CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
FULLERTON

WASC Visiting Team Report

California State University, Fullerton — Accreditation

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Chapter I: CSUF Background and History

A. Background

Originally known as Orange County State College, California State University Fullerton (CSUF) was established by an act of the California Legislature in 1957. CSUF was the 12th campus of what is now a 23-campus California State University (CSU) system. As part of CSU system, the campus is subject to the policies of the California Legislature and the CSU Board of Trustees.

The main campus is situated on 225 acres in Fullerton, 30 miles southeast of Los Angeles. Instruction on this site began in 1960. There are also off-campus centers in Mission Viejo, Garden Grove, Santa Ana and Irvine.

B. Demographics

In the fall of 1999 there were 660 full-time faculty and administrators and 1,051 part-time faculty members teaching on campus. Nearly all the full-time faculty had previous college or university teaching prior to coming to CSUF. Eighty-seven percent of the tenured and tenured track faculty members have earned doctorate degrees.

C. Academic Programs and Facilities

D. Accreditation

E. Self Study

F. The Team and the Visit Process

As related to the CSUF President during the outbriefing:

Chapter II: WASC Standards

A. Standard One: Institutional Integrity

B. Standard 2: Institutional Purposes: Planning and Effectiveness

While an inspection of annual reports from academic units reveals some unevenness in the extent to which the unit goals and strategies align with those of the institution, a structure for on-going planning is in place. In addition, units are instructed to report progress in implementing their stated goals in annual reports and in periodic Program Performance Reviews.

C. Standard 3: Governance and Administration

Throughout the visit, team members were impressed by the overall collegiality of faculty and staff. The obviously high level of mutual respect and cross campus communication reflected a healthy state of governance and administration.

D. Standard 4: Educational Programs

Despite the fact that most students fulfill General Education (GE) requirements at other institutions, those who were interviewed in an upper division GE course displayed a remarkable ability to articulate the distinctive goals of general education. Students' ability to articulate these outcomes for majors programs varied considerably across the programs we audited.

In a recent (1999) administration of a survey from the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), the research and scholarly writing of CSUF faculty were compared to national norms. In all of the categories related to traditional scholarship, CSU Fullerton's faculty was more productive than the national norms. These measures included:

- Number of books, manuals, and monographs published
- Number of articles published in professional journals
- Presentations at two or more professional conferences in the last two years
- Number of hours spent on research and writing

Faculty mini-grants for research were noted in several conversations with faculty and administrators. A review of the grants during 1999-2000 illustrated the importance of assessment in both empirical inquiries and action research studies. The mini-grants represent a creative approach to supporting faculty scholarship while addressing a significant campus need for innovative assessment.

Additionally, faculty research emerged as a very important criterion for search and recruitment processes across campus, a factor that will continue to support the prominence of research and scholarship on the CSU Fullerton campus.

E. Standard 5: Faculty and Staff

The institution demonstrates ample evidence in support of compliance with this standard. The central focus of CSU Fullerton is student learning with faculty and staff playing a collaborating role in this endeavor. One of the self-study themes was faculty and staff development and learning.

The evidence for the development and learning for faculty and staff is particularly noteworthy. This process was evident in the many interviews the team conducted with faculty, staff and administrators as well as in the review of materials and reports provided by the institution.

The following impressions are organized along four themes: support for faculty/staff learning; types of learning experiences; assessment; and indicators of educational effectiveness.

F. Standard 6: Library, Computing and Other Information and Learning Resources

Importantly for the continued success of information services, the leadership in Information Technology and in the Library is fully cognizant of—and willing to grapple with—an information world that continues to change at an increasing rate.

It should be noted that the 1990 Accreditation Report made reference to a university support unit, Television and Media Support Services. While there is evidence of some improvement, there are some

issues still to be resolved. The institution is aware of this and is taking steps towards further remediation.

As the institution expands distance learning, it will need to make a budgetary and programmatic commitment to electronic reserves, as a critical adjunct to general electronic resources. For the distant learner, online availability of content specific to their course of study would be of great value.

G. Standard 7: Student Services

The Office of Student Affairs represents a wide array of programs and services that are comprehensive, well-organized, and student-centered in their approach. Several new and innovative services were added in recent years: Fullerton First Year, the Co-Curricular Achievement Record, the Assistant Dean Program, the University Learning Center, and a New Student Orientation Program.

Particularly noteworthy in the visiting team's review was the on-going collaboration between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. All of the aforementioned programs, along with Enrollment Management and Retention Services, are good examples of the collective efforts of both divisions.

Although Student Affairs does not currently participate in the established process of Program Performance Review, it has developed its own internal process of periodic and systematic self-study, initiated during the 1997-98 academic year.

The visiting team recommends that attention be given to providing extended hours to enhance services for evening students. In general, however, the programs and services offered by Student Affairs are of high quality and particularly appropriate to address the needs of students at California State University, Fullerton.

H. Standard 8: Physical Resources

I. Standard 9: Financial Resources

With regard to Standard 9, the Visiting Team Report from 1990 noted the difficult financial circumstances confronting CSUF at that time and emphasized the need for better long-range financial planning, development of non-state sources of revenue, as well as greater strategic planning in the allocation of resources.

On the basis of the materials presented to the current Visiting Team and our own investigations, it appears that the University has taken strides in each of these areas. The financial climate for the overall CSU as well as CSU Fullerton has improved since the last accreditation visit. However, the faculty and administration continue to feel that the University is under-funded, not only relative to its needs, but also relative to its specific situation and CSU peers.

Chapter III: Academic Audits

A. Audits of Academic Programs — Areas of Evidence of Effectiveness

Programs	Curriculum	Pedagogy	Systems	Resources
General Education	+/-	-	-	N
American Studies	+/-	++	+	N
Biology	++	+	-	-
Chemistry	+	++	+	-
Child and Adolescent Studies	N	+	-	-
Communications	+	-	-	N
Computer Science	++	+	-	-
Management/Information Systems	+	+/-	+/-	-
Music	N	+	+/-	N
Psychology	+	+/-	-	-

B. Audits of Core Processes

After a thorough discussion of their observations, the team offered the following substantive recommendations for improving the PPR process and helping to extend its positive effects on learning across CSUF:

- Retain flexibility at the departmental level and focus on departmental self-reflection.
- Clarify responsibilities of deans and central administration, especially with regard to feedback and negotiation of action plans.
- Consider reducing the interval between reviews.
- Expand PPR to all units, including support units.
- Continue to develop stronger connections between PPRs and annual reports; between PPRs and resource allocation; and between PPRs and University planning processes.
- Re-examine the policy of substituting accreditation reports for PPRs.
- Provide resources centrally for departmental self studies.
- Establish an oversight group.

This report will use enrollment management to illustrate the effectiveness of the use of data in guiding institutional decision making. The integration and coordination in this critical policy and decision process was impressive.

C. General Observations and Synthesis

Chapter IV: Open Meeting Reports

A. Students

Student Theme 1: General Experience

- "I am a commuter student. I found a home at the re-entry center. I have made connections and feel a part of this place."
- "Although this is a big school, we have small classes especially in our upper division major classes. The professors here are accessible."
- "We can communicate with our professors either during their office hours or by email."
- "The professors are accessible but the part-timers are not to the same extent because they are here just for their classes."

When asked whether they would still choose to come to CSUF, given what they now know about the place, ALL said they would make the same decision.

Student Theme 2: Evening Student Services

Several of the students (who tended to be older and working full time during the day) expressed strong concern about the lack of availability of student support services (tutoring, writing lab, health and counseling centers) after 5pm.

- "This place is mostly centered on daytime students. The services available for day students are just not available for evening students. I work full time and by the time I get here many of the services I need are closed, by 5pm. Writing and tutoring labs close so early, I can't use them."
- "The counseling center and health center close at 5. By the time I get here they are closed."
- "The food court closes at 7."
- "In the Kinesiology Department, tutors are available for us after hours."
- "The university is between a rock and a hard place. With budget cutbacks it has to restrict the services it provides."

Student Theme 3: Course/Instructor Evaluations

Students were concerned about student evaluation of courses/instructors. Many wondered what was done with them, if anything. Some expressed the desire to receive feedback of the overall results of these evaluations.

Student Theme 4: Adjunct Faculty

Students in the open forum expressed concerns about the over-reliance on adjuncts in particular departments where professional and teaching experience might be more critical. Sample comments:

- "My department (graduate counseling) must have 60% part timers. I have been here 2 years and have taken 4-5 classes per semester and I have had only one full time professor."
- "In computer science part timers are great. They are an advantage because it means they have a full time job in the industry. We learn directly from their experience."

B. Faculty

Growth management: Demands on the University are enormous to manage growth and still maintain excellence. The message is 'do more with less.' The campus is 'chronically under-funded,' with growth dollars going to high-growth areas. Thus, there is a sense that the campus is 'demand-driven,' with

penalties to those programs growing more slowly, or not at all.

C. Staff

A strength was the staff's obvious commitment to serving the university and its students. There was a strong articulation about the staff role in 'enhancing learning' and the 'student journey' at the university. Staff also described their own high level of involvement with the community outside of the university.

Commendations: CSU Fullerton staff is a commendable group of contributors — knowledgeable and focused on student success. They are dedicated and involved in both student learning and their own learning.

Chapter V: Team Summary and Recommendations

CSUF's hospitality and consideration throughout this visit was superb. The team appreciated the consistent willingness of CSUF faculty and staff to accommodate the team's individual and collective needs and desires.

A. Alignment

B. Assessment

C. General Education (GE)

D. Accountability (the ninth cornerstone)

E. Analysis — Institutional Research/Analytic Studies

F. Program Performance Reviews (PPRs)

G. Technology

H. Diversity

I. Service Learning and Community Involvement

J. Community

K. Conclusion

Appendix 2: Audit Information

I. Excerpts from Notes for the Guidance of Auditor

David D. Dill, 17 August 2000

Examples of Questions and Protocols Used by Academic Audit Teams — Higher Education Quality Council, UK, September 1993

QUALITY AUDIT: CONTEXT, DEFINITIONS AND PROCESS

The language of quality audit is kept as simple as possible. Audit teams seek from institutions responses and information on the following general questions about their approaches to safeguarding and enhancing the quality of their academic activity:

- What are you trying to do?
- Why are you trying to do it?
- How are you doing it?
- Why are you doing it that way?
- Why do you think that is the best way of doing it?
- How do you know it works?
- How do you improve it?

II. Framework for the Teaching and Learning Quality Process Review, Hong Kong

A. Curriculum design

By what processes are programme curricula designed, reviewed, and improved? Key elements include design inputs from the academic discipline, inputs from employers and feedback from outcomes assessments, integration mechanisms, and external review mechanisms.

B. Pedagogical design

By what process are the methods of teaching and learning decided and improved? This includes the extent to which pedagogical methods are subject of active consideration, degree of innovation, and integration of feedback about learning attainment.

C. Implementation quality

Processes related to how well the staff perform their teaching duties. How broad is the definition of 'teaching'? What are the incentives for good teaching? How is teaching performance evaluated?

D. Outcomes assessment

How do staff, departments, faculties, and the institution monitor student outcomes and link assessments to teaching and learning process improvement?

E. Resource provision

Are the human, technical, and financial resources needed for quality made available when and where needed?

III. Accreditation Principles — Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC)

Quality Principle One: Student Learning

The institution establishes clear program goals and sets high expectations for student learning. Questions include: What evidence is there that students acquired and understood the subject matter? What evidence is there that students have acquired the habits of mind associated with a liberal arts education?

Quality Principle Two: Assessment of Student Learning

What is the rationale for the institution's assessment method and plan? What evidence addresses the reliability and validity of the assessment method? What is the evidence that the assessment method promotes high levels of student achievement?

Quality Principle Three: Institutional Learning

This principle requires the institution to use information from its inquiry to improve program quality. How does the institution use its educational philosophy, along with assessment of student learning, to modify educational goals, curriculum requirements, and pedagogical approaches?

Attachment 4-A(1): General Education

These impressions emerged from group interviews of students, faculty and administrators as well as from reviews of documents including the WASC audit report, the 1999-2001 university catalog, and the University Policy Statement on General Education.

The administrative interview yielded a concern for the development of assessment. Along with faculty, they recommended that a faculty group be formed to focus on assessment, that resources be provided to support the work. The administrators acknowledged a significant 'push' for assessment from multiple sources: the CSU system, WASC, the legislature, the general public, and others.

Attachment 4-A(2): American Studies

Students were quick to point out that the goals are in the syllabi for all their courses and that these goals are usually emphasized by faculty on the first day of classes, in addition to being posted on the department's website.

It was a pleasure visiting with students and faculty in what is clearly an exemplary department with dedicated, enthusiastic, and collegial faculty and students. The perspectives of students and faculty were so well aligned, we are convinced that in this program learning has become preeminent.

Attachment 4-A(3): Biological Science

In general, the audit team was impressed with the high regard with which students held the program and its faculty. All seemed confident that they were receiving a first-rate education at CSUF; they exhibited a strong sense of loyalty and community.

Faculty expressed concerns about consistent commitment to curricular change across all departmental faculty, and the shape of the department after retirement of ten senior faculty members in the next five

years. Research facilities are widely seen as inadequate.

Attachment 4-A(4): Chemistry

After conversing with faculty, students, and the Dean of the College of Natural Sciences, the energy and innovation in this department has become obvious. Team members note a clear commitment both to the student learning experience and to the students' long-term career success.

The Department of Chemistry successfully pursues funding from government agencies for education initiatives. Their NSF funding through the Research Experience for Undergraduates program allows them to support students for summer research projects carried out in campus laboratories, and has been funded for the last nine years.