

REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING TEAM

EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

To California State University, Sacramento

April 9, 2009

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Reaffirmation of Accreditation

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The evaluation team in conducting its review was able to evaluate the institution under the WASC Commission Standards and Core Commitments 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.

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SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution and Visit

Founded in 1947, California State University, Sacramento (Sacramento State) is currently the seventh largest campus in the 23-campus California State University system, with 29,011 students enrolled for the fall term prior to this Educational Effectiveness site visit. Sacramento State serves a predominantly commuter student population drawn from California's culturally and ethnically diverse metropolitan state capital. The campus's academic offerings consist of 60 undergraduate degree programs, 40 master's degree programs, an EdS program, a joint doctoral program in Public History, and an independent doctorate (EdD). Maintaining strong ties to government and community organizations has afforded the institution educational and service opportunities that enhance the curriculum and provide students with practical experience through internships.

Immediately following the Capacity and Preparatory Review visit of March of 2007, a Substantive Change Site Visit was conducted to evaluate Sacramento State's independent EdD program in April. In June of 2007, the Commission's Substantive Change action approved the Educational Leadership EdD with tracks in Community College and K-12 education. A follow-up review of the EdD degree program was conducted in connection with this Educational Effectiveness Review site visit, with analysis and observations pertaining to this review submitted as an appendix to this report (see Appendix A). Subsequent to the CPR visit of March 2007 and prior to this EER visit, the institution received 1) approval from the Commission for a

blended BA in Childhood Development degree completion program and 2) substantive change actions for a degree level (EdS -- Educational Specialist in School Psychology) as well as an MA in Education with an emphasis in Curriculum and Instruction, to be administered as an off-campus and distance education program. No particular emphasis on the Sacramento State off-campus sites or distance education programs was pursued as a component of the current site visit.

B. The Institution's Educational Effectiveness Review Report: Alignment with the Proposal, and Quality and Rigor of the Review and Report

The team notes alignment of Sacramento State's Educational Effectiveness Review report to both its Institutional Proposal as well as the CPR report and recommendations – the themes articulated in the proposal are explored (Academic Programs, Campus Life, and Community Engagement) along with a further emphasis on Strategic Planning activities and Student Success enhancement measures taken; the institution strives to study its practices in these areas as its best argument for educational effectiveness. Sacramento State demonstrates an honesty and openness in its presentation that constructively accompanies the report's tone of inquiry. (CFR 1.9) In a summary fashion, the report's "Inventory of Actions, Challenges, Opportunities and Priorities" catalogs the issues and themes, operationalizes actions taken, and identifies problem areas. "The Hypothesis Approach" forwarded by the report as its investigative and analytical tool serves the self-study well by focusing on outcomes that could serve as evidence of effectiveness (e.g., "Hypothesis 2" in the "Academic Programs" theme section is: "Learning outcomes indicate that our students are achieving the baccalaureate learning goals").

The EER report is well organized and clearly written, and the institution has used this self-study to depict its strengths and weaknesses in an accurate and detailed light. Evidence offered to support conclusions is often cited as a reference to a report or a process without specific findings or statistics singled out from these materials as the most persuasive evidence of success. The supporting materials provided, however, are consistent with the methods customarily used to test the hypotheses articulated in the report. As a consequence, the review materials enabled the team to prepare well for its visit and prompted the institution itself to gain greater insight into its quality assurance cycles and the extent of student learning, in the broadest sense as well as in selected programs. Faculty, staff, and students – constituents from across the community – were enlisted in the educational effectiveness efforts of the institution as well as in the preparation of the institution’s review portfolio and report.

C. Response to Issues Raised in the Capacity and Preparatory Review

Several issues were raised in the 2007 Capacity and Preparatory Review 2007 and were noted in the Commission’s Action Letter of July 2007. The institution addressed them in its Educational Effectiveness Review, and the team’s analysis follows. Sacramento State has shown great progress in addressing the team’s concerns from the CPR visit, and it is important to note that the progress witnessed at the EER visit marks major advances in transparency, governance, commitment to student success, and assessment.

Assessment of Student Learning

Issue: The Commission recommended that Sacramento State institutionalize the development of student learning outcomes and the assessment of their accomplishment with adequate resources to sustain an effective central structure and process for oversight of assessment and use of assessment results. Faculty development would be required for engagement in this assessment. Further, this assessment should be conducted in all degree programs, at all levels, as well as in the General Education of undergraduates, which embraces outcomes stretching across disciplines. Program review must embed such assessment in its processes, and the results of assessment must inform planning and budgeting decisions.

Institution's Evidence and Conclusions: Over the past two years, Sacramento State has advanced its assessment policy by creating processes and structures to strengthen these activities on campus. Academic Affairs committed resources to a new Office of Academic Program Assessment (OAPA) and appointed a faculty member as the University's Faculty Assessment Coordinator. The area supports, assists, and offers expertise to academic programs as they design and implement assessment plans. Its efforts were critical in the development of the new program review process. The Provost's Advisory Committee on Assessment (PACA) was formed to make recommendations to the Provost regarding academic program assessment. Chaired by the former Faculty Assessment Coordinator, the group has developed a manual for academic program assessment plans that has been put into use recently by several academic departments. PACA has made recommendations to the Provost to implement strategies and identify anticipated obstacles that lie ahead as the institution devotes more time and attention to student learning assessment activities.

The academic deans have been positioned by the Provost as having greater oversight of the departmental annual assessment reports, by virtue of their approving the assessment plans and approving and submitting the annual reports to Academic Affairs. OAPA summarizes and analyzes annually the assessment activity across all of the Colleges and provides reports of those activities to college deans and Academic Affairs for comparative purposes. Academic Affairs communicates good practices on campus on a greater scale by publishing annual assessment reports and summaries on its website. Further, the Provost has made financial resources available to the deans for the development of departmental academic program assessment efforts. The Provost has committed to relying on assessment findings and institutional research describing student success when considering requests for new faculty or academic program enhancements; consequently, strategic planning and budgeting processes may grow in their reliance on such data in decision making.

Capacity has grown in the institution's policy concerning the assessment of student learning outcomes within the institution's undergraduate programs; however, the institution acknowledges that it "[has] much work to do to build reasonable, useful and doable assessment systems for General Education and for [its] graduate programs." Curriculum-embedded strategies are being explored as potential avenues toward the goal of comprehensive assessment.

Analysis: It is immediately obvious that considerable commitment of energy and resources have been directed toward further development of an integrated and systematic assessment process at Sacramento State. (CFR 1.2) Despite the daunting challenges of a weak fiscal environment, the administration has identified a qualified individual to oversee the assessment effort. This

position, however, is not full time; the institution has been allocating release time for the faculty member holding this position, currently nine credit hours released from his twelve-hour load. In the Fall, he will receive a full release and may return to a nine-credit-hour release in Spring 2010 depending on workload requirements/adjustments. The team believes Sacramento State needs to commit a full-time position to these responsibilities, although the team recognizes the teaching contribution of the individual faculty member currently holding the position. In any event, the impact of a centralized office to coordinate several ongoing efforts has resulted in several very positive benefits. In addition, the Provost has tasked academic deans with a leadership role in assessment practice: all deans are now responsible for the quality of assessment practice in their respective colleges and schools. (CFRs 2.4 and 4.6) The campus has a much better representation of annual assessment reports, which now approaches 100% participation. In addition, graduate programs are now well represented in distinct assessment reports and program reviews. (CFRs 2.3 and 2.7) Much progress has been made, but it is important that this momentum not be lost after a successful site visit. In order for the University to enjoy and to derive the true benefits of the efforts thus far expended, development must continue.

Although the results have been uneven, and will be discussed in the Academic Programs theme section of this report below, a systematic program review has been implemented, with budgeting and planning processes and departmental-level decisions all informed by evidence of student learning and by quality assurance cycles designed for use on campus. (CFRs 2.6, 2.7 and 4.4)

Financial Resources and Strategic Planning

Issue: Comprehensive strategic planning must align resources with objectives and provide for wide constituency involvement in the process. Planning must be aligned with the budget, and budgets should be developed for more than one year at a time. Infrastructure needs and ongoing and new initiatives that are agreed-upon priorities should be funded with adequate resources. Budgeting, planning, and financial reporting should involve faculty and other campus constituencies and should be as transparent as possible.

Institution's Evidence and Conclusions: Two University-level committees were established shortly after the last visit: The University Budget Advisory Committee (UBAC) and the Strategic Planning Council (SPC). Both committees were charged with engendering a higher level of transparency and general understanding of the budget across campus, as well as making recommendations to the President on budgeting that are consistent with the institution's strategic priorities. Specifically, the UBAC is comprised of faculty members selected from the SPC, department chairs and the Faculty Senate, and representatives from various staff and student groups, and the group's core function is to "facilitate development of a highly transparent, informative, and participatory campus general fund budgeting process." With what the EER report describes as "broad University community input," the SPC produced the University's Strategic Plan, which was accepted by the President in December 2007.

Improving recruitment, retention, and graduation rates became the primary strategic goal in the budget process, which fortified the collaboration of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to address these issues. The Strategic Plan developed by the SPC became integrated into the divisional planning of various units on campus as well; the EER report argues that this is evidence of a growing shift in the culture "to align all campus functions toward the educational

effectiveness goals indicated in the Strategic Plan.” The Provost presented to the Faculty Senate a budget report that “for the first time looked three years out... while retaining the integrity of the Strategic Plan.” The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) has supported the budgeting and planning processes on campus by publishing a variety of relevant measures, in as transparent manner as possible -- “available and accessible to the campus community” -- to position student success measures as critical components of Sacramento State’s evidence-based decision-making.

Analysis: A greater alignment exists between the institution’s strategic planning priorities and the budget process. (CFRs 1.3, 3.5 and 4.2) The participation of various campus constituents generates the budgeting recommendations made. (CFR 4.1) A more lengthy analysis of the evidence presented by the institution to support its claims of transparency follows in the Strategic Planning section of the report below. The campus faces the same financial insecurity being felt throughout the entire higher education system in the State of California, and as a consequence must renew its commitment to these budgeting processes with each planning cycle ahead.

Student Success and Diversity

Issue: Data on student retention, time to degree, and graduation, including disaggregated data for various student subgroups and disciplines, should be collected and carefully analyzed. Such data should be used to develop clear targets for expected graduation rates and strategies to increase student success. The elimination of barriers to students’ progress toward degrees should be undertaken, with both appropriate resources and an assessment of these activities’ success.

Institution's Evidence and Conclusions: The Office of Institutional Research has published a variety of reports, including elaborate departmental fact books, which focus on student success data disaggregated in the manner suggested by the Commission (these fact books are utilized in a variety of campus processes including program review). Analysis of these data to influence planning has ensued, and the results have informed a variety of student success strategies, which include a focus on combining the efforts of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, by way of a First Year Programs Committee, the Advising Policy Implementation Team, and the Retention Task Force, with Student Affairs taking a lead in recruitment efforts. Further, the attrition of first- and second-year students is to be addressed with a focus on students at high risk of or on academic probation. Orientation programs have been enhanced, advising programs continued, and high-risk students identified for early interventions. Graduation rate targets have been set at a six-year graduation rate of 46% for first-time freshmen and a four-year graduation rate of 62% for transfer students by 2012-2013. Building and sustaining a diverse campus remains a high priority; collaboration among programs that support underrepresented, low-income, first generation, and disabled students has been set as a priority of the new Director of Student Academic Success and Educational Equity Programs. The campus's Retention Work Group has entered the next stage in its development, becoming the Retention Task Force. By year's end, the committee is scheduled to publish recommendations for action to address retention and graduation rate issues, by way of its effective use of data and analyses to support the decisions made.

Analysis: The array of retention and graduation rate reports and their availability demonstrate the institution's commitment to this aspect of its capacity. (CFRs 1.2, 2.10, 4.4, and 4.5) While the time frame is relatively brief for a valid assessment of the strategies' success thus far,

attention and resources are being directed toward these strategies, collaborations, and coordination of campus resources between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. The Futures Initiative is promised as the opportunity for addressing some student success issues at the campus-wide level, and the recommendations of the Retention Task Force are imminent. These plans for action speak well for the efforts of those convening on campus to address the issue of student success. (CFR 4.1) A good faith effort has been made and analyses performed to determine factors influencing students' retention and graduation from the institution, and there is evidence that conclusions drawn from these analyses are affecting the programs and directing Sacramento State toward increasing its student success. (CFR 4.3) The institution is perceptive in its assessment that students who are "socialized and acculturated into the institution" will have a higher probability of success. Sacramento State's ambition and willingness to explore "an expansive construct of student success" promises to lead the institution toward fulfillment of its Strategic Plan, provided the institution concentrates on assessing its progress and continuing to pursue the analysis of all available and relevant data collected throughout the campus.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS UNDER THE STANDARDS

A. Evaluation of the Institution's Educational Effectiveness Inquiry

Theme 1: Academic Programs

Two hypotheses were forwarded by Sacramento State in its EER report, the first focusing on program review as promoting reflection on student learning and the second focusing on learning

outcomes assessment as indicating that students are achieving baccalaureate learning goals. The process of program review has advanced since the CPR visit and has been presented by Sacramento State as an institutionalization of student learning outcomes assessment. As such, the institution's efforts to integrate student learning assessment into the program review process can be best described as "emerging," with some areas proving to be "developed." (CFR 2.7) Explicit integration of the program reviews into planning and budgeting processes, however, is in its initial stages of implementation. (CFRs 4.2 and 4.3)

A very positive trend is noted in the organization and conduct of academic program reviews. In the first cycles, the program reviews were conducted at the departmental rather than the program level. Although this process may have seemed more cost effective, each review became unwieldy for all involved, and distinct programs within a single department did not receive the review and attention they deserved. Under the new recent program review process, reviews are now conducted at the program level. These reviews occur every six years for all degree programs, they provide the insight of a peer review team that includes representation of Sacramento State faculty from several other programs as well as an "external consultant" requested and secured on behalf of the department/program, and they call upon the departments offering degrees to author a self-study document incorporating descriptors of the program, its productivity, its student success measures, and its learning outcomes, with a primary goal being the improvement of educational effectiveness within the degree program.

It is also noteworthy that graduate programs are now being reviewed separately. (CFR 2.7) This is a very positive move. Graduate programs are typically smaller, and they can and should accommodate more powerful assessment techniques. Most graduate programs include organic

assessment opportunities such as comprehensive examinations, thesis products, and internships.

These processes and products are meaningful to students and faculty, and should provide important information about program health and vitality. Involvement of graduate students in assessment design can also lessen the workload and add to collegiality in these programs.

During the team's interviews with several departments that had participated in recent program reviews, there was universal positive regard for the internal review teams, and most particularly the chairs of these teams. All parties expressed respect for these campus leaders and gratitude for their assistance. It appears evident that engagement in program review has been a powerful engine for building campus community and improving programs. There was also substantial evidence that the program assessment activities that had taken place prior to the changes in Sacramento State's program review process – and the data collected in these assessment activities – were not considered meaningful by participants. Among selected departments, there was a desire to discard the previous assessment work and to begin anew with meaningful outcomes and data. The interviewed participants made it clear that those previous efforts were completed because they were compulsory, but that now that the departments were involved in the institution's recently piloted program review process, these departments perceived the occasion as an opportunity to conduct assessment research that would, instead, be useful to them. (CFR 4.6) Monitoring and guidance in assessment planning, process, and product seems to be on the way, and the University needs to plan and support these efforts.

Another point that was clearly made concerned a lack of follow through by the administration in relation to the findings and recommendations of the program review teams. (CFRs 2.7, 3.5, 4.4)

Some programs had undergone multiple program reviews and had seen no response to recurring

recommendations. A continued lapse in effective follow-up will lead to a legitimate sense of futility and skepticism by faculty. If faculty are expected to engage in meaningful assessment, the recommendations and findings spawned by their effort must be responsibly addressed, even if there are no resources to allocate or reallocate. All participants remained clearly aware of the current dismal fiscal climate; however, there are many forms of attention that can be given by administrators considering action. The Program Review Oversight Committee (PROC) indicated that they will be asking the deans and central administration to respond to all academic program review recommendations in the future. This would represent a very important and constructive step toward a more highly developed educational effectiveness effort on campus.

Several programs expressed some frustration with the concurrent assessment of General Education, Baccalaureate Learning Goals, and the major in an academic program review, though it is not clear that department's must address all three of these areas in the review. Humanities and Religious Studies provides a fine example of such a scenario, and makes a strong case for considering the range of what programs assess, given varying student commitment and interest levels in the department's courses. This variability in student engagement in the coursework impacts the results of assessed outcomes. With only three courses in this department reserved for majors, course-embedded assessment (i.e., a focus on student work captured from among regular course assignments) confounds the multiple goals and objectives of these three purported distinct assessment efforts (i.e., General Education, Baccalaureate Learning Goals, and the major).

Majors such as Humanities and Religious Studies express an interest in explicating and assessing student learning outcomes more akin to dispositions and attitudes, in addition to knowledge or

content. They will seek the assistance of the campus's assessment coordinator to expand their efforts. This exploration is a very healthy development that should be encouraged, as such a conceptualization of the major program respects both the complexity and the passion faculty bring to their pedagogy and the student outcomes they most value. These efforts will enliven assessment for faculty and facilitate the kinds of conversations in which faculty most desire to engage. Quality assessment should be scholarship, and there is growing evidence that a variety of programs desire a shift from mere compliance with Sacramento State policy to a true, rich engagement in educational effectiveness. (CFRs 2.8, 2.9, 4.7, and Guideline to 2.8)

Regardless, tremendous strides have been made in the assessment of student learning. The Sacramento State website has a variety of assessment reports that are well organized and easily accessed. (CFR 1.2) The team was disappointed, however, with the annual summary assessment reports, as they often summarized only different domains of a program's learning outcomes, which disallows the reporting of trends, a powerful interpretive opportunity that becomes lost when the data have not been collected or reviewed consistently over time.

The University currently attempts to accommodate several levels of student learning goals with General Education, Baccalaureate Learning Goals, and the majors. There is considerable evidence across assessment program review reports of frustration and confusion about assessing these multiple inter-related outcomes. Recent demands placed upon the University from the system (e.g., implementation of the CLA test for VSA compliance) further complicate the development of meaningful assessment and data collection plans. Recent content analysis of the competing General Education goals suggests considerable overlap. Given the progress that has been made recently, it is time for the University to develop and adopt a coherent set of

undergraduate learning goals. (CFR 1.2) Taken in the context of the prominence of FTE generation in budget allocation decisions, resolution of this issue may be a challenging task. The tension between meaningful student learning outcomes and assignment of these outcomes to appropriate courses will prove quite challenging. These tasks will require the leadership and collaboration of the University's governance structures, as it appears that the entire campus is poised and ready to move forward on this front.

Coherent learning outcomes are the engine that should be driving the assessment process. At Sacramento State, the program review process is providing the momentum and guidance. This powerful force may be combined with the leadership provided by the new Assessment Coordinator, who is already considered an important resource, with his role to act as the consultant and facilitator, as opposed to the "police" or an auditor. The Provost's Advisory Committee on Assessment (PACA) will continue to exist until the Faculty Senate approves a revised proposal from the Curriculum Policies committee to establish an Assessment Council or similar oversight committee on assessment. The Office of Academic Program Assessment will need this continued support and oversight to provide administrative guidance, campus-wide communication, and gravitas to these efforts. The campus administration and faculty must assume ownership and leadership for these fledgling efforts to assess student learning outcomes in General Education successfully.

The current General Education data collection and analytic procedures need attention.

Considerable time and energy are expended toward minimal returns on investment. Evidence suggests that there are pockets of cooperation to render random samples of student work that have been carefully reviewed. (CFRs 2.4, 2.7, and 4.5) As stated in reports, however, there are

also other units within the institution and faculty members who will not participate in assessment activities or will participate only in marginal ways. In addition, the student work sampled across colleges, departments, and various sections of courses, when aggregated, fail to unite into a single coherent assessment of the whole. For example, a few programs engaged in random sampling of student products, presented the rubrics used for assessment of student products, and reported their findings; however, neither the sampling procedures nor the evaluation procedures were described in many others. Further, the reporting guidelines offer three very different reporting options that fail to specify assessment and reporting of all learning outcomes over time. (See <http://webapps2.csus.edu/assessment/Reports> for reporting formats) The current procedures to address this disparity are fragmented and cannot provide a meaningful message to inform the community about what the institution says it values: student learning. If the institution's faculty, among the best critical thinkers in the land, are expected to pay attention to assessment efforts, there must exist an evidentiary base that can withstand their scrutiny. To create this base requires appropriate sampling and psychometrically sound instrumentation. The University is a member of the Voluntary System of Accountability, and this membership may provide a partnership and some guidance in addressing the General Education assessment puzzle.

Theme 2: Campus Life

Student success is cited often during this Educational Effectiveness Review as a top priority of the institution's Strategic Plan, and in the form of student retention and graduation rates, it has proven to unite the efforts of the Divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs at Sacramento State. The first hypothesis in the institution's Campus Life self-study essay asserts

that processes and institutional incentives promote collaboration between these two divisions to forward student learning. The visiting team found ample evidence to support this assertion.

One of the best examples of this collaboration has been institutionalized for more than 30 years in the Academic Advising Center, which blends the professional contributions of staff and faculty from both areas. (CFRs 2.12 and 2.13) More recent programmatic efforts such as the First Year Programs embody a continuation of this collaboration, with its Learning Communities Program (which “pairs General Education classes and other courses into a format intended to facilitate student learning and University community-building”) and Freshman Seminar Program (which designs and offers a General Education Area E course). (CFRs 2.2 and 2.8) The leadership of this area comprises both a faculty member with release time and a staff member from the Advising Center, and local analyses performed by the Office of Institutional Research have demonstrated that participation in these programs has had a positive impact on first-to-second-year undergraduate retention rates. (CFRs 2.10, 4.3 and 4.4)

Such an outcomes analysis embodies the synergy created between Academic Affairs, which houses OIR, and Student Affairs. As the analytical resource on campus that calculates student success statistics, the Office of Institutional Research provides support to the Division of Student Affairs in the form of retention studies that have been utilized in Student Affairs’ planning and budgetary processes. For example, student extracurricular activities participation has been shown by OIR to influence the retention rates of undergraduates at Sacramento State in a positive manner, and these conclusions were part of the Student Affairs presentation to the University Budget Committee. (CFRs 2.11 and 4.6) Similarly, positive effects on retention have been shown in OIR analyses for students participating in the Academic Affairs division’s

Student Academic Success and Educational Equity Programs (SASEEP), such as CAMP, for students from migrant and seasonal farm-worker backgrounds, and the Educational Opportunity Program, for low-income students from educationally disadvantaged communities. (CFRs 1.5 and 2.10) Consequently, both Academic Affairs programs and Student Affairs programs have been able to demonstrate the value they add to the campus-wide retention effort, courtesy of OIR analyses. The Provost has advocated for Student Affairs in budget discussions in response to the successes shown by Student Affairs in the two divisions' common efforts toward the goal of enhancing student success.

The Educational Equity Score Card at Sacramento State originated in SASEEP and has advanced as an institutional priority by way of the academic deans' involvement in this program. Statistics prepared by OIR at the request of SASEEP are being distributed to the deans of the schools and colleges on the Score Card, and these reports summarize access, retention, and graduation rates by academic discipline and ethnic categories. (CFR 2.10) Armed with these data, the deans can explore the best actions and interventions to take in their efforts to address the disparate access and success issues experienced by Sacramento State's undergraduates. (CFR 1.5) This level of reporting detail and the engagement of Academic Affairs in the program speaks well about the commitment each division has made to this common goal, and follows up on Academic Affairs' commendable efforts with the Division of Student Affairs to improve student performance in "gatekeeper" courses and other initial academic challenges that students can find overwhelming. A further examination of this relationship between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs can be found below in the Student Success section of this report, which discusses the Retention Task Force and its representation of key players from both divisions to great effect.

Given the institution's commitment to its students, it should be noted that like many colleges and universities, Sacramento State is at the beginning of its preparation for the arrival of recent armed-forces veterans in pursuit of an education following their military service. To fulfill the institution's obligation to these incoming men and women, the complexity and extent of the resources that will be required, given recent legislation, are ambitious and will require sufficient planning and budgetary accommodations within both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to promote success. The institution would be well served by making advance preparations for meeting the needs of this diverse group of students. (CFR 2.13)

In response to the second hypothesis of this essay (that learning outcomes assessment is being conducted in Student Affairs), the team finds that the assessment of learning outcomes in the Division of Student Affairs is well on its way to being "developed" in the relatively brief time assessment reports have been required from the division's units. (CFR 2.11)

It appears that consistent effort has been expended to identify student learning outcomes for each of the Student Affairs programs. Further, systematic data collection and reporting have been integrated into the division's management of its separate units. All units must define objectives and outcomes appropriate for the programs being assessed, and all units must submit assessment reports describing their outcomes, their goals, and their performance on an annual basis. Initially fewer objectives and outcomes were required; however, over time, the quantity and variety of data points collected and the depth of the analysis required has advanced. This assessment program is in its third year of implementation.

Assessment strategies and outcomes/objectives used by the Student Affairs units were presented to the team during a meeting of directors and program managers from the division as well as in the form of annual reports submitted in recent years. The outcomes varied from students receiving pre- and post-tests of information presented in orientation meetings or through other presentations made by the units to constituents, to an evaluative scoring of students' sportsmanship in intramural sports, which serves as the basis for determining whether teams have acquired the values and behaviors of proper conduct during competition and can thus continue to compete in the leagues. Reflection essays were required of students committing violations of institutional policy and facing disciplinary action, and as a sample of students' acquiring knowledge and examining their own behavior, this direct assessment of student performance has been related at Sacramento State to students' avoiding subsequent infractions. Student leaders are evaluated in their job performance in both a formative and a summative manner, with such locally developed assessment instruments as the Board of Directors' Learning Outcomes Rubric. Students' performance and improvement are both noted and expected.

The Vice President of Student Affairs has chosen an ambitious path by charging Student Affairs units with this assessment of learning, in addition to the fulfillment of program objectives, and should be commended for this decision, given how the impact of measuring performance in this manner clearly increases student success by supporting Sacramento State's students through effective co-curricular activities and educational opportunities. This accomplishment deserves continuing support from the institution and has brought the Student Affairs division closer to the Academic Affairs division by both anticipating and then demanding that student programs and student participation in activities forward student success in academic endeavors in the form of higher retention and graduation rates. A previously described research study, which statistically

relates student activities participation to retention rates, is a primary example of how assessment techniques can ascertain that Student Affairs units can amplify the institution's success, and thus warrant protection of these programs during times of increasingly scarce financial resources.

(CFR 4.6)

The professionals in Student Affairs are encouraged to improve on a continual basis the techniques they use not only to provide co-curricular experiences for students but also to revise and to enhance their measures of outcomes, their instruments for capturing data that describes student performance, and their sophistication in analyzing their findings. (CFRs 4.4 and 4.5)

They are similarly encouraged to track outcomes over time, to pursue a combination of direct and indirect measures of performance, and to broaden the number of outcomes measured regularly to support the management decisions made within their areas. It is important to note that the most meaningful outcomes to measure from each program will grow apparent as a consequence of continually pursuing these endeavors. For example, a reliance on cognitive outcomes (i.e., knowledge acquisition) seems apparent in some programs, but many units sponsor co-curricular activities that value non-cognitive learning outcomes (e.g., values and attitudes) such as mattering, belongingness, self-efficacy, self-advocacy, learning motivation, and other important outcomes that impact retention and satisfaction with the collegiate learning experience. Per the collective wisdom of the division's management, however, the knowledge acquisition outcomes seem most suited to enhancing graduation and retention rates in the short term, as the administrative processes and procedures with which students must conform for successful completion of their studies in the CSU System require the acquisition of cognitive instead of affective outcomes.

Theme 3: Community Engagement

Sacramento State seeks a deeper engagement with the community that would advance educational effectiveness and promote civic engagement on campus. In this Educational Effectiveness Review, the University has made community engagement a central theme. The Sacramento State hypothesis is that “the University fosters strong linkages among Sacramento State, the Capitol, and the Sacramento community at large.”

Core to the identity of Sacramento State is its role as a “metropolitan university” that responds to diverse community needs. The majority of its students are drawn from the local community. External partnerships, through research-based learning opportunities, benefit both students and the community. Faculty are engaged in community issues and provide leadership and public service. The challenge that Sacramento State put forward in its inquiry is whether student learning and civic engagement could be facilitated with deeper institutional engagement in the community.

The proximity of Sacramento State to California’s capitol provides unique student and faculty opportunities for civic engagement and leadership development. In recent years, Sacramento State has advanced its profile within the community through a visible public relations campaign, government relations efforts, and an open atmosphere on campus. Public attendance at campus events is increasing. Academic lectures, cultural exhibits, literary symposia, and other public events open the campus and bring cultural vibrancy to the Sacramento community. At the same time, community involvement enhances the visibility of the campus and its relevance to Sacramento State faculty research and course instruction. (CFRs 2.8, 2.9, and 3.4)

In the context of a public forum, Sacramento State students praised the Learning Communities, the One Book Project, honors programs, internships, and other community engagement projects. Students indicated that community engagement experiences significantly contribute to their educational experience and improve retention and student success. The honors program is particularly critical as a venue to promote the engagement of high potential students. The creative initiatives of the Community Engagement Center provide stimulus for broad activities across the campus. With a small staff, this Center serves as a focal point for students and faculty. The Center for California Studies also provides unique opportunities for faculty and students to engage in civic life.

An example of institutional coordination is the collaboration between the College of Continuing Education and the Sacramento State Department of Child Development. This partnership provides experience for graduates with preschool teacher training to find employment with the Office of Education. Institutional support is also facilitating community partnerships at the program and course levels. Business, sociology, ethnic studies, and education have all developed active research and outreach efforts within the community. Practicum, internship, and volunteer community service opportunities are integrated within the context of an academic course of study to provide service-learning opportunities for the students of Sacramento State.

(CFR 2.9)

B. Student Success

As outlined in Section I.B above (“Response to Issues Raised in the Capacity and Preparatory Review”), the campus has made ample progress towards enhancing student success by strategically directing resources to have the greatest immediate impact on the retention rates of diverse student populations. Through mandatory advising and “intrusive” interventions for at-risk students, for example, the administration is implementing policies and processes on campus that promise a continued up-tick in the retention rates for undergraduates, particularly those for underrepresented groups. (CFRs 2.12 and 2.13) Along with these efforts, the Student Academic Success and Educational Equity Programs must be singled out for their exemplary programs that contribute so richly to the success of diverse students at Sacramento State. The variety of their offerings and their history of accomplishment bode particularly well for the institution as it addresses its disparate rates of retention and graduation by ethnicity. (CFR 1.5)

Reports prepared to track student retention and graduation constitute the evidence on which management decisions – both budgetary and programmatic – are being based, and other critical data presentations include analyses of factors influencing student retention, such as participation in support programs and co-curricular activities. (CFRs 2.10 and 4.5) The Office of Institutional Research’s data resources deserve praise for tracking student success with the versatility necessary to isolate the differential retention and graduation rates of demographic groups, participants of enrichment programs, and student groups defined by academic performance. A comprehensive picture of the students on campus and what relates to their being retained from the first to second years of undergraduate study thus informs and maintains a focus on the campus’s top priorities.

The Retention Task Force and its predecessor, the Retention Work Group, have been agents prompting change at Sacramento State recently and have proven to be effective users of the campus's data resources. (CFRs 4.5 and 4.6) These committees drawn from both Student Affairs and Academic Affairs deserve recognition for the knowledge, experience, and commitment of the faculty and staff members involved, as they propose action plans based on data-driven assessments of student success. Their use of relevant analyses has initiated the timely implementation of programmatic change, such as the efforts concentrating on students on academic probation or at risk of being on probation. The Retention Task Force has considered the institution's retention and graduation data portfolio, interviewed personnel, considered best practices in the literature, reviewed efforts undertaken in campus departments, and explored the early alert processes on campus. The group commands attention for its forthcoming recommendations, which will position the University for a well-placed investment of resources to bolster the retention and graduation rates of undergraduates. (CFR 4.3) The visiting team regards this committee with much interest, for both what they have done thus far and what they promise to do in the years ahead. Through this union of institutional effort and institutional research – and through synergies developed among staff from Student Affairs and faculty – Sacramento State is proving adept at identifying linkages between feasible institutional actions and the impact of these actions on student retention. Graduation and retention rates remain the best measures of how the institution can assess its ongoing success in supporting students toward degree completion, and the transparency of how these data are reported (i.e., in thorough reports presented on the web) ensure greater accountability for the institution. (CFR 1.2)

The student survey data available for analysis at Sacramento State are understood by the campus to suggest only so much about why students may find themselves discontinuing their studies. (CFR 2.10) A graduating student survey cannot collect data from students who have left the institution prior to graduation, so this point of comparison is lost. NSSE data collected every three years allow for reports to compare Sacramento State to its peers; however, long-term, continual or longitudinal data cannot be assembled from such periodic administrations of this instrument; hence, trends cannot be plotted effectively over an extended period. Additional peer comparison regarding student success includes the Office of Institutional Research's monitoring Sacramento State's standing in comparison to twelve CSU System peers via the IPEDS online reporting tool, in terms of graduation and retention. Sustaining these peer comparisons over time and strategically collecting data from students via survey administrations will provide the greatest context and deepest understanding of the myriad of reasons students may find themselves falling short of reaching their educational objectives. (CFR 4.4)

Thus far, Sacramento State has concentrated its attention on the undergraduate population, and has not yet expanded its attention to include the graduate programs' students, which constitute 13% of the headcount on campus. The graduate degree programs on campus must set appropriate targets for their retention and graduation rates as well, and work to attain those targets through efforts that enrich student success and ensure students' access to student services and support resources during and adjacent to the hours when the students attend classes on campus. (CFR 2.13) Centrally (or departmentally) organized and purposefully administered academic advising would be a key to enabling students to pursue their studies most effectively and to integrate their graduate degree programs into their professional career goals; student feedback collected by the visiting team indicated that recently students have proven able to study

in selected graduate programs for more than a year without having their academic advisor identified or without receiving any advising from other sources. (CFRs 2.12 and 2.13) The scheduling of courses in Sacramento State's graduate programs should by design provide students with the opportunity to complete their degree programs within a specified number of terms, with sections offered in consistent time slots; however, students noted that the cancellation of sections and the times when sections were offered posed a challenge to students seeking to complete program requirements in a timely fashion. (CFR 1.7)

One absence in the undergraduate retention and graduation rates analyses that was noted by the visiting team was a study of the pattern of students' unit accumulation. Part-time status for analytical purposes was described as being a course load of fewer than 12 units, which effectively eliminates the prospect of a four-year graduation for "full-time" 12-unit students who enter directly from high school. Calculating full-time/part-time status on attempted units at census does not provide data on whether more than a part-time completion of units occurred for a student in a given term; thus, although academic performance (as measured by GPA) is considered in the retention studies that the visiting team reviewed, cumulative progress in units earned may have more explanatory power when considering variances in retention and graduation. Students could be appearing to be "full-time" (even at the lower 12-unit threshold) at census but be, in effect, progressing as reduced, part-time students from term to term, given the institution's course withdrawal policy. Students confided in the team that a section is more likely to be canceled when the schedule notes "STAFF" as the section's instructor. A pattern of course cancellations after census could also have an impact on cumulative progress and increase the percentage of enrolled students with this latent part-time status, which is apparent only at end-of-term, as described above. Although great care has been taken in the OIR retention

analyses to make the findings easy for administrators to commit to action, multivariate analysis of greater sophistication would be the next step for the research effort, which could isolate the explanatory power of each independent variable considered, such as ethnicity, incoming academic indicators, and program participation. (CFRs 2.10 and 4.5)

C. Other Issues Arising from the Standards and CFRs

Strategic Planning

Since the team's last visit in 2007, significant progress has been made in a number of areas. With formation of the Strategic Planning Council and the University Budget Advisory Committee, budgeting is better aligned with strategic planning. The composition of both groups is diverse and includes representatives of key campus constituencies. (CFR 4.1) Furthermore, both groups have been meeting on a regular basis and have established an annual budget process including a budget call and meetings and presentations by key administrative units. These budget hearings have led to thoughtful recommendations to the President on both budget reduction and augmentation strategies.

The use of evidence-based decision-making is reflected in the deliberations of both the Strategic Planning Council and the University Budget Advisory Committee. Both committees have requested and received support from both the Office of Institutional Research and the campus Budget Office. (CFRs 4.3 and 4.5) The OIR has provided both standardized and customized reports on areas such as the cost of instruction. Likewise, the Budget Office has responded to

specific requests for data and has prepared an excellent compendium of budget data titled *Annual Report: Budget Expenditure and Financial Information*. (CFR 1.3)

One of the major goals of the President and his administration since the last visit is transparency of budget information and in the budget process. Significant improvements have been made in these areas. In meetings with both the Strategic Planning Council and the University Budget Advisory Committee, and with other members of the university community, there is considerable pride in the fact that the budget process is both open and consultative. In open forums with faculty, students, and staff, this finding was validated. (CFRs 1.3, 3.8, 3.10 and 3.11)

While acknowledging that considerable progress has been made in the areas of strategic planning and budgeting, the team suggests that the institution consider the following ways to enhance and strengthen the process:

- Use of Enhanced Analytical Tools to Analyze and Display Information: The institution is in the process of implementing a data warehouse and of implanting a reporting tool (COGNOS). The use of both the warehouse and COGNOS will greatly enhance the ability to compare and display data in a manner that will both foster inquiry and lead to better presentations of inter-related data. These tools and access to the data warehouse should also be shared with campus departments to facilitate their own budget preparation and planning processes. (CFR 4.3, 4.5)
- Focus on Campus Infrastructure: Both the Strategic Planning Council and Budget Advisory Committee have spent considerable time understanding the planning and

budget data. Despite significant budget reductions, they have been able to make informed decisions about program areas to preserve and enhance. Given the age of the campus, there is a need to move the issue of deferred maintenance and facilities renewal to the forefront of these conversations. Adequate facilities and infrastructure are critical to supporting both academic and student service programs. The deferred backlog of projects will require a multi-year planning and budget strategy. As Sacramento State is a component institution of the CSU System, it is essential that the CSU System leadership become a strong advocate in the issue of facilities renewal and maintenance. At a time of budget reductions, the need to maintain a base level of deferred maintenance funding is essential. Facilities renewal projects in the areas of utility infrastructure could also lead to savings in utilities budgets. The consequence of not advocating for facilities renewal funding would be to jeopardize the system's ability to support its fundamental academic mission. (CFR 3.5, 4.2)

- Need to Augment and Not Fragment the Existing Budget Process: The success of the campus planning and budgeting process has led some university divisions to create their own internal budget advisory processes. For example, Academic Affairs is in the process of creating an Academic Budget Advisory Committee. Although such groups can help focus the budget process, they also carry the potential to fragment the campus process. Care should be taken to ensure that these advisory committees support and not supplant the central budget and planning process. (CFRs 4.1 and 4.2)

SECTION III. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW AND THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

The visiting team was duly impressed by the amount of progress Sacramento State has made toward its stated goals in the brief period between the CPR and the EER visits. The institution's staff and faculty have demonstrated a considerable effort, an expert knowledge, a spirit of cooperation among themselves, a willingness to sustain a culture of evidence, and an unflagging commitment to the institution's students. Nothing short of a remarkable cultural shift has occurred at Sacramento State towards best-practices in transparency and collaborative governance. Faculty are much more willing and eager to be involved with assessment activities than before, and the joint commitment of faculty and staff to student success is palpable.

Commendations:

- The team commends all offices and individuals with whom the team met during the visit, for their hospitality, their candor, their enthusiasm, their responsiveness in supplying the team with evidence, their eagerness to participate in the WASC process, and their commitment to the diverse students educated at Sacramento State.
- The team commends Sacramento State for the progress it has made in a very short period of time. The institution has evolved from a compliance mode to an engagement in assessment and institutional review of effectiveness.
- The team commends Sacramento State for great improvement in its internal communications, transparency, and governance processes. The Academic Senate is engaged in a positive way and the strategic planning and budgeting committees include many constituent groups with broad representation across campus.

- The team commends Sacramento State's community engagement efforts, which enrich the experience of students, bind the community to the campus's mission, and promote scholarship benefiting the faculty.
- The team commends the institution for developing its culture of evidence through better integration of data and analysis in decision making.
- The team commends the alliance forged between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs in support of the institution's stated highest priority in strategic planning: student success.
- The team commends the Student Academic Success and Educational Equity Programs for implementing exemplary programs that contribute so richly to the success of diverse students at Sacramento State.
- The team commends the professionals in the Division of Student Affairs for their pursuit of outcome and objective measures designed to drive management decisions and to advocate for sustaining the division's resources during budgetary and planning.
- The team commends the Office of Institutional Research for its reporting and analytical support of student success enhancement efforts on campus, particularly those focusing on undergraduate student retention.
- The team commends the Retention Task Force and its predecessor, the Retention Work Group, for the knowledge, experience, and commitment of its faculty and staff members as they propose action plans based on data-driven assessments of student success.

Recommendations:

- The team recommends that the budget and planning process be strengthened by use of advanced analytical tools and by allowing campus departments access to the newly created data warehouse.
- The team recommends that the need to address campus infrastructure, such as facilities renewal and deferred maintenance, be included as a major focus in the deliberations of both the strategic planning and budget advisory committees.
- The team recommends that the focus for planning and budgeting be on the campus as a whole. Individual divisional and departmental efforts need to augment, and not to divert, attention from this process.
- The team recommends that the university develop one set of coherent and meaningful undergraduate learning goals toward which assessment plans can be focused, instead of viewing General Education and Baccalaureate Learning as separate sets of goals.
- The team recommends that the university establish a credible means by which General Education data can be collected and analyzed.
- The team recommends that the university assessment and program review reports emphasize assessment results (qualitative and quantitative) and their meaning and uses, rather than only outlining assessment processes and plans.
- The team recommends that the university develop the infrastructure by which the various assessment activities can be aligned and most efficiently administered and monitored.
- The team recommends that the Community Engagement Center be supported in its efforts to coordinate faculty initiatives, serve students, and market service learning opportunities to students.

- The team recommends that the Community Engagement Center be encouraged to launch further research and assessment projects on the impact of its programs on student retention, engagement, and success. The National Survey of Student Engagement might serve as a benchmark for research comparisons.
- The team recommends sustaining the collaboration of the Academic Affairs and Student Affairs divisions in all efforts to raise the retention and graduation rates for at-risk students.
- The team recommends that the academic deans pursue, as planned, a committed participation in the Educational Equity Score Card project with special attention paid to the underrepresented student groups experiencing the lowest rates of retention and graduation.
- The team recommends the establishment of the Retention Task Force as a permanent standing committee on campus, to sustain its praiseworthy efforts to improve student success outcomes.
- The team recommends that the graduate degree programs on campus set appropriate targets for their retention and graduation rates and work to attain those targets through efforts to enrich student success and to ensure students' access to student services and support resources, such as advising, during the hours when they are present on campus.
- The team recommends that the graduate degree programs focus their course scheduling on consistent patterns that ensure offering of the course-pattern required for graduation within a specified number of terms.

EdD Recommendations (see Appendix A):

- The team recommends that the EdD program draft a comprehensive assessment plan, with details specified in Appendix A.
- The team recommends that the EdD program design a formalized process for collaboration across departments involved in the EdD. Such a process should result in a comprehensive faculty workload and professional development plan.
- The team recommends that the EdD Program address university policies that will promote a culture of inquiry appropriate to the doctoral level.

Appendix A

Special Report

California State University, Sacramento Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy

April 8, 2009

Compiled by Marilee J. Bresciani, Ph.D.

WASC approved the offering of an independent EdD degree by Sacramento State in July 2007.

The Commission action letter approving the degree set forth several areas for further development and required submission of a progress report in December 2008. The July 27, 2007, action letter asked that the progress report address the following matters:

1. The hiring of additional faculty, with special emphasis on qualifications and scholarship of the core faculty for the community college track.
2. The development of the assessment plan, including research questions and plans for data collection and analysis, the use of data to improve student learning, and direct methods of assessment.
3. Rubrics for evaluating the qualifying examination and dissertation.
4. An explanation of the program review process, in which assessment of student learning is a central focus.
5. Adaptation of workload and scholarship requirements for EdD faculty members and support and encouragement of scholarship.
6. The appointment of a program director.

Upon review of that report, WASC requested additional information and clarification. Following review of Sacramento State's supplemental report, it was determined that a visit to the EdD program in connection with the EER visit would be useful to ascertain progress in several areas of concern. The WASC staff's March 25, 2009, letter stated as follows:

In our review of the progress report and addendum, we found that considerable progress had been made in all these areas; however, we could not determine with certainty that all of the issues listed above had been satisfactorily addressed. In particular, we still have some questions about the sufficiency of the faculty, the assessment plan, the rubric for the dissertation, the plan and schedule for a formal program review under university policy, the effects of the policies on scholarly output and the creation of a doctoral culture, and the plans for further program improvement and development after this year.

Sacramento State willingly agreed to host an additional team member on the EER visit and arranged for several special meetings to be held with faculty, administrators, and students involved with the EdD program.

The following issues were the focus of inquiry for this special report:

- How is Sacramento State leadership building the core faculty to support the independent EdD?
- Are there a sufficient number of appropriately qualified full-time faculty with demonstrated content expertise committed to the doctoral program?

- Do the faculty workloads reflect appropriately assigned expertise to the EdD while providing faculty members with time to engage in professional development and research?
- Are full-time faculty available to advise students?
- What are the issues, if any, with varying workloads and varying tenure rights and review processes across departments?
- What is the assessment plan for the program?
- How are the faculty using direct measures to assess student learning?
- How is the assessment process integrated with program review?
- When do core faculty meet to discuss the curriculum and results of assessment?

Findings

These findings were triangulated with interviews of program faculty, the program director and associate director, the Deans of Education and Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies, and students from both cohorts. Several common themes emerged from this visit and are discussed briefly below.

There is no structured vehicle for collaboration between the two colleges that host the EdD. Because there is no formal structure in place for collaborative conversations and business practices, the simple task of assigning faculty workloads is complicated by having to negotiate with several different department chairs within whose departments the EdD faculty reside. The multi-disciplinary nature of the program design will remain a challenge to Sacramento State because workload expectations and tenure rights of faculty belong to a specific department

within which a single faculty member resides. Furthermore, each department has its own culture for workload and publication expectations and for expectations about how faculty facilitate and support students' learning. (CFRs 2.1 and 3.3)

Neither the deans nor the program directors are empowered to assign faculty to teach courses without collaborating with others; those assignments must be negotiated with the applicable faculty department chairs. Varying commitment to the program or competing departmental responsibilities may cause some faculty to have overload doctoral assignments while others are able to take their research release time for these teaching assignments. This situation challenges students because they cannot be certain ahead of time who will be teaching their courses and how accessible the faculty will be to them, given the faculty members' other responsibilities within their assigned department.

Support seems uncertain from senior administration for creating a doctoral culture within the EdD. Students, faculty, program coordinators, and deans agreed that in order to do this program "right," the institution must support the program's attempts to create a doctoral culture at Sacramento State. All those involved appeared to have considered the notion of what is needed to develop and sustain a doctoral culture for the program, and many have useful ideas about how to effectuate this; they simply felt that they lacked consensus on what it meant to have such a culture. (CFR 2.2b) To quote one student who was also employed at Sacramento State, "we [the EdD Program] should be a gem in the institution's crown but we never hear about it from them." Those involved felt they needed to take the time to have dialogue about what it means to provide doctoral education and what is needed in order for this endeavor to be successful. There are many ideas about what is needed to demonstrate doctoral culture, but some of the program's

leaders and faculty members did not feel they were being fully supported to allocate the resources necessary for such things as providing assigned time to faculty for research, providing assigned time for advising students' research projects, or providing academic advising for students throughout the program. (CFRs 2.1, 2.2b and Guideline to 2.2b, 2.9, 2.12, and 3.2)

All participants in this program – faculty, staff, and administrators – believe that success is viable, just not yet attained. There are committed faculty, deans, a program director and an associate director, and students for this program. Students attested that because select faculty went above and beyond expectations, they felt prepared to conduct their dissertation research. Everyone interviewed agreed that the institution needs to support the EdD program in the right way, which means exploring the meaning of and creating a doctoral culture for the program and allocating the resources to create that culture over time.

There was an apparent lack of clarity about what the program is to accomplish with regard to student learning. (CFR 1.2) Faculty members reported feeling that decisions are made without their participation. Inequities exist in how workload is calculated and how assignments are distributed among faculty, and not all faculty understand how their courses connect to the curriculum design and to intended student learning. (CFR 2.4) Students do not feel systematically supported concerning career decisions and in research advising (CFR 2.12 and 2.13); thus, miscommunication and misunderstanding are present, and students often feel caught in the middle. To quote one student, “I often feel as if I am the child standing between my two arguing parents” (e.g., Public Policy and Education).

The visiting team recommends that the EdD program draft a comprehensive assessment plan that illustrates:

- the use of direct measures of student learning;
- how faculty will collaborate on evaluating and improving the curriculum;
- a tie into institutional program review that requires the program to reflect on how it is providing a culture of doctoral inquiry.

(CFRs 2.1, 2.2b, 2.3, 2.6, 2.7, 4.6, 4.7)

Further, the visiting team recommends that the EdD Program design a formal process for collaboration across departments that includes a comprehensive faculty workload and professional development plan covering:

- support for faculty release time for research;
- resources to ensure faculty can adequately support students' dissertation research;
- the utilization of content experts in the classroom;
- the balance of part-time and full-time faculty teaching in the program;
- support for student advising.

(CFRs 2.8, 2.9, 2.12, 3.2, 3.3)

Finally, the visiting team recommends that the EdD Program address the University policies that will promote a culture of doctoral inquiry, including:

- workload equities;
- assigned time for research and scholarly activity;
- promotion and review policy equities;
- professional development for faculty.

(CFRs 2.8, 2.9, 3.3, 3.4)