

REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING TEAM
CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW

To California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
February 10-12, 2010

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 according to Commission Standards and the Core Commitment for Institutional Capacity and therefore submits this Report to the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges for action and to the institution for consideration.

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Capacity and Preparatory Review

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Visit: February 10-12, 2010

SECTION I – Overview and Context

IA - Description of Institution and Visit

Institutional Background

Established in 1901 by the California Legislature, California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo (Cal Poly) began as a vocational high school. By 1927, Cal Poly was a junior college, later transitioning to a three-year institution in 1936, and a baccalaureate-granting institution in 1940. Graduate/master level degree programs were added in 1949. Cal Poly was incorporated into the California State College System¹ in 1961, becoming a university in 1972.

Since its inception Cal Poly has embraced an educational philosophy of “Learn-by-Doing”. This philosophy is exemplified in the University’s mission statement:

“Cal Poly fosters teaching, scholarship, and service in a Learn-by-Doing environment where students and faculty are partners in discovery. As a polytechnic university, Cal Poly promotes the application of theory to practice. As a comprehensive institution, Cal Poly provides a balanced education in the arts, sciences, and technology, while encouraging cross-disciplinary and co-curricular experiences. As an academic community, Cal Poly values free inquiry, cultural and intellectual diversity, mutual respect, civic engagement, and social and environmental responsibility.”

As part of the California State University (CSU) system of 23 campuses, Cal Poly operates under the governance of the CSU Office of the Chancellor. Although Cal Poly resembles other CSU campuses in providing undergraduate instruction and graduate/masters level degrees in traditional disciplines,² under the 30-years of leadership of President Baker (currently the longest tenured President in the California State University system) Cal Poly has continued to

¹ Name of the California State University system at the time Cal Poly was inducted.

² Cal Poly was approved in 2003 to provide a doctorate in Education Leadership to be offered jointly with the University of California, Santa Barbara. During the recent visit to Cal Poly the WASC Team was informed that the joint doctorate in Educational Leadership with the University of California, Santa Barbara has been identified for closure, although the official process of discontinuance of the program has not yet begun.

solidify its reputation for academic excellence and distinction in the applied fields of agriculture, architecture, engineering, and other professional fields.

As of Fall 2008, Cal Poly reported 19,471 students (95.1 % baccalaureate; 4.0% graduates; 0.7% credential programs; with the remaining enrolled in non-degree post baccalaureate programs). For the same period, Cal Poly reported 824 full-time faculty and 469 part-time faculty, for a FTE Student-to-FTE Faculty Ratio: of 19:1.

Accreditation History

Cal Poly became a WASC accredited institution in 1951. Between 1951 and 1980 the institution received a series of five year reaffirmations accompanied with interim visits and institutional reports. In 1980 Cal Poly received a ten year reaffirmation with a five year interim report. A ten year reaffirmation was also granted in 1990, with progress reports in 1992 and 1994. In 2000 the institution's accreditation was again reaffirmed and the dates for the current sequential WASC review process scheduled (i.e., October 2007 for the Institutional Proposal, Spring 2010 for the Capacity and Preparatory Review [CPR], and Spring 2011 for the Educational Effectiveness Review [EER]). Cal Poly submitted its Institutional Proposal to the WASC Commission in October, 2007. Although the original date for the EER visit was scheduled for Spring 2011, in June 2005 the Commission revised the original one year timeline to the normal 18 months, scheduling Cal Poly's EER visit to occur in Fall 2011 as the concluding phase of its current WASC reaccreditation cycle.

Off-Campus and Substantive Change Requests

Between 1996 and 2009 Cal Poly submitted Off-Campus Substantive Change proposals for six programs. The first request submitted in 1996, a proposed Master of Science in Architecture in Taiwan, was denied. The two subsequent off-campus substantive change proposals were approved in 1997 and 1998. Respectively, these included a Masters in Business Administration program to be offered in concert with the Ruppin Institute in Hefer, Israel, and a revised proposal to offer an off-site Masters of Science in Engineering with an emphasis in

Aeronautics. The fourth request, submitted in 2002 and approved in 2003 after a series of revisions, was a proposal to offer a joint doctorate in Educational Leadership (EdD) with the University of California at Santa Barbara.³ In 2008, the Commission approved Cal Poly to offer a Master of Science in Industrial and Technical Studies as a blended modalities program. Based on advice from WASC's Substantive Change Manager at the time, Cal Poly applied in 2008 for approval to offer a Master of Science in Biomedical Engineering through distance education, together with Fast Track approval for the distance education modality. Following an initial review by WASC, the Fast Track application was no longer pursued, but approval for the degree was granted in 2009 after submission by Cal Poly of an addendum to the proposal.

The Site Visit

The site visit to the California Polytechnic State University occurred February 10-12, 2010. The team was provided with excellent hospitality and work accommodations both on campus and at the appointed hotel. Over the course of the visit the team met with administrators, faculty, professional staff, and students. All representatives of the University were engaged and candid, providing the information necessary for a thorough CPR visit.

The team would like to extend its appreciation to President Baker and his leadership team for the openness with which they responded to questions and the provision of additional materials as requested. A special thank you is also extended to David Conn, Associate Vice President for Inclusive Excellence and Director of Ombuds Services⁴ and Accreditation Liaison Officer, and his staff for their extraordinary effort in facilitating every aspect of a well organized site visit.

Appreciation is also extended to Dr. Bruno Giberti, Faculty Director and Co-Chair of the WASC Self-Study along with Dr. Conn. The team also wants to thank the faculty, students, staff, and

³ See reference to proposed closure on page 3 of this document.

⁴ Dr. Conn's position recently changed from Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Undergraduate Education. Dr. Conn continues in his role of Accreditation Liaison Officer in his new appointment as Associate Vice President for Inclusive Excellence and Director of Ombuds Services.

administration for their support in the development of the CPR report, as well as their thoughtful participation in team interviews. Finally, the orientation to and assistance with the CPR process provided by Richard Osborn as the WASC staff, were both helpful and greatly appreciated.

IB - Institution's Capacity and Preparatory Report

Alignment of the Institutional Proposal

The organization of the CPR report follows the general content presented in the Institutional Proposal, including a detailed treatment of the selected institutional themes, i.e., *Overarching Theme: Our Polytechnic Identity; Theme 1: Learn-by-Doing; Theme 2: The Teacher Scholar Model; and Theme 3: Integration and Student Learning.* As noted in Cal Poly's Institutional Proposal, time and attention was also given to the institution's continuing challenges related to diversity enhancement. Content on how the University had and continues to address diversity and related campus climate issues are interwoven throughout the CPR themes.

Quality of the Capacity and Preparatory Report

The CPR report proved to be useful in describing the efforts the University has taken to engage in institutional analysis and capacity review. Incorporated in the report and site visit was an impressive amount of openness as to the fiscal and strategic challenges faced by the University. On the whole the CPR report provided a useful foundation from which to organize and conduct the CPR visit.

IC - Response to Previous Commission Issues

The following issues were presented to the University in its 2000 reaccreditation letter from the WASC Accrediting Commission.

Cal Poly as a Learning Community

The institution was urged to sustain the topic of both student and institutional learning as an ongoing initiative of inquiry and action. It was pointed out that the inquiry should particularly reside within and among the faculty; and that the faculty role would be critical to the discussion regarding what it means to shift from being a predominantly teaching institution to one where learning is the priority. The institution was urged to join the regional and national conversation about learning, and to support faculty through appropriate means of training and support. The Commission encouraged the

institution to build on its teaching excellence, and on the “Learn-by-Doing” pedagogy, to create a learning community steeped in the strengths of the institution. (2000 Commission Letter, pp. 2-3).

Cal Poly continues to reaffirm its focus on Learn-by-Doing as its signature pedagogy that uniquely shapes students’ academic experiences. In support of this ongoing examination, Learn-by-Doing was selected as one of the themes for the current reaccreditation cycle and Cal Poly Strategic Plan. Subsequently, a Learn-by-Doing Working Group was formed to engage the campus in a deeper analysis of Learn-by-Doing—both the strengths and challenges of infusing this pedagogy across all curricular and co-curricular aspects of the institution. In supporting this effort, the Learn-by-Doing Working Group, in conjunction with other associated University committees, has: conducted surveys of department chairs and students; examined the nature and extent of students’ involvement in Learn-by-Doing experiences through curricular, General Education, and co-curricular learning experiences; compared students’ performance on the National Survey of Student Engagement in related areas; and proposed a working definition which takes into account the holistic application and understanding of Learn-by-Doing expressed by campus constituents. In preparation for the EER visit the institution will be assessing the educational effectiveness of their Learn-by-Doing pedagogy.

Assuring Adequate Financial Support for High Cost Fields

The 2000 visiting team acknowledged the challenges faced by the institution to support its high cost academic programming, as well as the resulting constraints experienced by the campus community. The Commission noted that it would be important for the University to be creative in designing funding strategies—within its own campus structure and within the CSU system—upon which it could move from a teaching to a learning institution. The Centennial Campaign celebrating the 100th anniversary of the institution was seen to auger an excellent beginning to this effort. The Commission encouraged faculty and administration to develop funding innovations linked to its teaching excellence, institutional research, and long-range academic goals to complement its fund-raising and development activities. (2000 Commission Letter, p. 3).

Although significantly impacted by the financial challenges affecting the CSU system, Cal Poly is to be commended for its continuing efforts to secure adequate funding for its high cost academic programs. Included in these efforts are business partnerships that support both the development of revenues and intellectual enterprise. The faculty has also been successful in achieving significant increases in grants and contracts awarded over the past five years. The current (2010) team found great capacity and potential to continue this trend, and thus further increase the amount of funds generated through grants and contracts received to support the institution’s high cost academic programs.

Campus Climate, Diversity and Excellence

The Commission noted that it was pleased that the Cal Poly community was united by its commitment to students and pride in the quality of education it provides. Reference was made to the institution’s selection of campus climate and diversity as an important area of inquiry for its self study, and that the institution had discovered, importantly, that the lack of diversity at the institution should be considered a threat to the quality of student learning. It was further noted, that while the institution demonstrated high intellectual commitment to increase diversity among students and faculty and to improve the campus climate to support increased diversity, the Commission urged the institution to reinforce and strengthen its efforts to integrate diversity goals within the framework of its learning

centers. This was noted as particularly important in positioning Cal Poly to successfully fulfill its mission within California over the next several decades (2000 Commission Letter, pp. 3-4).

Since the 2000 WASC accreditation, Cal Poly has worked to improve the institution's diversity climate, including the development of a significantly revised program review process, adoption of a model of Inclusive Excellence, and the creation of Diversity Learning Objectives (DLOs) which will be used to assess the effectiveness of diversity content in curricular as well as effects of improvement in the diversity climate of the campus. Guiding the University's efforts is the newly formed Inclusive Excellence Council which functions under the leadership of a new administrative position, i.e., the Associate Vice President for Inclusive Excellence and Director of Ombuds Services. With the necessary structure and leadership in place, it is anticipated that policies, processes, and structures will continue to be developed that support the institution's goal infusing Inclusive Excellence throughout the University. It is hoped that these developments and the institutional learning that results, will assist Cal Poly in realizing improvements the diversity profile of students, faculty and staff.

Moving from Analysis to Action

The Commission noted with appreciation the depth and scope of the self study analysis prepared around the three themes the institution had identified as essential to its development: intellectual environment; physical environment; and campus climate environment. It was noted that the self study presented a comprehensive and rich array of data which went well beyond the report of the team. Additionally, the team observed that while the University has been in a state of "readiness to be a learning center for several years," movement from analysis to action was needed and in many areas had yet to occur. The Commission encouraged the institution to continue its reflective study, not to lose the momentum that had been created thus far, and to translate the results of research and data collection into an established set of priorities and decisions. Cal Poly's ability to learn from institutional inquiry and convert that learning into concrete revisions and reforms is critical to the educational effectiveness of its programs and its vision as a learning community (2000 Commission Letter, p. 4).

It is clear that since the last accreditation that the administration and faculty at Cal Poly have made student learning a priority and have taken some promising steps toward measuring that learning. As the University continues in these efforts the organizational structures, processes, as well as the administrative leadership responsible for guiding this work will need to be solidified, and broad University dissemination of this knowledge assured.

SECTION II - Institutional Themes

Cal Poly identified one overarching and three targeted themes to guide their CPR process. These are: Overarching Theme: Our Polytechnic Identity; Theme 1: Learn-by-Doing; Theme 2: The Teacher Scholar Model; and Theme 3: Integration and Student Learning. Throughout the site visit the team had ample opportunity to observe the

commitment of faculty and administration to these themes in planning, resource allocation and program development. (CFR 2.2; 3.1; 3.4; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.6)

IIA - Overarching Theme: Our Polytechnic Identity

The essay for this theme provides an introspective inquiry into the identity, values and character of the institution. The working group investigating this theme identified an impressive group of 15 peer and aspirational institutions for the purposes of bench-marking and the search for best practices. To facilitate the identification of comparative institutions the working group utilized the Carnegie classification determined by the drafters of the strategic plan, *Professions Plus Arts and Sciences*, (i.e., nearly 75% of the institution's degrees are granted in professional fields, while programs in the arts and sciences are also offered). Based on their conclusions, and after some debate, the working group for this theme affirmed and expanded upon existing understanding, as evidenced by the institution's mission statement and original study question, to envision Cal Poly as a comprehensive polytechnic university. In addition to identifying the need to enlarge the concept of polytechnic to allow full inclusion of colleges that are not traditionally considered part of that group, the group also identified four challenges (or opportunities) related to Cal Poly transitioning into comprehensive polytechnic university. (CFR 1.1; 1.2; 4.1)

Challenge 1 is to move Cal Poly into the ranks of outstanding polytechnic universities. Although it can be argued that Cal Poly is already recognized as an outstanding comprehensive masters-granting polytechnic university, the aspirational polytechnic universities cited are research institutions with funding that is unlikely to be easily obtainable given the CSU systems current funding formula for Cal Poly.⁵ Fully meeting this challenge would require a substantial increase in resources that will be very difficult to obtain in the near term. However, building on University's strengths within its current classification, while continuing to pursue incremental

⁵ Despite the noted differences in research outcomes and associated funding, Cal Poly fared extremely well in comparisons with the 15 bench-marked institutions, including admissions selectivity, SAT scores of its students, and attrition and graduation rates.

growth in targeted areas of research, will facilitate the infrastructure needed for the institution's envisioned future.

Challenge 2 is the need to ensure that all graduates are whole-system dialectical thinkers, experiencing integrated and interdisciplinary strength across all university disciplines. However, should this occur it is anticipated that existing challenges with the University policies requiring students' early declaration of a major, as well as the strong restrictions relevant to students changing majors, will increase. In response to this issue, core step C-3 of the Cal Poly Delivery Plan enrollment management effort has a goal to assure that the University develops an inter-major transfer policy that is clear and that students are informed about requests to change majors within two terms after their application for transfer to a new major. The institution has formed a joint faculty-administration task force to address this issue. The active discussion of this element of the plan should continue.

Challenge 3 addresses the need to ensure that graduates have experiences that will increase the likelihood of them becoming leaders in their chosen fields. Although Cal Poly graduates are known for their hands-on skills, it is argued that graduates should be equally sought for their vision, critical-thinking skills, and ability to work in teams. To address this challenge, it is felt that there should be an increase and/or expansion of programs that address leadership development, honors, applied projects and research.

The faculty should continue to address this issue and consider whether these offerings should be separate programs, or integrated into the existing majors. However, given the current fiscal retrenchment, it will be difficult to justify the creation of new programs. Thus, the University may want to consider the integration of approaches to leadership learning, critical thinking and multidisciplinary teamwork into existing courses, programs and curricula. Plans to increase engagement with alumni and their employers should continue, allowing for greater evidence of the accomplishments of their graduates, as well as possible resources to support leadership mentoring. (CFR 2.2a, 2.4)

Challenge 4 is to enhance campus diversity, as well as increase student, faculty, and staff awareness and understanding of diversity issues. Despite the discovery that Cal Poly fares well in student and faculty diversity in comparison with the 15 peer and aspirational institutions across the country, the diversity of the students, staff, and faculty of Cal Poly do not adequately reflect California's diversity. The institution's perspective regarding this is considered in part related to the institution's relative geographic isolation and the nature of the institution's science and technology disciplines. Attention to this challenge is being addressed in the institution's commitment to embrace the principles of Inclusive Excellence. As the University proceeds in giving priority to this area, it is important that those involved with envisioning Cal Poly's future as a comprehensive polytechnic university continue to realize that the extent to which their vision of excellence is achieved will be associated with the institution's ability to markedly improve the diversity of the campus community. (CFR 1.5)

In a meeting with the WASC team, members of the working group responsible for this theme expressed considerable doubt as to the institution's ability to meet the identified challenges. The WASC team present for this discussion, found the dialogue with the working group disconcerting in that it was unclear as to the sources of the committee's doubts. As such, members of this working group (as well as faculty in other groups the team met with) stated emphatically that its institutional aspirations were dependent upon the quality of the next University leaders. When questioned further, members' doubts not only appeared linked to a lack of guidance from administration as to the group's function in moving their strategic visioning forward, but were also associated with the members' lack of clarity about the role faculty governance plays in institutional strategic planning. When questioned why they selected the overarching theme of envisioning a different identity for Cal Poly, they were so doubtful about realizing change without direct administrative direction,, the team was left with the view, that to a great extent, this working group lacked the sense of empowerment and self-efficacy needed to move their agenda forward, despite a genuinely expressed desire to achieve the contrary. As such,

it is important that the group be given the guidance and support required to develop confidence in their abilities and prospects for envisioning Cal Poly's future, as they have already begun to address many of the elements that are part of the identified challenges. With these issues resolved, the team encourages the working group to continue to refine their definition of a comprehensive polytechnic university in ways that can be embraced by all members of the University. As this process proceeds, attention should be given to developing measures that will allow the University to assess the effectiveness of its current identity and predict the validity of its envisioned future. During the coming year as the University moves to identify a successor for President Baker, and subsequent to that a new provost; steps should be taken to ensure that the visioning that has been the product of workgroups of faculty, staff, administrators and students is shared with and confirmed by the institution's new leadership.

IIB – Theme 1: Learn-by-Doing

Learn-by-Doing has long been a key pedagogy for the institution, despite few attempts to define what it means to the campus community. As currently operationalized, Learn-by-Doing is the union of theory and practice with an emphasis on the latter. The essay prepared for this theme addresses, in an insightful and candid way, the need for a measurable definition of the signature pedagogy of Cal Poly, that of Learn-by-Doing. Learn-by-Doing has been highly valued and continues to be successfully embedded throughout the institution.

In addition to addressing the historical and theoretical foundations of this pedagogy, this theme reviews how Learn-by-Doing is implemented, how it differs from that of other institutions, its impact on student success and how it contributes to achievement of the University Learning Objectives. This theme advances the argument that Learn-by-Doing occurs earlier and more often at Cal Poly than at comparable institutions, and that this occurs due to the intentional design of curricula. The theme also suggests that it is not the uniqueness of the elements of Learn-by-Doing

practiced by the institution that make it distinct, but rather the weight that is attached to its applied methodology that is most distinctive.

Learn-by-Doing is a deliberate, intellectual process whereby students acquire essential knowledge and skills through active engagement in their education. Both faculty and students report that a distinctive characteristic of this pedagogy is the close relationship between faculty and students (relationships enhanced by the geographical proximity of faculty and students living in the same close knit community). As such, the Learn-by-Doing pedagogy is implemented in the curriculum in the form of laboratories, collaborative work, research papers and projects, internships, student abroad and senior projects. In the co-curriculum, it involves projects organized by student clubs and organizations. During the visit the team had an opportunity to observe Learn-by-Doing projects at a student poster session. Team members were able to dialogue with students and experience first-hand the impressive effectiveness of this pedagogy.

Faculty at Cal Poly continue to look for ways to further integrate this pedagogy into all components of students' educational experience. As such, surveys of current students suggest that Learn-by-Doing experiences play a vital role in achievement of University Learning Objectives. There is, however, considerable difference of opinion among campus constituencies (faculty and students) as to the value of the culminating senior projects as a part of the Learn-by-Doing pedagogy. As mentioned in the CPR, the working group for this theme has identified the need to articulate and clarify the nature and importance of the culminating senior project for students earlier in students' academic programs. It is felt that this early clarification will assist students in understanding the utility of summative learning.

The working group for this theme has also observed that some areas of the curriculum, including general education and diversity learning, would benefit from greater application of the Learn-by-Doing pedagogy. For example, surveys have shown Cal Poly students lag behind in exposure to diverse perspectives, with some conflicting results as to the contributions of general education and major courses in the achievement of the institution's Diversity Learning

Objectives. This issue and the extent to which Learn-by-Doing is and continues to be applied in general education courses must continue to be investigated by the institution.

Yet another element of this pedagogy that the working group has identified as benefiting from additional analysis is what is referred to as the “upside-down curriculum” of the institution. This phrase refers to the University’s early major-declaration requirement that leads to freshman students enrolling in classes that are core requirements of the major, a regular occurrence that is said to be in “stark contrast” to that of other universities. It has been suggested that due to the early major declaration requirement, students at Cal Poly encounter Learn-by-Doing earlier than at peer institutions. The nature and educational value of these early introductions to Learn-by-Doing should be measured and analyzed in greater detail.

In addition to the early requirement of major declaration, the institution has adopted a strong restriction on change of major. Present estimates suggest that nearly a quarter of the students would change their majors if they were given the opportunity. As noted in the CPR report, this situation is currently being studied by a joint faculty-administration work group to assure that implications are fully understood and addressed.

This theme provides evidence that the Learn-by-Doing pedagogy leads to several positive impacts. First, it is felt that the known presence of this pedagogy at Cal Poly may assist with the recruitment and retention of students, faculty and staff from underrepresented populations; but disaggregation of student and faculty survey data is needed to confirm this impact. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that the practice of Learn-by-Doing contributes to students’ success after graduation. However, the greater use of alumni surveys is needed to confirm this hypothesis.

The theme concludes with three proposed action items that are endorsed by the WASC team. The first is to continue the effort to establish a working definition of Learn-by-Doing, which should be adopted by the Academic Senate. The second is to continue to investigate the educational effectiveness of Learn-by-Doing, including the use of program reviews in this investigation. The third is to identify ways of strengthening this signature pedagogy. Finally, the

team recommends that the institution continue to address funding issues so that this strong and excellent practice is not compromised in the future. (CFR 2.2a, 2.4, 2.5, 4.1)

IIC – Theme 2: The Teacher Scholar Model

The Cal Poly WASC Steering Committee explained that the targeted themes, including the Teacher Scholar Model, have been viewed as opportunities to improve institutional capacity, rather than simply report current accountability. As such, the phrasing of the questions animating this theme reflects its central importance to the University and the difficulty associated with answering these guiding questions, including: “What does the term *teacher scholar* mean to Cal Poly, and how does the teacher scholar model fit within the mission, goals, and values of the University?”

Cal Poly has consensus that the University remains a teaching-centered institution, and it has evidence of “a high level of scholarly activity that enhances student learning.” But, according to the self-study and campus interviews with the visiting WASC team, the University continues to struggle with reaching consensus on fundamental questions that must be answered if the institution is to implement the teacher scholar model. Namely, the working group assigned to address this institutional theme continues to struggle with qualifying the activities that should be considered “scholarship” (and the relationship of research to scholarship). Likewise, there is continuing debate regarding the shared expectations for faculty scholarship, and how scholarship is assessed and weighed in the promotion and review system.

Supporting their analysis of these issues, the Teacher Scholar working group considered Boyer’s definitions of types of scholarship as a fruitful way to focus their discussion. Consideration has also been given to exploring how student-faculty research fits into this model. The University is to be commended for the breadth of its considerations, and for recognizing the importance of faculty development in teaching, as well as the essential contributions of pedagogical research. (CFR 2.8; 2.9)

The institution's CPR report identifies goals for clarifying teacher scholar expectations. The faculty are aware and the team concurs that effort should also be directed at gathering data to obtain a more thorough understanding of the existing scholarly activities that faculty have and continue to be involved with, and that by gathering information about existing activities the University should be in a better position to articulate expectations for a teacher scholar model that embraces the institution's mission and vision for its future. This foundational work should also position the University to establish variable targets that are responsive to fluctuating resources. (CFR 2.8; 2.9)

IID - Integration and Student Learning

Cal Poly has been thinking strategically about student learning as part of their continuing institutional commitment, as well as preparation for the CPR and EER visits. As a part of these on-going efforts, Cal Poly has been tracking graduation rates and setting goals for improved rates, as well as attending to more-difficult-to-assess areas such as: integrating students' learning across general education, their major, and co-curricular learning; and reviewing the University's policies that affect students' progress such as policies pertaining to the early declaration of a major, and restrictions on changing majors. (CFR 2.2; 2.3; 2.4; 2.5; 2.6; 2.7)

As such, Cal Poly's six-year graduation rates are good, with a three-year average of 71.7% for freshman cohorts and 82.7% for transfer cohorts (with an overall average of 74%). Cal Poly has set a target of 80% by 2015 for the six-year graduation rates for first-time freshman. This target has already been exceeded for transfer students. Plans articulated by the University to achieve this target include: (1) assuring that all degree programs have clearly articulated expectations for completion and that degree expectations can be programmed into a degree auditing system readily available for use by students and advisors; (2) assuring that courses required for degree completion are available and support students' timely progression; and (3) improving the inter-major transfer policy and practice in ways that support students' transfer to a

new major with the fewest number of non-transferrable courses possible. The institution has formed a joint faculty-administration task force to address this issue. (CFR 2.2; 2.7; 2.10)

In addition, the University has identified plans to improve the four- and five-year degree completion rates.⁶ According to the *Delivery Plan Report* (i.e., a component of the Strategic Plan also referred to on campus as the *comprehensive enrollment management effort*), the University will “develop a campus culture that expects to graduate any student in four or five years depending on the major selected... [and that encourages] faculty members to think of themselves as partners in their students’ success.” As such, attention will be paid to eliminating “gateway courses;” tracking course repeats; assuring interdivisional coordination of academic affairs and student affairs regarding campus climate and academic coaching; and discontinuing remedial courses. This last item (the most controversial among the institution’s proposed changes), has generated concern from faculty members who see some variation in the extent to which students meet the institution’s increasingly high entrance requirements. These faculty members are worried that some highly motivated and bright students may still need additional help in some areas. (CFR 2.2; 2.4; 2.6; 2.7; 2.10; 2.12)

Cal Poly’s University Learning Outcomes (ULOs) are well articulated and understood throughout the institutional community. In fact, the institution’s attention to the systematic inclusion of students in key institutional committees and decision-making processes guiding the development and dissemination of the ULOs and educational assessment has been impressive. The attention given to ULOs should position Cal Poly to be prepared for the EER in 2011. (CFR 2.3; 2.4; 2.5; 2.6; 2.7)

In addition to the ULOs, all academic programs have Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). During the site visit the team was informed that academic programs with external professional accreditation (e.g., Engineering) have well developed PLOs that are integrated both

⁶ Although both Cal Poly and the WASC team noted that students frequently take six years to graduate, it should be clarified that several of the institution’s larger professional undergraduate degree programs by design are five-year programs.

horizontally and vertically into the respective program curriculum, and assessed systematically. Programs that are not accredited by professional agencies do have PLOs, but vary in the extent to which PLOs are tracked through curriculum mapping and assessed. Also variable is the degree to which these latter programs have achieved alignment between university, program, and course learning objectives. In addition, whereas PLOs exist for all programs, the placement of this information in institutional and program documents varies across programs. It is recommended that attention be given to ensuring that all learning objectives appear systematically in University documents. In addition, in a meeting with the visiting team, some department chairs noted difficulties reconciling the different sets of student learning objectives. The team encourages the University to reflect on the different sets of student learning objectives, and clarify how assessment across all of the PLOs occurs. (CFR 2.3; 2.4; 2.5; 2.6; 2.7)

Inclusive Excellence--Students

The WASC/ACSCU Summary Data provides the Six-Year Graduation Rates by Ethnicity and Gender for freshmen and transfer students entering each Fall from 2001-2003. The retention rates for both genders combined are: 78.6% (White/Non-Hispanic), 77.3% (Asian/Pacific Islander), 69% (American Indian/Alaska Native), 67.5% (Hispanic/Latino), and 63.6% (Black, Non-Hispanic). Across all ethnic groups women have the highest retention rate at 80.5%. The campus average is 77.4%. (CFR 1.5; 2:10; 2.14)

Admissions data (see Table 1.4 of Appendix D of *Our Polytechnic Identity*) show that 6,114 Hispanic/Latino students applied in Fall 2008, but only 1,533 were admitted and 413 actually enrolled. These data indicate that both admission and enrollment rates for Hispanic/Latinos applicants are roughly one in four. A similar pattern was discovered for first-time freshmen and new (community college) transfers among African Americans and Native Americans, whereas the admission rates for Asian Americans is closer to one in five, with an enrollment rate that is approximately one in eight. (CFR 1.5; 2.10)

The institution's admissions data was explained by a number of factors, including the "dearth" of underrepresented students leaving high school in California who are interested in pursuing higher education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (the STEM fields), and qualified for admission to Cal Poly. Another explanation is believed to be the isolated location of the campus, its distance from communities with rich cultural diversity, and the obstacle faced by less affluent students who wish to commute to college from home rather than pay for accommodation on or close to campus (Cal Poly CPR, p. 10). (CFR 1.5; 2.10)

To some degree, data regarding the number Hispanic/Latino applicants (6,114) seems to contradict the notion of a "dearth" of interested students, however, the data regarding the acceptance rate does indicate that only one in four of the applicants meet the institution's admissions standards, and one in four enroll. No additional qualifying data was presented regarding the reasons why accepted students choose not to enroll, e.g., the number who accept admissions to a competing institution; number who report significant financial barriers to attendance; or comparative admissions and enrollment information from similar institutions. The University should engage in more assertive analysis of enrollment data to determine if additional underlying causes are impacting the enrollment of accepted applicants. (CFR 1.5; 2.10)

Cal Poly has a Multi-Criteria Admissions (MCA) formula for determining applicants' ranking and acceptance. According to a presentation at the Academic Senate on Dec 1, 2009,⁷ 45-55% of an applicant's MCA score is based on GPA in college prep core courses. Test scores (ACT or SAT) comprise 25-35% of the MCA, and relevant work experience and/or extra-curricular activities another 1-10%. There are also bonus points for: California resident; recently released veteran status (701 of a total possible 5000 MCA points); service area (350 points possible); campus-defined partner schools (700 points possible); and low level of parent education (300 points possible for parents with a high school degree or less). Beginning in Fall

⁷ http://www.calpoly.edu/~acadsen/minutes/09-10_minutes/mca_presentation.doc.ppt

2010, applicants who are faculty/staff dependents will also receive 700 MCA bonus points. (CFR 1.5; 2.10)

Both the campus-defined partner school initiative and attention to parent education respond to the challenges low-income and first-generation students face when applying to college. Nonetheless, the MCA calculation relies mainly on GPA and test scores. Moreover, within the GPA, Cal Poly permits “weighting” of Advanced Practice (AP) scores, so applicants can achieve adjusted GPA’s of up to 4.25. While recognition of AP scores is useful, it may also penalize applicants in high schools that have few or no AP courses due to lack of funding. Since people of color are over-represented in low-income schools, applicants of color are also likely to be over-represented in this penalized category. In addition, SAT and ACT scores correlate with family income (College Board/Educational Testing Service data). And, although relevant work experience increases the MCA score, economically disadvantaged applicants of color are less likely to have these opportunities. Likewise, extra curricular activities, including the importance of these in college preparation are often not available to the population of applicants and future students the institution is trying to attract. Data was not presented that reflected the impact of the MCA scoring system on the admission of applicants of color over time. If this data is available, it should be analyzed by the University so that the full impact of the MCA system on admissions decisions is clearly understood by the time of the EER. (CFR 1.5; 2.10)

Progress made toward improving the diversity climate at Cal Poly is perhaps, best illustrated by institutional data for enrolled students. Table 2.3 in Appendix D presents the number and percentage of all students from Fall 2004 to Fall 2008. During this period of time there was a small increase in Hispanic/Latino students (N=1,690/9.6% to N=2,200/11.3%). Meanwhile, African American student numbers increased over the time period and the percentage increased slightly (N=175/1.0% to N=212/1.1%). Data for Native American students demonstrates an increase in number but not the percentage for the same period of time (N=133/0.8% to N=155/0.8%). The number of Asian American students increased although the

percentage decreased slightly (N=1,981/11.3% to N=2,137/11%). This data suggests that despite Cal Poly's concerted efforts to improve their diversity climate, the proportion of students of color at Cal Poly remains substantially unchanged. With the CSU central office requirement of reducing enrollment, the University should collect data to understand how this enrollment reduction will affect minority acceptance rates and retention in the coming years. This data seems particularly important as there are currently discussions at Cal Poly to reduce and/or eliminate many remedial academic programs which, again, may disproportionately affect applicants and students of color. (CFR 1.5; 2.10)

The disaggregated graduation data for Cal Poly indicate that women have a higher graduation rate than men, and that graduation rates for Blacks and Hispanic/Latino students fall below the mean for all students, whereas Asian, White, and "ethnicity unknown" report graduation rates at the average rate for all students. The discrepancy holds when the data is controlled for high-school GPA ranges. A direct correlation has been found between students' high school GPA and graduation rates in each group reported (i.e., Asian, Hispanic, and White). The team encourages the University to continue to reflect on its disaggregated data to discover if there are additional differences among academic majors, as well as other indicators of students' success that may affect institutional policies and practices in support of students' progress toward graduation. (CFR 1.5; 2.10)

Finally, although the reporting of additional aspects of campus diversity are not required by IPEDS no information was presented regarding the diversity climate of Cal Poly as it pertains to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transsexual (LGBT) students, staff, and faculty. Attention to these issues is also an important aspect of developing the diversity climate of the institution. Related to this, representatives of the visiting team met with minority students who presented their shared agreement that the campus has a negative climate for students, staff, and faculty based on their race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. This sentiment directly contradicts the University's portrayals of itself in the media and on its website. Cal Poly needs its efforts to

understand and improve minorities' subjective experience as it works to infuse Inclusive Excellence throughout the campus. (CFR 1.5; 2.10)

*Inclusive Excellence—Faculty*⁸

The diversity of faculty has also lagged in recent years. Table 4.1 in Appendix D summarizes the gender and ethnicity of all full- and part-time faculties from Fall 2004 to the Fall 2008. During this time the number of full-time Hispanic/Latino faculty members stayed at 43, while the percentage declined from 6% to 5%; the number of African American faculty increased from 10 (1%) in Fall 2004 to 13 (1%) in Fall 2008; the number of Native American faculty rose from 1 to 2; and the number of Asian Americans faculty (i.e., the largest group of minority scholars) has essentially remained unchanged, i.e., 57 (8%) in Fall 2004 to 58 (7%) in Fall 2008. A total of 83 new full-time White faculty members were hired between 2004 and 2008 (a 15% increase in White full-time faculty members), whereas only four additional full-time faculty members of color joined the Cal Poly faculty for the same time period (a 3.6% increase in full-time faculty of color). In addition, the overall percentage of faculty of color (full- and part-time combined) decreased from 14.5 of the total faculty in 2004 to 12.7 of the total faculty in 2008. Also notable for this same period of time is the relatively stable White part-time faculty workforce (i.e., 399 in 2004 to 393 in 2008) versus a decrease in part-time faculty of color for the same time period (i.e., 61 in 2004 to 48 in 2008). This data indicates that considerable attention needs to be given to applying Inclusive Excellence strategies in order to improve the diversity of faculty at Cal Poly. (CFR 1.5; 3.1; 3.2)

⁸ Data were not available to assess staff diversity.

SECTION III - Evaluation of Institutional Capacity under the Standards

IIIA – Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purpose and Ensuring Educational Objectives

The institution defines its purposes and establishes educational objectives aligned with its purposes and character. It has a clear and conscious sense of its essential values and character, its distinctive elements, its place in the higher educational community, and its relationship to society at large. Through its purposes and educational objectives, the institution dedicates itself to higher learning, the search for truth, and the dissemination of knowledge. The institution functions with integrity and autonomy.

Institutional Purposes

Cal Poly has a comprehensive mission statement which provides its constituencies with a clear public statement of its purposes. The institution's purposes fall within recognized academic areas and/or disciplines, or are subject to peer review within the framework of recognized academic disciplines or areas of practice. These purposes are supported by clearly articulated University Learning Outcomes (ULOs) that are consistent with the institution's educational philosophy and purposes, and are widely recognized throughout the University. (CFR 1.1; 1.2)

The University has benefited from the long-standing leadership of President Baker. As his retirement approaches in one year, a process exists whereby a successor will be named. The University has been less successful in maintaining the stability of the Provost's Office. To assure greater stability in this office, Dr. Koob, the current Provost was asked to return from retirement. Dr. Koob has agreed to serve as Provost through the succession of a new President, and until such time that the University is able to identify a new Provost. (CFR 1.3; 3.9; 3.10)

Integrity

The University continues to demonstrate an impressive record of appropriate responsibility, accountability, and integrity in developing and sustaining a learning environment that exemplifies excellence in scholarship and commitment to academic freedom. The University has also demonstrated its institutional commitment to diversity through active processes (reviewed earlier in this document) to develop and sustain a diversity climate that supports a quality social and learning environment for its academic constituencies. (CFR 1.4; CFR 1.5)

Cal Poly demonstrates consistency with its primary purposes of education, and operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy. Evidence of this commitment was demonstrated during the site visit as it pertained to alleged issues and subsequent ethical concerns related to donations and the influence of these on academic autonomy. Regarding this issue, President Baker assured the team that an independent investigation would be conducted to put to rest any associated rumors, and assure that no impropriety had occurred. (CFR 1.6)

The University truthfully represents its academic goals, programs, and services to students and the larger public, including information related to the timely completion of degree, and the policies and procedures related to students and research. Institutional structures and processes are in place to implement, review and revise policies and practices to ensure attention to students' academic needs. Likewise, the quality of the institution's commitment to integrity is reflected through the University's published academic information, central operations, and practices, including the use of unqualified independent financial audits. The University continues to demonstrate its commitment to honest and open communication with the Accrediting Commission, as witnessed throughout this reaccreditation process. (CFR 1.7; 1.8; 1.9)

IIIB - Standard II: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions

The institution achieves its institutional purposes and attains its educational objectives through the core functions of teaching and learning, scholarship and creative activity, and support for student learning. It demonstrates that these core functions are performed effectively and that they support one another in the institution's efforts to attain educational effectiveness.

Teaching and Learning

Cal Poly is well known for its excellent undergraduate and graduate programs, many of which also meet the additional requirements of professional accrediting agencies. Entry-level requirements for degrees are clearly defined. Program requirements and expectations are well articulated, including the existence of University Learning Outcomes (ULOs), Diversity Learning Objectives (DLOs), and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) which exist for all programs and are used for assessment and for faculty to provide students with feedback as they progress toward

graduation. In addition, program reviews attend to periodic review and assessment of these objectives. (CFR 1.5; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4; 2.6; 2.7)

Also embedded in all programs and contributing to its reputation of academic excellence in students' achievements is the institution's commitment to Learn-by-Doing. All aspects of Cal Poly's learning environment emphasize this commitment, including student advisement, information resources and facilities, as well as co-curricular offerings. The faculty is actively engaged with students in ways that support a vibrant learning environment, rich with opportunities for student growth and their participation in applied scholarship. Given the centrality and success of this pedagogy, the University needs to find ways to assure that current financial challenges do not compromise this strong and excellent practice in the future. (CFR 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4; 2.5)

The University has an articulated General Education program that is currently being examined to determine the extent to which the institution's pedagogy of Learn-by-Doing is interwoven into students' collective educational experiences. In addition, Cal Poly has done much promising work in the assessment of writing and critical thinking. Furthering this work will require both faculty commitment and more coordinated technical support. (CFR 2.2; 2.2a; 2.4; 2.6)

The institution has a clear program review process. The program review process follows a five year cycle, and appears to be applied consistently across the institution, albeit that the alignment and assessment of PLOs is less developed for programs that do not report to professional accreditation agencies. (CFR 2.7)

Scholarship and Creative Activity

Cal Poly has an excellent reputation for scholarship, creativity, as well as curricular and instructional innovation. Recent activities to envision the institution's future as a comprehensive polytechnic university has engaged faculty in renewed dialogue regarding the linkage of

scholarship, teaching, learning, and service. This analysis should provide the Cal Poly with the opportunity to build on an already formidable reputation. (CFR 2.8; 2.9)

Support for and Student Learning and Success

Cal Poly is actively engaged in developing its capacity to select and analyze academic and co-curricular programs and student data for the purposes of tracking effectiveness and achievement. This data is being used to understand the characteristics of its students and assesses their preparation, needs, and experiences. The institution's dedication to continuous quality improvement in self assessment is impressive. However, the Cal Poly WASC Steering Committee reported to the visiting team that the University's capacity for institutional research was been stretched to accommodate the needs of the CPR investigation. To the extent possible, the team encourages the University to identify additional resources to facilitate the continuing data assessment in preparation of the upcoming EER visit and sustaining the institution's culture of evidence. (CFR 2.10; 2.11)

Structures and processes are in place to ensure that students' understand degree requirements and receive timely and useful information. During the visit it was observed that these structures and processes can be enacted (albeit perceived by some to be cumbersome and lengthy) to process policy changes designed to remove perceived impediments that have the potential to affect clarity of student information and completion rates (i.e., policies relating to declaring and transferring to new majors). (CFR 2.12; 2.13; 2.14)

IIIC - Standard III: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Sustainability

The institution sustains its operations and supports the achievement of its educational objectives through its investment in human, physical, fiscal, and information resources and through an appropriate and effective set of organizational and decision-making structures. These key resources and organizational structures promote the achievement of institutional purposes and educational objectives and create a high quality environment for learning.

Faculty and Staff

Cal Poly is successful in recruiting and hiring faculty with the expertise to support the educational purposes of the institution. In particular, the University has paid close attention to hiring faculty and providing faculty development activities that align with the institution's interdisciplinary and global initiatives. The University continues to be challenged by the need to employ a more diversity faculty. (CFR 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4)

Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources

The significant budget issues confronting the California State University system are leading to not only substantial budget reductions at Cal Poly but also a mandated 9.5% reduction in enrollment. Cal Poly's share of the reduction to the CSU's 2009-10 budget was \$33.7 million which is a 15 percent reduction in the campus' current operating budget of about \$226 million. Cal Poly's Full Time Equivalent (FTE) enrollment target must be reduced in 2010-11 from the 2009-10 target of 17,350 FTE to 15,702 FTE. The manner in which these actions are being taken, first by the State of California through budget reductions to the CSU, and then by the Board of Trustees to raise fees, approve furlough plans, and reduce enrollments has serious ramifications to students and employees. The Board of Trustees for the CSU approved a 10% student fee increase in May 2009 and then an additional 20% increase in July 2009. The Board of Trustees also approved an additional per unit fee for students in professional business graduate programs. This fee is assessed in the amount of \$210 per semester unit or \$140 per quarter unit. Additionally, the Governor didn't sign the state budget until late July 2009. Furlough agreements were not approved until early in the current fiscal year and as highlighted in the resolution by Cal

Poly's Academic Senate in December 2009; the furloughs are still not implemented in a manner acceptable to the faculty. These issues combined make strategic planning and enrollment management a significant challenge. (CFR 3.5)

Cal Poly has proposed a new student based fee to help finance itself during this period of budget stress and transition. The increase would generate approximately \$22 million per year once it is fully implemented in three years. Of the 49% of the student body responding, 78% voted in a student poll in support of these college-based fees. Unfortunately, the CSU system is not allowing the collection of these fees. The rationale given by the CSU system is that Cal Poly, even though the students endorsed it, should not collect these fees while the other member institutions are not doing so. Cal Poly has developed a financial plan that will address the 2009-10 budget reductions. There is concern that these reductions have a high probability of significantly impacting the institution's Learn-by-Doing signature pedagogy. The campus has previously implemented college-based student fees that have augmented institutional funding to ward off major erosion in the quality of the academic offerings, a funding shortfall, which was the result of prior budget reductions. (CFR 3.5)

While the Governor's proposed budget for 2010-11 for the CSU system appears to be better news, the deficit facing the State may make it difficult for the Governor's proposal to be implemented. The recent action by the Chancellor to provide campuses with one-time funds in 2010-11 to add course sections does not address the long term fiscal problems. (CFR 3.5)

While financial challenges will continue, Cal Poly is to be commended for the business partnerships it has been pursuing through both The California Center for Construction Education as well as the University-Related Technology Park that is scheduled to be completed in May 2010. The California Center for Construction Education is an educational outreach unit designed to provide practitioner education, applied research services, and consultation to the design and construction industry in the state of California and to serve the community at large as a national clearinghouse for industry leadership, knowledge, technology, and innovation. The University-

Related Technology Park will have facilities leased to private high-tech firms seeking to locate their businesses on Cal Poly's campus, enabling them to work closely with the University's renowned faculty and students. The Technology Park is designed to develop public-private partnerships that will spur innovative technologies, facilitate research grants, create new jobs, provide internships for students, and deliver quality experiences. Both of these efforts fit well with Cal Poly's Learn-by-Doing signature pedagogy. (CFR 3.5)

Funding for library resources needed to support scholarly and creative activity is a campus identified issue that needs to be addressed. As indicated in their self study, Cal Poly currently spends \$285 per FTE student compared to a median \$669 per FTE student spent by identified peer institutions. (CFR 2.13; 3.6; 3.7)

The campus recognizes the need to increase private donations to support ongoing programs and projects, such as student research, and the University endowment. The campus' first capital campaign, launched in 2001, raised \$265 million, and another campaign is currently planned in summer 2010 with a tentative goal of \$400-\$500 million. (CFR 3.5)

The financial crisis has serious implications for the maintenance and quality of buildings and facilities. Cal Poly has been successful in gaining financial support for some new facilities. the Meat Processing Center - 100% donor funded; a Recreation Center Expansion - funded through debt to be repaid by student fees; the Technology Park - funded through a combination of sources including private donations, a grant from the US Economic Development Administration and from CSU lease-revenue bonds with the bonds being repaid from income on leases. The Center for Science, which is a replacement for an existing science building, has been delayed due to California budget crisis. (CFR 3.5)

The faculty has been successful in achieving significant increases in grants and contract awards over the past five years. Given the polytechnic mission and academic structure at Cal Poly, there is significant potential and capacity to continue increasing in grants and contracts awarded. (CFR 3.4; 3.5)

In the midst of the financial crisis, the campus has continued to have unqualified independent financial audits and they have a history of financial stability. (CFR 1.8; 3.5)

Organizational Structures to Ensure Sustainability

Although organizational decision-making structures appear to be in place, a number of the faculty participating in some of the meetings with team appeared unclear about these, including the continuation or discontinuance of committees supporting the accreditation process. Associated with this, there was evidence that faculty do not clearly understand or consistently demonstrate authority in operationalizing academic leadership. (CFR 3.8; 3.11)

IIID - Standard IV: Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement

The institution conducts sustained, evidence-based, and participatory discussions about how effectively it is accomplishing its purposes and achieving its educational objectives. These activities inform both institutional planning and systematic evaluations of educational effectiveness. The results of institutional inquiry, research, and data collection are used to establish priorities at different levels of the institution, and revise institutional purposes, structures, and approaches to teaching, learning, and scholarly work.

Strategic Thinking and Planning

Cal Poly has a deep commitment to an ongoing strategic planning process to realize its vision as a comprehensive polytechnic university. Much of this envisioning has come from faculty groups but will need to be confirmed by the new president and provost. Currently, there is considerable uncertainty expressed by the faculty as they wait for new leadership. (CFR 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4)

Commitment to Learning and Improvement

The institution actively engages in ongoing inquiry into the processes and of teaching and learning that support their pedagogy of Learn-by-Doing. These efforts are clearly evident in program curricula and co-curricular offerings. The University has and continues to engage a variety of stakeholders in the regular assessment of its educational programs. However, if the University is to be successful in completing the assessment activities required for the EER visit, attention will need to be given to clearly identifying who among the leadership (administration

and faculty) is responsible for guiding educational assessment and linking the educational outcomes, including the linkage of these with strategic planning and budgeting. (CFR 4.6; 4.7; 4.8)

SECTION IV - Major Findings, Commendations, and Recommendations

Major Findings

Cal Poly is a strong and relatively unique member of the California State University system. Although the whole of higher education in California is under extreme financial stress and uncertainty, decisions must now be made as to which areas should be selectively targeted for additional cuts or enhancements. These decisions should be made in light of how Cal Poly envisions what it will look like in four to five years.

This period of stress and uncertainty is further complicated with Cal Poly's expected retirement of its long standing president. Although Cal Poly has experienced a rapid succession of provosts in recent years, the current provost has agreed to remain until a new president has been hired and a decision made about the next provost.

During this transition period, Cal Poly has engaged in envisioning itself as a comprehensive polytechnic university. Much of this envisioning has come from faculty groups but will need to be confirmed by the new president and provost. Currently, there is considerable uncertainty expressed by the faculty as they wait for the institution's new leadership to be appointed.

Cal Poly has proposed an increase in student fees to help finance itself during this period of budget stress and transition. The student body has overwhelmingly voted in support of an increase in existing fees. Unfortunately, the CSU system is not allowing the collection of these fees. The rationale given by the CSU system is that Cal Poly, even though the students endorsed it, should not collect these fees while the other member institutions are not doing so.

Commendations:

- Faculty demonstrate a strong dedication to teaching;
- Learn-by-Doing is highly valued and successful and is embedded throughout the University. The University needs to continue to address funding issues so that this strong and excellent practice is not compromised in the future;
- The University has shown impressive growth in external research funding in recent years;
- The library faculty are to be commended for their engagement in student learning and substantial support for programs across the University;
- The University's attention to the systematic inclusion of students in key institutional committees and decision-making processes, including the development and dissemination of the University Learning Objectives and educational assessment is exceptional;
- Development of comprehensive approaches for assessing writing across all programs;
- Creation of a vibrant social-learning environment that promotes opportunities for faculty and student engagement;
- The selection and development of focused and highly articulate students; and
- The transparency and openness of the administration, faculty, staff, and students in exploration and self evaluation.

Recommendations Related to Institutional Themes:

Overarching Theme: Comprehensive Polytechnic Identity

The University is reaffirming the concept of a comprehensive polytechnic university, and the team affirms that this process will be useful in defining a vision for the future while building upon the strengths of the past. As the University progresses in this effort, it is recommended that additional attention be given to clearly: 1) defining what is meant by the term "comprehensive polytechnic university"; 2) articulating the institutional changes desired; and 3) identifying the quantifiable measures that will allow the University to assess the effectiveness of its identity. The new leadership is encouraged to support this process with appropriate budget allocations.

Theme 1: Learn-by-Doing

Learn-by-Doing is a clearly established and successful practice at Cal Poly. The team urges Cal Poly to develop measurable ways of demonstrating the educational effectiveness of this practice.

Theme 2: Teacher Scholar Model

There is a strong foundation for the teacher scholar model at Cal Poly and great opportunities to further the development of this model. Cal Poly is positioned to rapidly increase the amount of research that is occurring. It is recommended that Cal Poly continue to clarify the definitions associated with the teacher scholar model, including establishing a plan that includes targets to be accomplished by the EER visit and beyond.

Theme 3: Integration and Student Learning

Cal Poly is invested in integrating students' learning experiences that occur in general education, in their majors, and co-curriculum. However, everyone seems to be waiting for someone else to take the initiative to take this effort forward. A leadership structure needs to be identified so that this agenda will benefit from further focus and be moved forward.

Recommendations Related to the Standards

- Considerable effort needs to occur in the next 18 months to assure: 1) that there is alignment between university, program, and course learning objectives across the institution; and 2) that all learning objectives appear systematically in university documents.
- Attention needs to be given to clearly identifying who among the leadership is responsible for educational assessment and assuring that the related educational goals are linked with budgeting.
- Questions have been raised about undue influence of donors in the operation of the university. It is recommended that the university consider an independent review of any such alleged incidences.
- The university has recently adopted an inclusive excellence initiative. The team applauds this effort. Appropriate leadership has been identified to continue this

initiative. We urge continued progress on enhancing the diversity of the students, staff and faculty, with particular attention to campus climate.

- In consideration of their current financial difficulties, it is recommended that close attention be given to maintaining the quality of buildings and facilities.
- Financial uncertainties jeopardize the future viability of the university's comprehensive polytechnic mission. It is recommended that there be continuous monitoring of university finances and that relevant financial options be considered to sustain the quality of academic offerings.
- The faculty is encouraged to invest time in reviewing the role and critical nature of faculty governance in academic decision-making.
- Attention needs to be given to creating a greater awareness of the role of the WASC self-study process in affecting institutional strategic planning.
- Apparent inconsistencies exist in the collection and utilization of data by programs. It is recommended that the university expand its capacity for institutional research and analysis to support academic decision-making.

SECTION V - Preparations for the Educational Effectiveness Report and Review

In preparation for the EER visit the University will continue to utilize its institutional themes (*Overarching Theme: Our Polytechnic Identity; Theme 1: Learn-by-Doing; Theme 2: The Teacher Scholar Model; and Theme 3: Integration and Student Learning*). As the University pursues these efforts in preparation for the EER, it has expressed awareness that this presents an excellent opportunity for Cal Poly to demonstrate the educational effectiveness of its signature pedagogy, Learn-by-Doing.