

University Statement on Assessment of Learning Outcomes

For quite some time, California State University, Sacramento has articulated a strong commitment to assessment of student learning outcomes. The principal goal of our activities in this area has been to enhance student learning and encourage excellence in teaching while building a culture of evidence in support of our educational effectiveness. Indeed, our commitment to evidence-based assessment is a direct and positive statement of confidence in what we do and affirmation of our continual pursuit of excellence. Since 1997, WASC has linked our progress in assessment to decisions about institutional re-accreditation in order to insure that our academic and other programs reflect a learning community that best serves the needs of our students.

As part of our current re-accreditation process, and in preparation for our forthcoming Educational Effectiveness Review, WASC recently reviewed the University's "Capacity and Preparatory Report" (see www.oir.csus.edu/wasc/Documents/Review.pdf). The study, the collaborative outcome of efforts by faculty, staff and administrators, reported on the University's progress in institutionalizing assessment policies and practices. The Commission identified several areas of successes and commended the University for progress in many areas including institutional planning initiatives such as Destination 2010; the new Strategic Planning Council; recent collaborations between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs that integrates academic learning with student development; strong links between the campus and the community; effective off-campus and online programs; and improvements to campus facilities as substantial evidence of institutional transformation to support our capacity for educational effectiveness. With these successes in mind, the Commission acted to continue the accreditation process for California State University, Sacramento. However, the Commission also felt that the University needs now to show "substantially greater progress" in building its culture of evidence of student learning and student success prior to the WASC Educational Effectiveness Review Visit scheduled for Spring 2009.

Although the Commission acknowledged the considerable work that has already been done in the area of assessment, it also noted that "progress has been uneven across campus and efforts have not been sustained over time." The Commission identified several items that will require urgent, immediate, and sustained efforts to embed strategic and effective practices and policies into program assessments of student learning and to use the results of these assessments to inform University planning and budgeting decisions. Our response to WASC's very serious charge to us necessarily must be collective: The administration will reinforce its commitment to an evidenced-based culture through support of sustained and effective assessment processes; faculty and staff must direct interest toward infusing assessment as a central element of pedagogy and program planning; and students will need to understand and support the values that assessment brings to their college learning experience.

The task before us is urgent; we have fewer than two years in which to position ourselves for a successful WASC review. We begin positively, having committed Sacramento State

to excellence in academic curricular and co-curricular programming. We must now rededicate ourselves to that commitment both in the short term in responding to WASC and in the longer term as we meet the needs of our students in the future. Your cooperation and support will be vital in this endeavor and much appreciated.

You are welcome to view the WASC Commission Action Letter to California State University, Sacramento on line at [www.oir.csus.edu/wasc/Documents/WASC Commission Action Letter.pdf](http://www.oir.csus.edu/wasc/Documents/WASC_Commission_Action_Letter.pdf) .

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