espoused a commitment to being "stewards of learning to make a positive difference," but fell short of identifying University-wide learning outcomes. In its WASC Accreditation proposal, HSU attempted to address this issue by creating a special focus on Identifying Greater HSU Expectations which is the subject of the first essay in the materials HSU provided for the WASC visit. In this context HSU identified three questions:

- What are core academic expectations for HSU students?
- Are these core academic expectations being met by HSU students?
- Are HSU students achieving proficiency in written communication skills?

To address these questions, HSU appointed a Theme One Action Team composed of faculty, staff, students and administrators. This Theme One Team is commended for using the AAC&U's Greater Expectations Report as its guiding document toward rethinking what a college education should be in the twenty-first century.

The Theme One Action Team began by developing a set of draft student outcomes in answer to the question, "What should all our graduates know and be able to do as a result of their HSU experience?" These draft outcomes were "drawn from consensus documents reflecting a common set of understandings that HSU students, staff, and faculty have about their institution." (CFR 1.2) These draft outcomes were vetted by the campus community in fall 2006 through "outcomes discussions" with various campus constituencies, as well as by posting them on the campus website with a vehicle for feedback. (CFR 4.1) On April 6, 2007, the Theme One Action Team released this final version of the HSU Outcomes:

“What all HSU graduates should know and be able to do as a result of their HSU experience.

HSU graduates have demonstrated:

- Effective oral and written communication
- Critical and creative thinking skills in acquiring a broad knowledge base and applying it to complex issues
- Competence in a major area of study
- Appreciation for and understanding of an expanded world perspective by engaging respectfully with a diverse range of individuals, communities, and viewpoints (CFR 1.5)

HSU graduates are prepared to:

- Succeed in their chosen careers
- Take responsibility for identifying personal goals and practicing lifelong learning
- Pursue social justice, promote environmental responsibility, and improve economic conditions in their workplaces and communities”

The WASC Team commends HSU for completing the difficult task of identifying University Outcomes and for answering the first of the three questions posed in its proposal. The Visitation Team also noted the connection between the HSU Student Outcomes, and the widely acclaimed Essential Learning Outcomes of the AAC&U Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) Report. The LEAP Report identified these outcomes: Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World, Intellectual and Practical Skills, Personal and Social Responsibility, and Integrative Learning.

There has been limited progress toward answering the second question: “Are these core academic expectations being met by HSU students.” The Visitation Team members were impressed by the commitment to student success that was voiced by the faculty, staff, students and administrators with whom they met. The “mapping” of the HSU Student Outcomes to departmental outcomes is a good first step. Nevertheless, there is still a great deal of work to be done prior to the Educational Effectiveness Review and a serious challenge for ensuring that student performance is being measured across all departments, as well in the general education program (CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6). Some departments such as Social Work have a clear focus on how they assess their students’ learning outcomes, while other departments appear to have barely begun the process. Similarly, the process for develop-

ing and assessing learning outcomes in General Education is inconsistent across general education areas. The oversight and approval of curriculum, including general education, appears to be decentralized to the point of being less than cohesive (CFR 4.3). The Visitation Team Report will return to this issue again. 9The EER visiting team will be particularly interested in learning how well the institution carried out the recommendations made by the HSU Outcomes Assessment Working Group in its Humboldt State University Outcomes Assessment Plan (Appendix F of CPR Report).

Although resource issues will be addressed later in this report, it is important to note in the context of the seven outcomes that the long-standing budget issues have affected all aspects of the campus community. The recurring theme from faculty, staff and students in all campus discussions was that “departments and programs had nothing left to cut,” and human resources were being stretched thin. It was clear that burn-out is a problem which reduces the energy available for advancing from a “teaching-centered” to a “learning-centered” culture. This challenge will require courage, vision, and a continuing examination of what kind of institution will emerge from these turbulent times. In institutional terms, exactly “who” will HSU be after dealing with the current resource reductions?

During the time period between the Capacity and Preparation Review and the Educational Effectiveness Review, HSU will face several challenges in its effort to fully answer both the second and third questions posed in the WASC Proposal: Are these core academic expectations being met by HSU students; and Are HSU students achieving proficiency in written communication skills? Those challenges include:

- Identifying targets for implementation of the HSU Student Outcomes
- Articulating a clear plan, including appropriate milestones, for institutionalizing the HSU Student Outcomes
- Assessing how the HSU Outcomes are met as a result of the integration of General Education and the major, as well as curricular and co-curricular activities

At the time of the EER visit, the WASC Team will expect to see evidence such as:

- Assessment results for at least one student learning outcome for each program. The results should include student performance data, as well as how those data have been used to improve student performance. (CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 4.7)

- Student learning outcomes for all General Education Areas, with assessment results for at least one outcome in each area.
- Evidence that initial assessment data was used to improve writing proficiency among students rated as “weak” writers.

### **Learning to Plan and Planning to Learn (2.7 and 2.10)**

Closely associated with these assessments of HSU’s seven Learning Outcomes is the general subject of planning and the use of data. In the 1998 accreditation review HSU was encouraged to proceed with a campus planning process utilizing input from a broad range of campus constituencies, and to set priorities, assign resources, and evaluate programs in order to improve the educational experience. Since that time, HSU has taken steps to respond to this recommendation – steps that are described in the essay on “Learning to Plan, Planning to Learn: Planning and Assessment Across the Campus Community.” These steps include a campus Master Plan and a Mission Vision and Strategic Plan (2004 – 2009). This planning effort is now being connected in a meaningful way with the WASC Review.

According to the HSU essay, “Meaningful assessment of student learning outcomes is at the heart of an organizational commitment to learning and improvement.” The essay refers to a quote from Robert D. Barr and John Tag taken from an article titled “From Teaching to Learning” published in *Change* magazine in 1995. It states that “a paradigm shift is taking hold in American higher education. In its briefest form, the paradigm that has governed our colleges is this: a college is an institution that exists to provide instruction. Subtly, but profoundly, we are shifting to a new paradigm: a college is an institution that exists to provide learning. This shift changes everything.” While HSU has shown progress in making this shift, the Visitation Team observed that the institution will need to remain vigilant and active in its efforts to create a culture of evidence – a culture that can exist only when members of the community understand the value and benefits of planning and the use of assessment data to improve the quality of their students’ educational experiences.

### **Assessing Student Learning in Major Programs**

As a part of the planning process, in January 2005, the University Education Policies Committee approved revisions to the program review process to include learning outcomes, assessment measures, and a description of how assessment data would be used. An additional important step in support of this assessment program was taken when the University administration adopted

a proposal to appoint a Faculty Associate for Assessment. The Faculty Associate was appointed effective in the spring of 2006 and much activity followed including several workshops and the publication of program binders. These binders contain step-by-step instructions for the completion of assessment processes, along with a timetable for submission of each stage to the Faculty Associate for Assessment. All departments are making progress in their work on assessment and the Faculty Associate has met individually with each major program during the fall 2007 term to provide feedback. The Visitation Team viewed this progress as “mixed” at this point. The Interim Vice Provost and the new Faculty Associate for Assessment jointly asked each major program to identify a first learning outcome for their students, to develop a plan to assess that outcome, and to submit their results to the Faculty Associate. Probably owing to the stress of institutional change and the looming resource issues this effort has developed slowly, although it is in these times that these activities become even more critical to HSU’s ability to accurately define itself. This will be an important matter to revisit at the time of the Educational Effectiveness Review.

### **Assessment in General Education Areas**

HSU has had varied success in assessing General Education. Most areas have developed measurable learning outcomes; however, very few have implemented an assessment plan. This lack of movement is probably caused by some combination of a lack of clear guidelines for structures and design of assessment from the University Curriculum Committee and the absence of a single oversight authority for General Education. The Visitation Team recognizes the resource issues that are confronting HSU, but the Team also believes that there should be more attention focused on HSU General Education by a single authority within the HSU community. This probably should be a member of the administration who would manage the implementation of timely and effective assessment practices and use the results to improve student learning outcomes. At this point, the development of General Education planning and assessment appears uneven -- something which could affect quality. This is another issue that should be revisited at the time of the Educational Effectiveness Review. Evidence of Educational Effectiveness might include a clarified and unified structure for overseeing general education certification and assessment.

Any suggestions of new HSU administrative structures or personnel bring immediately to mind the resource challenges HSU faces. The natural question is, how can more people be added to enhance performance when the current faculty/staff is spread so thin and is working so hard just to keep up? There is no easy answer to this question

and more will be said later in this report where the Visitation Team turns its attention to resource issues.

### **Quality Improvement in Administrative Affairs**

HSU has made good progress in achieving Quality Improvement and efficiency. The Quality Improvement Program is to provide support, resources, and training for faculty, staff, and administrators to achieve greater efficiency and productivity in providing a quality education, practicing social and environmental responsibility, and maintaining a positive presence in the community. It is a continuous process that aims to prioritize, plan, implement, and measure campus quality improvement activities and strategic goals. As a foundation for this work a SWOT analysis was conducted within major business units which involved a wide range of support staff, supervisors, managers, and directors from all administrative departments. All of these efforts have served to heighten campus understanding and appreciation for the use of tools such as QI and the balanced scorecard to improve the business functions of the University.

This appears to be a good effort to streamline and make more effective the business operations of the University. For the Educational Effectiveness Review it will be of interest to have some data points that would show the progress that has been made in lowering costs and improving service. (CFR 3.1 and 3.5)

### **Making Excellence Inclusive**

HSU has a long record of sensitivity to matters of race, ethnicity, and inclusion. For example, many years ago HSU was an early leader in creating an Indian economic development council and a native language restoration program. HSU also created a Native American cemetery protection program as part of its Center for Community Development.

HSU was in the vanguard in creating an Upward Bound program in 1966. In 1969 it created an Indian and Teacher Education program as part of its special emphasis on Native Americans. This development was related to the proximity of tribal communities and native populations in northern California.

In 1969 the California legislature enacted the Educational Opportunity Program. Pursuant to that enactment HSU created its own Educational Opportunity Program to increase access and retention for low income and historically underrepresented students. In 1974 HSU created a Native American Career Education Program in Natural Resources which has now transformed into the Indian Resource Science and Engineering Program.

Despite its small African American enrollments, HSU was still early in creating a Black Student Union about 30 years ago. It created a Multicultural Center about 15 years ago; it created a Women's Studies Program in 1971 and an Ethnic Studies Program in the early 1980s. It now has a Native American Studies Program, begun in 1995, which provides the only Native American Studies major in the CSU system.

In 1976 HSU created a Student Disability Resource Center. It is now launching new programs for students with disabilities along with the CSU system-wide Accessible Technology Initiative. HSU is participating in what is called EnAct for ensuring access through collaboration and technology. This is an ongoing project in which the university has already been involved for two years. It is facilitated by a three year, one million dollar federal grant through a multi-campus collaboration managed by Sonoma State University. In 2007 and beyond nine HSU faculty members from two colleges (Professional Studies and Natural Resources and Science) will participate in the EnAct project. Finally, HSU is embarking on a visionary effort conceived as a "universal design for learning." It is the underpinning for such programs as EnAct and represents a shift in focus from retrofitting/accommodation to built-in universal accessibility.

Despite these efforts, HSU's geographic isolation away from minority populations has inhibited the growth of a diverse university community. Working against the effects of this isolation HSU has recorded some recent impressive gains in student enrollments. Over the past seven years, since 2000, Asian student enrollments are up 24%; African American student enrollments are up 60%; Hispanic enrollments are up 28%; and Pacific Islander enrollments are up 26%. Only Native American enrollments have gone down – by 9%. Although Native American enrollments are down at HSU, the percentage of the HSU student body that is Native American is still higher than for the California State University system as a whole.

These gains, however, have been on a very small base of minority student enrollment. For example, even after years of impressive percentage growth in the enrollment of black students, the total number at HSU in 2007 was only 278 out of a total student body of 7,773, or 3.6%. These figures may not reflect the true diversity of HSU because there may be minority students included in the very high number of students (1,184) who did not specify ethnicity. Similarly, and perhaps of even greater concern, is that in 2007 the Black faculty was only 1.4% of the entire faculty. Students who talked to the Visitation Team were quite vocal in their disappointment concerning the level of diversity at HSU. This lack of diversity has been of concern in previous WASC visits and it seems clear that HSU is

now taking on this issue with a renewed enthusiasm and a sound plan for “making excellence inclusive.”

HSU has concluded that this effort should not be a matter of increasing compositional enrollments and simply counting more underrepresented students in the HSU student body. It is based on an assumption that the best education can be afforded to HSU students only if there is an additional depth and breadth of diversity in the student body. Diversity is a core feature of the educational process and HSU is addressing diversity on those terms.

HSU chose a sound method of undertaking this next step through the Theme Two Action Team. This Theme Two Team focused on ensuring inclusive academic excellence for traditionally underrepresented students in the areas of student access, persistence, and graduation. The Theme Two team sought to answer three questions:

- In which HSU program areas are the largest numbers and percentages of underrepresented students retained and graduating?
- Within the program areas identified in the first question, what “best practices,” circumstances or other conditions are evident as factors that affect underrepresented students’ access, retention, achievement, and graduation?
- How can these best practices, circumstances, or other conditions be used to facilitate underrepresented students’ access, persistence, academic achievement, and graduation in other HSU program areas?

At the same time, the Theme Two Team set out to identify HSU program areas as units to study and use as laboratories, to develop baseline data through which to explore their research questions, and to prepare a “campus roll-out” of “making excellence inclusive.” In this roll-out HSU program areas began to analyze and interpret the baseline data and identify best practices, circumstances, or other conditions that may encourage the desired results.

Initially the Action Team identified 18 program areas based on whether minority enrollments were either above or well below the overall 21% average for HSU. The Theme Two Team divided up and addressed each of these 18 program areas or departments individually and provided for them a package of materials which would help them to examine the data and document impressions, insights and questions, as well as to brainstorm about departmental practices and circumstances that may have influenced these data. Each program area then prepared a written analysis and interpretation of the data. They also recommended departmental practices and other action steps, processes, or strategies for improving the data year by year over the next five years. These program

areas or departments were to use the recent report of the American Association of Colleges and Universities and other research and publications on the subject of producing better results among underrepresented student groups. Fourteen programs or departments completed the questionnaire; eleven of them were from major fields of study and three were from ancillary fields.

The Action Team studied these responses and compiled an impressive list of best practices reflected in them. HSU is now at the point where a determination is being made about how to use these best practices to facilitate higher achievement. It is envisioned that this will develop in a cascading series of activities beginning with those programs and departments that have already completed the questionnaire and have listed their ideas about improving minority participation and accomplishment. There probably will be waves of cohorts comprising five programs, each of which will be asked to begin by identifying two new best practices to be sustained for a three year period. As each new wave of five programs or departments begins that process, HSU will go beyond the original fourteen who have responded and in stages will ask for a self-study to be done by all those programs and departments that have not yet participated. As each program or department enters the action phase there will be a period of introspection, an identification of initial best practices, launching of an implementation program, reporting of data, identification of additional best practices, and distribution of the results of the pioneering activity to other departments and programs that are moving forward in subsequent waves in the cascading process.

The Theme Two Team has recommended that after this work is well underway, at a point where optimal impact can be achieved, there be an appointment of a new Director of Diversity, Equity and Retention. It is expected that this person should be on board in 2010 – 2011. While HSU is supportive of this recommendation there has been no determination of how to configure or staff the office. Whatever the configuration or staffing, such an appointment will give the process encouragement and renewed impetus just about at the time when the cascading activities will be reaching their highest level. By that time it is assumed that every department or program will have completed a selfstudy; that they will have measurable outcomes at a department/program level; that they will use the experience of first best practice programs to inform their processes; and that by the time the new Diversity, Equity and Retention Officer is appointed there will be a growing sophistication and database available. Of course, university-wide outcomes should follow.

With respect to making excellence inclusive, the goals of the university are high. For example HSU aspires to address the access issue by enrolling the same proportions of minority students that graduate from California high schools.



Today that proportion is something like 42.8% White, 32.5% Latino, 11.2% Asian/Pacific Islander, 7.3% African American, 3.3% Filipino, and roughly 1% Native American.

Moreover, HSU has set high goals for itself in terms of retention and graduation rates. For the second year retention and six year graduation rates HSU aspires to using the overall second year retention and six year graduation rates for the CSU. HSU has decided not to simply use the minority retention and graduation rates in each category, such as, for example, for Latino students. It is HSU's intention to go to the higher goal of having all of its underrepresented minority groups match the general CSU retention and graduation rates.

By the time of the Educational Effectiveness Review these efforts should have produced a significant amount of activity and the beginnings of measurable data. Expectations should be for HSU to have an impressive report on these cascading activities and some initial data (as well as projected data) that will give an opportunity to judge the educational effectiveness of this effort. (CFR 1.5) In light of all the work under way it certainly would be worth considering advancing the date on which the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Retention is to be launched.

### **Resource Planning: From Crisis to Community**

Because of the recent announcements of reductions in support through the CSU system, there were comments in nearly every session about the lack of resources and the burdens that resource shortfalls will create. This focused the Visitation Team's attention on resource planning and the essay on "From Crisis to Community."

The Visitation Team was impressed by the general commentary and observations included in the essay on resource planning. First, HSU wisely sought the counsel of two 21senior CSU retired presidents. CSU Chico Emeritus President Manuel Esteban and CSU Long Beach Emeritus President Robert Maxson both visited the campus and conducted separate assessments of resources, allocation processes, and fiscal challenges. President Emeritus Esteban's analysis suggested, in particular, that HSU should reevaluate its strategic plan, objectives, and resources available and determine whether it is allocating its resources appropriately to permit it to successfully meet the challenges it faces. President Maxson's analysis noted that structural changes in the budget are needed and the per student cost needs to be reduced. He recommended that the University review and resolve as a whole, division by division, to identify what is essential to maintain a vital university and where downsizing may be possible.

The HSU essay on resource planning states that it is important to reshape the allocation process to ensure sustainability. Establishing resource allocation processes that are transparent, informed, and consistent is among the biggest challenges facing HSU, which has repeatedly struggled to review and improve resource policies and processes. (CFR 3.8)

The Visitation Team was much impressed by the manner in which the essay on Resource Planning was concluded. It said that "a number of people in this campus community remain unhappy with both the allocation results and the budget process. A major concern is that the approaches that have been taken to the allocation of resources so far have tended to favor the status quo, making it difficult to formulate decisions around strategic priorities." The Visitation Team saw ample evidence of the validity of this commentary.

In connection with the subject of resource planning there were a couple of observations which the members of the Visitation Team made in their oral report to the HSU community on February 8th. First, it seems to the Visitation Team that the process for allocating annual operational resources to the CSU system does not favor a smaller campus like Humboldt. This situation will be made even more difficult by changing demographics among traditional age students. Unless there is a dramatic change in the enrollments this is a reality at least for the near term that HSU must accept. HSU may have to chart a course for the future that is somewhat less dependent on state allocations.

The Visitation Team also commented that HSU does not have an adequate institution wide analysis and research capability. This deficiency was discussed in several meetings with HSU constituents. There are pockets within the institution that have good data gathering, analysis, and management capabilities. Nevertheless, there does not appear to be institutional research capacity for effectively collecting, examining, and analyzing data in an integrated and aggregated manner across HSU. This deficiency impacts both the academic and administrative functions of HSU. It will be increasingly difficult for the HSU community to understand and appropriately address issues and problems without an institutionally focused research and analysis function. (CFR 4.1 and 4.3)

The Visitation Team also observed that governance and decision-making processes at the University are complicated, cumbersome, and difficult to understand. HSU seems to take a fragmented approach to institutional decision-making which creates internal confusion and sometimes unclear results. There are several examples of this including the decentralized and somewhat disconnected departmental focus on many 23curriculum matters; the loose structure of faculty governance over

curriculum, in general; the absence of a centralized faculty based focus on general education; and in the University-wide budget and priority setting process which is the subject of a recommendation for study at another point in this report. This situation contributes to an environment lacking in transparency since the complexity of process and fragmentation of information makes everything more opaque. These problems surrounding decisionmaking appear to be deeply embedded in the culture. Nevertheless, for an institution of only 7,500 students, there seem to be too many organizational layers and too many committees, some of which appear to operate at cross-purposes. (CFR 3.8)

The budget process at HSU is very distributed; a lot of authority and control over budgets is concentrated at the college or even at departmental levels. Although this is not an uncommon model in large public institutions, it may not serve an institution of HSU's size. This is particularly so given the financial challenges currently confronting HSU. HSU probably would be better served by centralizing more of the process and establishing institution wide budget standards. This could be extremely difficult to achieve in light of HSU's history and culture, but it may be absolutely necessary if the institution is to navigate its way out of what is likely to be a prolonged resource crisis. Such steps will require leadership on the part of President Richmond, his senior administrative team, the CSU Chancellor's Office, members of the faculty, alumni and community representatives, student leadership, and a great deal of coordination. (CFR 3.5)

This decentralized budget management within HSU has contributed to a silo attitude toward problem solving and organizational change. This culture does not perceive or see a means within the institution for the reallocation of resources. As a result, everything is looked upon as additive. For example, the discussion about the implementation of "making excellence inclusive" assumes the introduction of new resources to fund the proposed diversity, equity, and retention position. The general culture resists the notion that resources can be reallocated for this purpose and seems to not conceive of an opportunity for restructuring existing functions and personnel to achieve the objective. In making this observation it is fully recognized that the institution has been under tremendous resource pressure for an extended period of time. Nevertheless, this institutional attitude seems engrained in the culture and it inhibits efforts to adapt in the present to address serious challenges such as, for example, HSU's lack of diversity which it has defined for itself in important educational terms. (CFR 3.5)

With respect to the immediate resource planning challenges, HSU should consider conducting a comprehensive functional analysis (process reengineering) of its budget development and management processes. This functional

analysis, which would be best facilitated by a third party consultant, should give consideration to a more centralized, yet transparent and participatory, approach to the prioritization of resources. (CFR 3.5 and 4.5)

One aspect of the resource challenges that confront HSU is the continuing need for larger enrollments. In recent years HSU has done a good job of increasing the number of students it attracts and appears to have a current enrollment which will not cause any further reductions based on enrollment shortfalls. This has been the result of some successful recruitment and retention of students through some innovative programs such as the freshmen interest groups, the recruit back program, and the recruitment of students from the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) States. Recruitment of some WUE students results in out of state students paying an even lower tuition rate as nonresidents at HSU than they would pay as resident students in their home states. These students are counted as resident students for purposes of CSU budgeting, adding an additional advantage to their enrollment. WUE students represent an area ripe for continued cultivation.

Marketing will be a special opportunity for student recruitment. The tradition of HSU has been to communicate messages to potential student audiences with an eye toward internal constituencies. In other words, each academic program area would be entitled to the same degree of attention in general recruitment materials. This is to give the best opportunity for enrollments in all of the degree programs. While this may address the makeup of HSU and the need for enrollments in all programs, it may sacrifice some penetration of message in high school student populations generally. Now may be a good time for HSU to deviate from its current policy and attempt to sharpen the focus of recruitment by leading with a general message about HSU, highlighting only those programs that are likely to attract the attention of the maximum number of high school students.

One area that HSU has cultivated in the period leading up to the WASC Visit is development or fundraising. HSU seems to have recruited an outstanding young man to head up the fundraising activities and there are already some early signs of progress. The percentage of HSU alumni who give is being increased in a remarkable way, in part because the starting percentage was low, suggesting the phenomenon of low hanging fruit. No matter how one may view these increases they represent a very important early stage in what must be seen as an important investment for HSU – an investment that should pay important dividends in the future.

Resource planning probably should begin with the renewed emphasis on academic program prioritization discussed in the essay on "Learning to Plan and Plan-

ning to Learn.” Of course it is easier to set priorities when resources are expanding. In such cases the question is who will get extra funding. It is much more difficult to set priorities when resources are being reduced because program curtailment may be necessary, a point that often surfaced at discussions about the appropriate organizational mechanisms and criteria that HSU will use to study these challenges.

These tensions were evident during Visitation Team interviews with members of several planning committees. Not surprisingly, conversations about University-wide planning were frequently dominated by personal concerns over the survival of programs or job security. As pointed out in the essay on “Learning to Plan and Planning to Learn,” the most critical component of the prioritization process is the development and weighing of criteria by which programs will be evaluated. This subject has generated debate and some confusion. Again, not surprisingly, there are different approaches and understandings about the criteria that should be used to prioritize programs and reallocate resources.

One sound approach is found in a document titled: Prioritizing Academic Programs. It was written in consultation with the Provost Council by the Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, a person who is likely to play a pivotal role in HSU’s prioritization efforts. This document uses three categories to rank programs and to allocate resources: 1) programs to be grown or enhanced, 2) programs that will not be grown or will be reduced, and 3) programs that are to be reorganized, given reduced support, or eliminated. In spite of the HSU administration’s efforts to clarify this matter, the passions seem to be running high and there seems much work to do in developing a consensus or a workable basis for moving ahead.

This could be among the most important Planning challenges in HSU’s history. It will be an opportunity to solve the resource challenges that are so much on the minds of the faculty, staff and students of HSU. Perhaps more importantly, it will be an opportunity to, in the concluding words of the HSU Capacity and Preparedness Review, “link campus planning that begins with a clear sense of what the campus should look like in the next decade . . . to resource allocations and to the outcomes of program review and curricular assessments.” In other words, as mentioned at the outset of this Visitation Team Report on page ten, “In institutional terms, exactly who will HSU be after dealing with the current resource reductions?” How can HSU use this WASC process to “become the campus of choice for individuals who seek above all else to improve the human condition and our environment and become the premier center for the interdisciplinary study of the environment and its natural resources . . .” The Educational Effectiveness Review should focus on

these goals and outcomes as HSU moves from “Crisis to Community.” (CFR 3.5)

## Conclusion

The Visitation Team was duly impressed by the efforts underway at HSU. There are serious discussions of the need for institutional renewal, the need for the transformation from teaching to learning, the need to define and assess the outcomes of an HSU education, the need to make excellence inclusive, the need to use contemporary thinking about management to improve operations, and the need to address the enormous challenge of dealing with resource reductions in the wake of previous resource losses. It is in aligning resources with educational objectives and institutional purposes where the HSU family may have its most immediate and profound challenges. (CFR 3.5) In general, during the Educational Effectiveness Review the Visitation Team will want to focus on:

1. The degree to which the seven outcomes of an HSU education have been embraced by the students and faculty and the extent to which there is a capacity to assess the progress of students in these seven areas. (CFRs 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.11, 2.12)
2. The progress made by HSU in transforming to create a culture of evidence with special emphasis on assessing major fields and general education. (CFRs 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7)
3. The progress demonstrated through data that HSU is using evidence and contemporary management concepts to lower the costs and improve the efficiency of its business operations. (CFRs 3.5, 3.8)
4. HSU’s progress in Making Excellence Inclusive through an update on the cascading initiatives, a report on the status of the nascent office for Diversity, Equity and Retention, and through data a report on student participation and success along the path to HSU’s ambitious goals. (CFRs 2.5, 3.2)
5. HSU’s progress in establishing priorities and making resource decisions in pursuit of its forward-looking agenda. (CFRs 3.5, 3.6, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4)

## Timing of the Educational Effectiveness Review

While the Visitation Team believes that HSU has the capacity and is prepared to meet WASC standards and its mission, HSU’s ability to offer evidence of educational effectiveness in the many areas in which HSU has challenged itself to achieve at higher levels, will present some

issues of timing. This is especially true since it appears that there is only one academic year within which to perform and produce evidence. The Onsite Visitation in the spring term of 2008 was not completed until mid February. It will be mid March before the Visitation Team report is prepared and reviewed by HSU. If the final visit is in the fall term of 2009, this will allow roughly one academic year for showing educational effectiveness in these many areas.

This short time frame was discussed among members of the Visitation Team. The Team asked, in view of the many challenges, how difficult it might be to compile data in this one academic year. In this setting WASC team members discussed whether it would be better to have the Educational Effectiveness Review at the end of that next academic year, in the spring term of 2010, to give HSU an opportunity to gather more evidence of educational effectiveness.

This idea was introduced to President Richmond. After discussion with some of his colleagues, he indicated to the WASC Visitation Team that HSU saw merit in this slightly later Educational Effectiveness Review and would be interested in exploring whether the Visitation could be toward the end of the spring term in 2010. With respect to some key activities this might give an opportunity to gather one more year's worth of evidence.

The Visitation Team has no sense that this represents an effort to delay or to not take the WASC process very seriously. Indeed the matter was first raised by the Visitation Team. Moreover, HSU representatives demonstrated over and over again that they are very serious about their future and the broad gauged efforts that are now underway to prepare HSU well for continued success. Accordingly, the Visitation Team offers the following recommendation:

HSU has a very large agenda to undertake at a time of great stress caused by the resource crisis that is looming for all CSU campuses. For HSU this comes on the heels of the earlier enrollment related resource pressures. These resource issues may be a distraction if not a barrier to progress on other agenda items. In and of itself this may be a reason to give HSU a little more time to gather evidence of Educational Effectiveness, but because of the complex nature of the initiatives under way there will be additional practical reasons for allowing more time.

The later date will allow more time to complete the assessment planning for all of the outcomes, for the programs/majors and for general education. It will also allow another semester, at least, for implementation and will make it more likely that meaningful data will be available for HSU to analyze.

With respect to making excellence inclusive a delay would allow more of the cascading initiatives to play out and for more groups to implement their two best practices for the three year cycle. And the delay would give at least one additional semester with respect to gathering retention data and it likely would give one additional year to gather admissions data.

The effort to move from crisis to continuity in resource planning would be facilitated by additional time. In its concluding presentation to the HSU family and in this report the Visitation Team noted the complex and confusing processes currently in place to make resource decisions and recommended that HSU consider conducting a comprehensive functional analysis (process re-engineering) of its budget development and management process, most likely to be facilitated by a third party.

It appears that HSU is now considering the type of process re-engineering suggested. Given the complexity of HSU's committee structure and its long and politically grounded resource management process, this kind of comprehensive review is likely to consume some of the time needed for other tasks and could delay actions of the various initiatives. This is especially so with respect to plans that may require additional resources in the near term.

For all these reasons the Visitation Team recommends that the Educational Effectiveness Review be rescheduled for a week in the late spring of 2010.