I. List of Topics or Concerns Addressed in Report

Summary of Commission Topics or Concerns

1. List of Topics or Concerns (from issues identified in the Action Letter).

The Commission Action letter of June 29, 2009, identified four areas of the University’s activities that the Commission felt deserved further attention and development:

- Continued Progress on the Assessment of Student Learning
- Continued Development of Planning and Budgeting
- Promotion of Student Success
- Support for the Development of the Ed.D. Degree Program

This interim report will focus on the first three items. Discussion of the Ed.D. degree program is appended to the report in order to provide a developed framework for the Special Visit scheduled in Fall 2012.

Instructions: Please list the topics identified in the action letter(s) and that are addressed in this report.

II. Institutional Context

Institutional Context

Instructions: The purpose of this section is to describe the institution so that the Interim Report Committee can understand the issues discussed in the report in context.

Very briefly describe the institution's background; mission; history, including the founding date and year first accredited; geographic locations; and other pertinent information.

Each encounter with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) allows California State University, Sacramento (Sacramento State) a fresh opportunity to make visible and reflect on the significant work we have undertaken to promote student success, student learning, assessment and planning and to document the evolution of our institutional culture from a culture of compliance to a culture of collaboration and evidence-based decision-making. This interim report documents our on-going efforts to refine our educational enterprise and strengthen our focus on our institutional mission. The reaccreditation process allows us to showcase our accomplishments, celebrate our achievements and focus on areas where we can do better. While the Commission, in its most recent action letter, identified several areas for improvement, overall, we are eager to highlight the ways our efforts are making a difference to our students and our community.

Sacramento State, a campus of the California State University system, was founded in 1947 to provide school teachers, community leaders, musicians, artists and a talented workforce for the Sacramento Valley region. First accredited by WASC in 1951, the University moved to its current location in 1953, growing from a small teacher's college into a comprehensive, metropolitan university that is the seventh-largest campus in the CSU system. The University offers fifty-five baccalaureate programs, forty-two programs leading to Master's degrees and three doctorates (public history in partnership with the University of California system, an Ed.D. in the College of
Sacramento State is home to a multicultural student body of nearly 29,000 students. Fifty-five percent of our students identify themselves as non-white, and 33 percent consider themselves multi-ethnic. Almost all of the University's students commute to their classes from work and home, although the campus recently acted on its commitment to create a more residential community by upgrading and expanding the residence halls to accommodate 1,600 students and has undertaken a partnership with the city of Sacramento to create and manage loft-style housing in the redevelopment corridor south of campus.

### III. Statement on Report Preparation

**Statement on Report Preparation**

**Instructions:** Briefly describe in narrative form the process of report preparation, providing the names and titles of those involved. Because of the focused nature of an Interim Report, the widespread and comprehensive involvement of all institutional constituencies is not normally required. Faculty, administrative staff, and others should be involved as appropriate to the topics being addressed in the preparation of the report. Campus constituencies, such as faculty leadership and, where appropriate, the governing board, should review the report before it is submitted to WASC, and such reviews should be indicated in this statement.

Sacramento State organized a Steering Committee with a membership of faculty, staff, administrative representatives and students. Dr. Jackie Donath, Professor of Humanities and Religious Studies and Provost's Fellow was elected chair. The Committee also included Dr. Jeffrey Clark, representing Student Retention and Academic Success; Dr. Jeffrey Brodd, Chair of the Department of Humanities and Religious Studies and Chair of the Program Oversight Committee; Dr. Janet Hecsh, Provost’s Fellow, former chair of the General Education Policies/Graduation Requirements Committee and lead on the campus COMPASS initiative; Drs. Amy Liu and Terry Underwood, Faculty Coordinators of the Office of Academic Program Assessment; Dr. Sheree Meyer, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies; Dr. Don Taylor, Assistant Vice President (Interim), Academic Programs and Global Engagement and campus ALO; Edward Mills, Associate Vice President, Student Affairs and Enrollment Management. This group was charged to 1] collect data and evidence of the University's continued efforts in the three areas highlighted in the Commission action letter in order to frame the Interim Report; 2] identify progress, gaps, weaknesses and opportunities in the campus response to these central institutional issues and functions; and 3] prepare short- and long-term recommendations to the campus that center on these foundational activities. The committee's preliminary findings were compiled into charts.\(^1\) Even as the committee met with campus resource people and experts in each of these areas, it was also committed to taking advantage of the knowledge and energies of the larger campus community in a synergistic way, to support continued action on the important issues facing the campus. The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate, the Deans of the University's Colleges and department chairs were also consulted at various points in the preparation of this report.

A separate group took responsibility for crafting a response to the action letter’s request for an update on the Ed.D. program, and their report is included as a separate appendix. The Ed.D report also documents progress in preparation for the special visit planned for the fall of 2012.

### IV. Response to Issues Identified by the Commission

**Response to Issues Identified by the Commission**
Instructions: This main section of the Report should address the issues identified by the Commission in its action letter as topics for the Interim Report. Each topic identified in the Commission’s action letter should be addressed. The team report may provide additional context and background for the institution's understanding of issues.

Provide a full description of each issue, the actions taken by the institution that address this issue, and an analysis of the effectiveness of these actions to date. Have the actions taken been successful in resolving the problem? What is the evidence supporting progress? What further problems or issues remain? How will these concerns be addressed, by whom, and under what timetable? How will the institution know when the issue has been fully addressed? Please include a timeline that outlines planned additional steps with milestones and expected outcomes.

The WASC Commission’s action letter of June 2009 required that Sac State prepare a mid-cycle report on three central issues: student learning assessment, planning and budget, and student success as evidenced by retention and graduation rates.

A. Continued Progress on the Assessment of Student Learning

In the WASC Educational Effectiveness Review Report of April 9, 2009, the Visiting Team reported, “Tremendous strides have been made in the assessment of student learning. . . . it is time for the University to develop and adopt a coherent set of undergraduate learning goals. 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.” (WASC EER Report, 17.)

Over the past two years, Sacramento State has built on the progress identified by the Visiting Team and has continued its efforts to strengthen the processes, policies and practice of assessment at the department, unit and University levels. In response to the complications identified by Visiting Team and what the team correctly identified as the “frustration and confusion about assessing . . .multiple interrelated outcomes,” a major effort by the Chair of the General Education/Graduation Policies Committee, in collaboration with the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies and interested faculty members, led to the revision and adoption of the University’s Baccalaureate Learning Goals (BALGs) in November of 2009. These goals, while aligned in many ways with the previous set, were based on system-wide Student Learning Outcomes (Executive Order 1065) drawn from the LEAP (Liberal Education and America’s Promise) initiative. Conceptualizing degree-level learning goals within the LEAP framework had a positive effect, in that the campus began to draw on the “value rubrics” which were part of that effort. As a result, the campus quickly began to reframe and reassess current practice and policies within the context of the revised BALGs and the domains of the VALUE rubrics.

Cooperatively linking academic programs and outcomes
Sacramento State acted as a “beta” campus for the CSU system COMPASS project, and began working on designs for new programs and curricula that would provide direct, explicit evidence of the LEAP domains and thus intersect meaningfully with our BALGs. This work was proposed as a “General Education pilot” and received approval from both the Associated Students, Inc. and the Faculty Senate. Preliminary work in Academic Learning Collaboratives (ALC) has begun and, in the fall of 2011, we had several pilot efforts under way that attempted to reconcile the pressure to generate FTEs with innovative pedagogy and collaborative teaching and learning. Each ALC proposal requires explicit development of opportunities for students to demonstrate progress on the BALGs, as well as information about assessment methods and planning. Additionally, in developing ideas for ALCs, we encourage faculty to “examine the sequence of learning activities with an eye toward identifying which BALGs can be developed by way of the activities” and to
“map the activities onto the VALUE rubrics to produce an assessment matrix.” As a measure of the value of this work, Sacramento State has received additional funding for COMPASS II, a partnership with Cosumnes River College built on aligning SLO’s, easing the transition to CSU and developing an Undergraduate transfer sequence.

First Year Seminars, which fulfill GE Area E and focus on outcomes associated with “becoming an educated person,” already shared common learning goals that were confirmed by the revised BALGs. In the fall of 2010, some sections piloted activities and assignments that introduced the concept of “liberal education” as it is framed by LEAP. Students interviewed faculty, researched general education as both a theoretical concept and in its Sacramento State expression, and developed academic plans and mind maps that provided evidence of accomplishment in each of the domains of the BALGs. First Year Seminars are elements of the First Year Program at Sacramento State and are overseen by the office of the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies. In an important collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, the First Year Program Committee and the Community Engagement Center are exploring ways of incorporating the four learning domains into assessment activities that more typically focus on retention, GPA and demographic indicators. The University General Education Honors Program, which is an inter-departmental collaboration, and part of the University’s first-year curriculum, has organized a student e-portfolio assessment project for its 2011-2012 program assessment activity.

Revising learning outcomes

As WASC observed in its June 2009 letter, “attention also needs to be given to clarifying general education and baccalaureate learning goals before assessment of general education can be conducted.” Current GE assessment policies (last revised in June 2004) embed GE assessment in departmental program review, and the only university-wide review is the Area syllabi review, which is on a five-year cycle. The syllabi review, however, is based on course criteria—not on student learning outcomes—and whether or not those criteria are met in a course syllabus that documents what will be taught. Furthermore, once the University passed the new Baccalaureate Learning Goals (BALGs) in Fall 2009, those goals needed to be fully instantiated in the General Education program goals, criteria and outcomes. We have identified several threads of change as providing possible avenues for improvement of the University’s GE assessment processes—such as removing general education assessment from the program review process and placing it within the context of the Office of Undergraduate Studies and the GE/GRC. The Community Engagement Center also participated in the review and testing of the AAC&U VALUR rubric for Civic Engagement.

According to the existing cycle for GE Area syllabus review, 2011-2012 would be the year for reviewing Area B. But as WASC points out, we cannot proceed with assessment until our goals have been clarified. To that end, the General Education Policies/Graduation Requirements Committee (GEP/GRC) began a process of outcome revision, beginning with Area B. The following process was implemented with shared leadership from Academic Affairs, the GE/GR Policy Committee, the Office of Academic Program Assessment, and the Colleges (Natural Sciences and Mathematics and Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies):

I. Open Forum for Area B Faculty: A panel presentation that reviewed current goals, introduced the BALGs, a timeline for the creation of revised learning outcomes, etc.
II. A Sac CT site[attachment 6] was established by the Dean of the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics
III. A smaller brainstorming session was held for faculty in Area B
IV. An even smaller working group then met periodically to revise the Area B Learning Outcomes to integrate with the BALGs.

The goal was to complete a draft of new learning outcomes for Area B by May 2011 and to undertake Area B assessment in the 2011-2012 academic year. The Area B Learning Outcomes were approved in fall 2011. A similar schedule has been organized for Area C, D and E assessment, to take place in 2012-2013.
Strengthening and institutionalizing assessment
Over the past two years, Sacramento State has also worked to implement improved assessment of student learning 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 coordinator supports, assists and offers expertise to academic programs as they design and implement assessment plans. An electronic newsletter focusing on assessment and the services of OAPA is provided to the campus community on a regular basis. The coordinator’s efforts were critical in the development of the new program review pilot process.
Additionally, to provide broad support to OAPA, the Provost’s Advisory Committee on Assessment (PACA) was formed to make recommendations to the Provost regarding academic program assessment. Chaired by the Interim Assistant Vice President for Academic Programs and Global Engagement, the group has developed a manual for academic program assessment plans that several academic departments have recently put into use. PACA has advised implementing strategies and identifying anticipated obstacles that lie ahead as the institution devotes more time and attention to student learning assessment activities, including a significant report and set of recommendations to the Provost in the spring of 2011. PACA also began to work in the fall of 2011 on possible revisions and improvement of University processes and policies focused on program assessment and student learning.

The Visiting Team identified a number of factors, some internal to the University and some imposed by system requirements (such as VSA compliance), which posed potential challenges to the campus’ ability to develop meaningful assessment and data collection planning. Several connected, but structurally unrelated, elements of the University’s efforts must be brought into alignment to frame and support the centrality of program and student learning assessment to the institutional goal of educational effectiveness. The framework for such alignment is beginning to take shape, and the work of the groups charged with assessment reflects a growing acceptance of viewing assessment within the larger context of student learning.

Areas for Continued Improvement

Although Sacramento State has made progress in defining its educational goals and baccalaureate expectations, the issue of whether it is meeting its goals and to what level, continues to require, and receive, focused attention. While collaborative and learning-centered structures are being organized, each division of the University needs to define its place in an environment focused on the common goal of student learning and a holistic definition of student success. Put another way, the culture of the University must change in a manner that moves structural change (mandated assessment activities) beyond nominal levels. Faculty buy-in occurs when significant numbers of its membership perceive assessment to be common, reasonably accepted and positively influential upon department curricular decisions.

Based on the information provided in program review self-studies and annual assessment reports, a significant number of faculty members continue to embrace the idea that learning is a transmission of knowledge from instructor to student, i.e., framed in terms of delivery and content, rather than understood as the work that students do that is facilitated, designed and evaluated by faculty. This “sacred cow” hinders the development of meaningful assessment of student learning at the program level. Although the University has made progress in the area of student learning and continues to work to improve institutional effectiveness, assessment has not yet become a natural, cultural element of the University’s academic environment.

A clear and productive partnership between program review, program assessment and educational effectiveness is emerging. But, as might be expected at the outset, these activities tend to take place in isolation, without a framing structure that will align assessment and decision-making in ways that strengthen their meaningfulness. While the Program Review pilot project has yielded
significant improvements in the process, the relationship between annual assessment activities, program review, student learning and resources remains underdeveloped.

However, significant progress in this area has resulted from major changes and initiatives. First, College deans have been asked to play a pivotal role in reviewing the annual assessment reports and to take a new, more central and direct role in the program review process. This has resulted in college-level, rather than individual department-level approaches to assessment. Discussions are occurring, for example, across science programs and across arts programs in ways that improve technique and strategy but also create a positive culture of attention to desired program learning outcomes.

Also, the Faculty Senate approved a revision to the 1991 Academic Resources Prioritization policy. The new policy: The Policy on Instructional Program Priorities: Academic Planning, Resource Allocation, and Enrollment Management (2011) for the first time included assessment of student learning among major criteria when ranking the educational effectiveness of programs in consideration of resource allocation. Notably, the student learning criterion required use of a common template that for the first time creates both a framework and a benchmark on which to derive a comparative assessment of student learning across programs.

Importantly, the student learning data submitted via this template has led to significant campus-wide understanding of the inextricable alignment between the educational effectiveness of academic programs with resource allocation. For this reason serious discussion is under way in the Program Review Oversight Committee (PROC) to see how best to integrate the template on program learning outcomes in the program review process. This development has brought the campus closer to fulfilling the Visiting Team’s recommendation that the campus meaningfully address the alignment of program quality with planning and budget. Additionally, PROC is also working on a set of recommendations that aim at revising the program review process to ensure further a more direct alignment between program review and resource allocation decisions. It is anticipated that those revisions will be presented to the Faculty Senate before the end of the spring semester of 2012.

B. Continued Development of Planning and Budgeting

While the Visiting Team reported that the variety of University “assessment reports. . . are well organized and easily accessed,” the team was disappointed, “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.” This disappointment led the team to recommend that the campus focus more on the use of advanced analytical tools and widespread access to data and that planning and budgeting be more coordinated across campus.

Focused, regular and accessible data

The University Office of Institutional Research (OIR) has responded to the need for data as an essential resource for the whole campus. OIR has begun to prepare annual department factbooks that provide programs with retention and graduation data and contextualize programs within their colleges and the university as a whole. The factbooks are organized and accessible on the University’s website.

In addition, the University has also recently implemented a new data warehouse (DW) tool that is widely available across campus—easily accessed by program chairs, administrative directors and academic officers—and that offers admissions, enrollment and course scheduling information. One indicator of the availability and user-friendliness of this resource is that the DW team in Information Resources and Technology responded to more than 2,000 requests for reports and is
now holding monthly information sessions to showcase available reports and gather more requests.

In addition to improved data collection and encouraging widespread consideration of data-driven decision-making, the University is working to improve the meaningfulness and value of the uses to which data is put. This aspect of using data is increasingly important in the face of the fiscal issues facing Sacramento State (and other institutions of higher education in the state and nation.) While the University does have a Strategic Plan and has worked with a set of strategic priorities for the Destination 2010 initiative, the coordination of planning and budget across the campus remains more fragmented than desirable. While program reviews provide the campus community with a sense of each program’s hiring priorities (self-study) and an analysis of those priorities (program review report), budget constraints have delayed fuller development of a systematic and public means of determining the effectiveness of program review in resource allocation decisions.

Areas for Continued Improvement
In response to these issues, as discussed earlier, the Faculty Senate developed in cooperation with the Provost a policy intended to provide a commonly held set of principles to frame the hard decisions that will need to be made in this environment of reduced resources. A Senate Committee for Instructional Program Priorities (SCIPP) was organized to respond to the campus’s need to make a fundamental shift to the institution’s understanding of the connection among programs, student learning, assessment and resource allocations. In the spring of 2012, programs are being evaluated and ranked into four quartiles, based on their responses to a set of questions. The ranked list will be provided to the Faculty Senate and the Provost and will be used to inform resource decisions in the coming budget cycle. This process is intended to provide a data-based “snapshot” of the campus and to strengthen the links among program and student learning assessment, annual assessment reporting and available University resources. At the same time, the focus on learning outcomes is reinforcing the perception that considerably more productive and positive work in the area of assessment of learning outcomes (particularly in the sense of shaping curricular decisions) is occurring than has been assumed by programs reluctant to pursue this path.

Benchmarks: Fully Addressing Our Goals
Perhaps more than anything else, the coordinated mandate from the Provost and the Faculty Senate that every instructional program must provide a detailed report on the status of its learning outcome efforts has begun to change the culture of the campus. The focus has shifted clearly from course outcomes to program outcomes. Programs are accepting the responsibility to state clearly what they believe their graduates should take away from the curriculum generally and how they will know if this is happening. Colleges are integrating discussions among departments (hopefully with measureable goals to follow) so that college tracking of student progress toward graduation (and instructional takeaways) will become the norm.

Equally important, the same mandate has produced comparable benchmarking across programs. Sacramento State henceforward can work with colleges and departments to set very clear goals for major and minor instructional programs and can measure the extent to which those goals are being achieved (or revised, as data indicate). As noted earlier, these benchmarks and follow up to them already are being conceptualized as the common core of the program-review effort.

Finally, exceptional progress is being made in benchmarking the status of General Education goal implementation. For the first time, learning outcome goals are being set for GE Area B, and these soon will promote measures that will permit tracking of accomplishment (or necessary revision) of GE area program goals. The same approach is now being developed among other GE areas. Furthermore, the campus is engaged in reviewing the structure of its GE and GR requirements in the context of its stated goals and available data.

C. Promoting Student Success

Sacramento State remains committed to high levels of achievement in the area of student success. Since the WASC team’s visit in 2009, the University has been highly responsive to the issues
raised in the Commission action letter. The letter focused the University’s attention on several specific areas of student success: continued prioritization of student success as a foremost goal of the University’s mission; ongoing assessment of transfer and native freshmen retention and graduation rates; enhanced work on the Equity Score Card to address the needs of students from underrepresented student populations; and sustaining the vitality of collaborative efforts between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, which has served as a significant strength. In addition, the letter underscored that student success efforts should continue to address barriers and challenges that emerge for students, while expanding on programming at the undergraduate and graduate levels that will facilitate time to degree. The Visiting Team also encouraged the campus to undertake a close examination of flexible course schedule options and innovative retention programming that had the potential to maximize degree attainment.

**University-wide retention and success effort**

In direct response to the paramount role that student success plays on the campus, an Associate Vice President of Student Retention and Academic Success was appointed to provide university-level leadership and oversight of student success. Creation of this position allowed retention programs across the campus to coordinate with clear retention goals in mind. We developed a University-wide Retention Tracking Tool to assist programs in tracking and documenting their work with students, as a way to improve assessment and service utilization. The tool serves as a model in the CSU system of strategic approaches that can be used to better document daily retention work using technology.

Simultaneously with this effort to better track and serve Sacramento State students, we created a brochure chronicling all campus retention programs “The Student Success Brochure” to inform students of the services available to them. We aimed for 100 percent distribution to new students, providing copies to all incoming freshmen and transfer students via University Orientation and in the Sac State portal of every student for ease of reference. This informational and marketing piece has been a key feature of the campus’s Graduation Initiative effort.

As Sacramento State worked on the CSU-system’s Graduation Initiative, we put in place structural mechanisms to fortify the campus’s student success goals. This Chancellor’s Office Initiative was designed to elevate the overall system graduation rate to the top quartile of similar institutions, while closing the achievement gap among underrepresented student populations across the 23 campuses. To address such a goal on the Sacramento State campus, a 36-member team, which included broad representation from throughout the University, was organized into Graduation Initiative Steering Committee. The committee’s basic charge was to make recommendations to the administrative leadership on those strategies that would help to raise the native freshmen and transfer graduation rate.

In addition, the committee was charged with developing and revising the campus plan reporting document and producing an annual strategic plan with focal strategies designed to reach the University’s graduation rate improvement goals. The work of the committee builds upon prior campus retention committees (i.e., the Retention Task Force) and has, at its core, five thematic sub-committees that work bi-weekly on implementation strategies to realize campus-wide change. Unlike prior committees, the Graduation Initiative Steering Committee works to ensure that productive and feasible actions are taken on a continual basis to meet campus retention and graduation benchmarks.

In addition to the Graduation Initiative Steering Committee, the campus is working on developing a long term approach to retention planning that ensures faculty engagement in retention endeavors. To this end, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee has proposed the establishment of a faculty-driven Student Services Committee that will work in tandem with the Academic
Policies Committee (APC), as a sub-committee to promote retention work that will support the longevity and momentum that has been built to increase campus graduation rates long after the system-wide Initiative has expired.

These efforts represent the University’s attempt to address the longstanding need to institutionalize involvement in retention. The establishment of committees and informational and assessment devices has helped to build a foundation for student success work as a core commitment of the University as a whole.

We have also made progress in the specific areas identified in the Commission action letter:

**Equity Scorecard**
In a relatively short period, we have significantly increased concrete actions in the area of retention. A Retention Task Force was created to provide a general set of recommendations to guide work in retention. In tandem with the Retention Task Force, the Campus Educational Equity Committee (CEEC) compiled a template to guide Deans and Associate Deans of Colleges in formulating retention plans for the improvement of the academic performance of underrepresented students. The Office of Institutional Research was then commissioned to provide disaggregated data by College, segmenting the performance of students based on their entry characteristics (i.e., HS GPA, SAT, etc.), baseline performance, first year retention rates, and graduation rates. We then used the data to determine the level of equity or to assess achievement gaps among students in the Colleges. In response to the data, each College devised a plan of action to address barriers to student success within their respective areas. With the formulation of Equity Score Card Plans, each College was then asked to provide an update of progress to CEEC via their Educational Equity Coordinator. In addition, recent work on the CSU Graduation Initiative has called for an executive summary of the outcomes of such plans in relation to work on closing the achievement gap. A snapshot of the progress of underrepresented minority students can be found in the “2011 Minority Quick Facts Report.”

**Closing the Achievement Gap and the Graduation Initiative (GI)**
We have strengthened work in improving performance of diverse students through substantial progress in the use of the Equity Score Card and broader, University-wide efforts through the Graduation Initiative to close the achievement gap. In fact, in 2010-2011 a Closing the Gap Work Group was formed to devise recommendations for addressing achievement gap concerns. The goal of the group was to work in collaboration with the administration to augment the existing Sacramento State Plan on Increasing Graduation Rates. Given the productivity of this informal team, this working group, with the addition of faculty representatives from the Colleges and other key campus stakeholders, became what is now known as the Graduation Initiative (GI) Steering Committee.

One of the major actions of the GI Committee was the development of the 2011-2012 Graduation Initiative Strategic Plan, which has as its focus graduation and student achievement. Within the plan, recommendations were made according to the following themes: Theme 1- Services that Support, Theme 2- Learning that Counts, Theme 3- Defining and Developing the Faculty Role in Student Retention and Graduation Efforts, Theme 4- Incentives that Motivate, and Theme 5- Outreach and Recruit Back/University-wide Engagement. The University has taken action on the following elements of the current plan:

- To address low persistence rates among male students on campus, we developed a male support and academic enrichment program, the Male Empowerment Collaborative- Two Point Conversion Challenge. The goal is to assist male students in raising their GPAs and retention rates on campus. The program has been in place since the fall of 2011. (Note: A companion Female Initiative has also been developed with the goal of reaching the entire campus in the spring of 2012;)

- Degree Roadmaps have been developed for each academic program offered in the University
for both freshmen and transfer students;

- Sacramento State was selected to attend the AAC&U High Impact Practices Summer Institute. At the Institute, the campus team, comprised of representatives from both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, developed and was lauded for, the creation of a sophomore success curriculum and “Connections Framework” designed to improve the retention of second year students (and beyond;)
- In collaboration with Information Resources and Technology (IRT), the campus established a preliminary Early Warning System to assist faculty and staff with better documenting the progress of their students. An accompanying draft white paper[attachment 18 See Additional Documents Section 1] was developed by the Center for Teaching and Learning to outline the benefits of such practices within academia;
- To increase engagement opportunities for students, the University expanded the work of the Leadership Initiative (LI) to include the involvement of over 800 students. This is a record level of growth given the estimated 300 students who were in the program in the 2010-2011 academic year. The LI program helps to promote “Hornet pride,” diversity, wellness, and overall leadership skill development;
- When students stop-out of the University, it is important that they maintain connection to the campus to ensure re-enrollment and future success. With the help of the Enrollment Management Team, we sent letters to recruit students who were in good academic standing and eligible to come back after one semester of non-enrollment back to the University. This strategy represents the first attempt of this kind to engage in recruiting students back to campus and was found to be very effective.

In addition to the work of the GI, the University also unveiled a Peer and Academic Resource Center (PARC)[attachment 19 See Additional Documents Section 1]. The mission of PARC is to create a home base of support for excellence and student success. Services of the Center are accomplished through peer-led and student-driven components that are intended to increase course passage, student retention, build on academic support services and improve graduation rates. The PARC includes supplemental instruction offerings, a university peer advising program, individual and group tutoring, specialized workshops and services to support students at the junior and senior class levels.

Evidence Supporting Assertion of Progress/Documents with Effectiveness of Actions

To substantiate the claims asserted in the student success section, the following reports provide a body of evidence of the outcomes achieved since the last WASC review.

Retention and Graduation Initiatives (Office of Institutional Research Analyses)

- Projected Graduation Rate (2006-2015)[attachment 19a See Additional Documents Section 2]
- Target and Actual Graduation Rate (2006-2015)[attachment 19b See Additional Documents Section 2]
- Milestone towards Graduation for URM[attachment 19c see Additional Documents Section 2]
- Student Flow from Initial Majors to Final Degree Programs[attachment 19d See Additional Documents Section 2]
- Graduation Initiatives: Trends and Progress[attachment 19e See Additional Documents Section 2]
- Graduation Initiatives: Comparison and Focuses[attachment 19f See Additional Documents Section 2]

Areas for Continued Improvement

In reflecting on the progress made in a myriad of student success areas, there still remains room for improvement amid the significant milestones that the campus has reached. Work still needs to be done in some key areas:

1. Continue to further refine College level and departmental retention plans to ensure closure of the achievement gap. This should be done through semester Equity Score Card Progress reports and enlisting campus departments and programs to report outcomes on a semester basis;

2. Find innovative ways to pair academic and student support services to high utilization areas such as the classroom and student/clubs and organizations. This can also be embellished with
increased engagement opportunities for students occurring in campus life that promote wellness, leadership, and diversity;

(3) Refine indicators for student departure, especially among high risk or more dropout prone underrepresented student groups. Using such information, counteract stop-out and dropout behaviors with critical services in the highest attrition years;

(4) Implement the “Connections Framework Model” developed at the AAC&U that will provide retention services and interventions from the freshmen through the senior year to realize notable gains in the campus graduation rate.

**Timeline for Improvements/Planned Steps, Milestones, Expected Outcomes**
To effectively address the nature and scope of student success efforts on the campus, the Graduation Initiative Strategic Plan[^17 See Additional Documents Section 1] provides a comprehensive documentation of planned steps from 2009 to 2015. This 94-page document of recommendations and improvement standards was designed to enable the University to reach its planned milestones and outcomes for improved graduation rates.

**Benchmarks: Fully Addressing Our Goals**
In conclusion, benchmarks fully addressing our goals for student success are delineated in the opening pages of the Sacramento State Campus Plan. This in-depth report includes well-crafted projections charts and the number of graduates needed per year to achieve University goals in student success. (See also the Target and Actual Graduation Rate Goals Chart produced by OIR).

**D. Support for the Development of the Ed.D. Degree Program**
The Educational Effectiveness Review visit in April 2009 included a parallel review of the Sacramento State Ed.D. program. The Commission action letter called for focused attention on five interrelated areas of concern: 1) faculty scholarship; 2) doctoral research/culture; 3) comprehensive assessment plan; 4) formal structure of collaboration; and 5) periodic program review.

**Faculty Scholarship**
Consistent with the Carnegie Foundation’s definition, for the Sacramento State Ed.D. graduate program faculty, scholarship includes four components: discovery of new knowledge, integration of knowledge, application of knowledge, and teaching, which are directly linked to the development of a doctoral/research culture. The core mechanism for establishing and maintaining a culture of research is the scholarship expectations for faculty. This rich context for faculty work supports the central goal of the program, linking theory to practice. In support of this goal, all faculty members are expected to design, conduct, and disseminate their research. Core faculty members in the Ed.D. program must demonstrate a consistent pattern of scholarship, with the requirements differing for each faculty type (core, affiliate).[^20 See Additional Documents Section 2] We ask faculty members to submit a 1-page status report, with supporting evidence, to the Program Director, at the end of each academic year.

**Doctoral research/culture**
The enabling legislation, SB 724 (Scott), authorized Sacramento State to grant the education doctorate (Ed.D.) in Educational Leadership with a focus on developing applied leader-practitioners, who would be capable of addressing the complex educational issues facing the state. In setting this goal, the need to develop and support a research culture suitable for doctoral study has provided a foundation for the design and implementation of the program. The Sacramento State Ed.D. is committed to preparing doctoral degree candidates who are able to conceptualize, design and generate practical action informed by high-level professional applied scholarship. In response to the insights provided by the WASC team, the nascent doctoral culture at Sacramento State has been a central concern of the program, and we have made progress in the transition from a teaching- to a research- focused emphasis.[^21 See Additional Documents Section 2]

**Comprehensive Assessment Plan**
A systemic effort to acquire an accurate, thorough picture of the strengths and weaknesses of program activities has allowed the faculty to use data to improve academic rigor and student
achievement. The examination of multiple sources of data has been used to determine priority goals, to develop assessment plans, and to make concerted efforts to reach programmatic goals. The Ed.D. program has made strides in assessing program goals, student learning outcomes, and core curricular elements in a clear, discernable way. Various assessment tools are utilized to continuously monitor program development, to gain student feedback and prompt future changes. [attachment 21 See Additional Documents Section 2]

**Formal Structure of Collaboration**
Doctoral students develop the skills to be effective leaders as a result of the involvement of faculty from both the Department of Public Policy and Administration (PPA) and the College of Education. The involvement of PPA in the program's curriculum offers students exposure to diverse disciplinary perspectives and skills within the public policy and leadership arena. The Ed.D. Program provides an opportunity for faculty across academic departments with expertise in educational leadership and policy areas to be partners and active participants in the education of future leaders and in the planning and improvement of the program. [attachment 21, in Additional Documents Section 2]

**Periodic Program Review**
The Ed.D. program follows Sacramento State’s Assessment Review Cycle which is a focused inquiry conducted every 6 years. At Sacramento State, periodic program review includes the following: (1) general information about the program (e.g., data on students, faculty, staff, facilities); (2) a statement of intended student learning outcomes at the program level; methods for assessing them, including the use of direct measures; assessment results to data; and documentation of the use of assessment results in efforts to achieve program improvement; and (3) the results of a focused inquiry addressing issues of particular interest/concern to the program itself.

**Timeline for Improvements/Planned Steps, Milestones, Expected Outcomes**
Attachment 21 in Additional Documents, Section 2 delineates the Ed.D. Programs' plans and expected improvements in the coming cycle of review.

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**Attachments**

- 2._BaccalaureateLearning_Goals.pdf
- 3._EO_1065.pdf
- 6._SacCT_ALS_GE_Area_B.pdf
- 7._AssessmentNewsletterF2012.pdf
- 8._PACA_Recommendations_to_Provost_Spring_2011.pdf
- 8a._SIPP.pdf
- 8b._IPP_Learning_Outcomes_Template.pdf
- 9._University_Factbook_2011.pdf
- 10._2011_SCIPP.pdf
- 11._Template_for_Presenting_Program_Data_for_Program_Ranking.pdf

**Additional Documents (section 1)**

**additional documents**

**Attachments**

- 11a._GE_Report_.pdf
- 12._UniversityRetentionServices.pdf
- 13._GradInitSteerComm.pdf
- 14._CEEC_RETENTION_TEMPLATE.pdf
- 17._GI_StrategicPlan_October_21.pdf
- 18._Early_Alert_Program_White_paper.pdf
- 19._PARC_summary_of_services.pdf

**Additional Documents (section 2)**
V. Identification of Other Changes and Issues Currently Facing the Institution

Instructions: This brief section should identify any other significant changes that have occurred or issues that have arisen at the institution (e.g., changes in key personnel, addition of major new programs, modifications in the governance structure, unanticipated challenges, or significant financial results) that are not otherwise described in the preceding section. This information will help the Interim Report Committee gain a clearer sense of the current status of the institution and understand the context in which the actions of the institution discussed in the previous section have taken place.

On January 19, 2012, President Alexander Gonzalez announced the most significant change since the June 2009 WASC Commission Action Letter when he launched a bold new campus initiative that would serve as a unifying theme to achieve the broader educational effectiveness goals of the campus and transform Sacramento State into a University for the 21st century. The campus initiative titled: "Redefine the Possible" is based on recommendations from the faculty, staff, students and the community to inspire innovation and change along a set of values that reinforce excellence and accessibility, agility and efficiency, in a modern attractive campus that is a source of pride for the region and beyond.

"Redefine the Possible" challenges the campus to think boldly and creatively, to create new pathways to success that look beyond the deep reductions in state support and that work towards major changes in curriculum and pedagogy that benefit students and improve efficiency. Notably, President Gonzalez in launching the new initiative in his spring address to the campus stated that: "We must not look just at how we can improve, but how we can re-invent ourselves in the name of improvement. We must stand up for innovation, and stand out in our community, state and nation." [attachment 22]

There have been no modifications to the governance structure of the University. However, a few changes in key personnel have occurred with the retirement of the Vice President for Administration and Business Affairs (with the Vice Provost serving as Interim Vice President in that role) and the Vice President for Human Resources (with the University Counsel as Interim in that role).

Two major programs were approved by WASC: The Doctorate in Physical Therapy (DPT), the first in the CSU, and the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) Online. For both programs, WASC intends to publish the substantive change proposals as samples.

The reductions in state funding for the CSU has had painful effects on our campus. Student tuition fees have increased, and we have been forced to implement program impaction in a handful of majors. The decrease in funding puts Sacramento State’s state support for 2012 at the level that it was in 1998-99, despite higher enrollment and greater diversity in the student body. Additionally, the delay in passing recent state budgets has added to the complexity of enrollment and course management, with FTE targets changing and budget cuts now coming
during – not just before – fiscal years. Future challenges include increased public and political resistance to higher tuition and the continuing economic pressures on our state funding.

The dramatic reductions have compelled all units at the University to focus on change, in all areas of student success and outcomes. We can no longer afford to examine problems parochially, and the improvements we have made in assessment, along with the President’s new initiative, come at an ideal time in terms of creating a framework for improvement. Much of the work we have done and explained in this report required intense collaboration among many units on campus, such as implementing technological solutions and aligning curricula with enrollment. Further increases in cross-divisional cooperation are essential to meeting the challenges of the years to come.

At Sacramento State, we have been able to mitigate some of these painful developments through prudent budget planning via various consultative bodies such as the University Budget Advisory Committee (UBAC) and the Academic Affairs Budget Advisory Committee (AABAC) – committees that were created to enhance budgeting and planning. Among some strategies have been reductions in expenditures that safeguard programs and foster timely progress to graduation for our students and setting aside reserves and use of one time monies. Effective enrollment management tools have enabled us to meet CSU established enrollment targets that further mitigate otherwise severe reductions that could have had serious consequences for program quality, student retention and graduation. As noted above in the section on student success, it is clear that the University has utilized useful and data-driven strategies that have made our ability to weather the budget storm much more manageable than many other similarly situated public universities.

Attachments 22._01_19_2012_Spring_Address.pdf

VI. Concluding Statement

Concluding Statement

Instructions: Reflect on how the institutional responses to the issues raised by the Commission have had an impact upon the institution, including future steps to be taken.

The harmonious convergence we evidenced some four years ago between a campus poised for evidence-based decision-making toward educational effectiveness and the requirements set forth by WASC has strengthened and deepened across the University. Greater infusion of campus-wide input, greater recognition of the need for a change in the campus climate toward student learning, key implications for student success as defined by better retention rates, higher graduation rates in shorter time to degree, campus initiatives that foster innovation and the emergence of systematic frameworks to elicit data and act on results have helped to foster a dynamic campus environment that assures sustainability of progress and sets forth a pathway to meet new challenges, improve weaknesses and address shortcomings.

These improvements also informed the President’s new initiative for the campus. Greater transparency of the budget and planning processes, along with the stark realities of the financial numbers, has resulted in a University community that is eager to enact positive change.

Some notable achievements and benchmarks outlined above serve as the foundation of assurance that the campus is keen to realize its goal as a premier metropolitan comprehensive University in Northern California. As much as we are proud of the adoption of a more meaningful set of BALGs, the requirement for all programs to assess some of the BALGs goals in the majors, the strong movement towards assessment of GE, the further development of the GE Honors Program, the progress in adding two professional doctorates, modernized classrooms, more options for on- and
near-campus living, enhanced student life programs and a new award-winning recreation and wellness center (The WELL), we still do not lose sight of the necessary elements for sustained success.

To this end the emergence of the SCIPP process, the revision of the program review process, the launch of a new campus-wide initiative and continued attention to student success offer persuasive evidence that Sacramento State takes its WASC accreditation as a serious partner to enhance continued improvement in all aspects of University life. In short, the Commission has had a positive and instrumental impact on the achievements of Sacramento State and in mapping a clear pathway to the future. We anticipate further demonstrated progress and evidence in the key areas of improvement in time for the next milestones in our reaccreditation with WASC.

### VII. Required Documents for all Interim Reports

#### Required Documents

**Instructions.** Attach the following documents:

2. Summary Data Form [attached]
3. Complete set of Required Data Exhibits [please see Required Data Exhibits Section]
4. Most recent audited financial statements by an independent certified public accountant or, if a public institution, by the appropriate state agency; management letters, if any. [attached]
5. Organization charts or tables, both administrative and academic, highlighting any major changes since the last visit.[attached]

#### Attachments
- Organizational_charts.pdf,
- Summary_Data_Form_for_Accredited_Institutions_Sac_State.pdf,
- Reporting_Package_for_Sacramento_as_of_10_27_11___READ___for_Fiscal_10_11.pdf

#### Required Data Exhibits

#### Attachments
- 2010_EDTE_Bienniel_report_MultipleSubject.pdf,
- 2012_EDTE_Bienniel_Report_SingleSubject.pdf, Art.pdf, BMED_Multiple_Subject.pdf,
- BMED_Single_Subject.pdf, Business.pdf, EDS_Praxis_Exam.pdf, EDS.pdf,
- Required_data_exhibits_for_interim_reports_Sac_State.pdf

### VIII. Additional Financial Documents

#### Additional Financial Documents

If any of the issues identified in the Commission's action letter relate to financial management or
financial sustainability, the Interim Report must also include the following documents. Attach them to this page.

1. Financial statements for the current fiscal year including Budgeted and Actual Year-to-Date and Budgeted and Actual Last Year Totals.

2. Projected budgets for the upcoming three fiscal years, including the key assumptions for each set of projections.