

## In This Issue:

- The 2002 National Survey of Student Engagement
- The Summer Student Services Survey
- The Golden Years of California State University
- Wondering about WASC?
- Casper Survey Questions Got You Curious?
- The OIR Welcomes a New ASC

## The 2002 National Survey of Student Engagement

The experiences that students accumulate during college contribute more, in terms of desired outcomes, than either who they are or where they go to school. In support of this statement is the fact that the most significant predictor of student learning and personal development is the time and energy that students devote to educationally purposeful activities. Research in higher education suggests that those institutions which more fully engage their students in a variety of activities contributing to valued college outcomes can claim to be of higher quality when compared to colleges and universities where students are less engaged.

Last year, about 365 colleges and universities from across the nation participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). CSUS took part in the survey, along with 12 other CSU campuses which formed a consortium to share comparative and aggregated data.

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In the 2002 spring semester, a random sample of 500 first-year and 500 senior students at CSUS was chosen to share their views by completing a short survey. The survey focused on areas that are very important to achieving a high quality undergraduate education;

specifically, what students do and what they say about their experiences. The overall response rate for CSUS was 41%, which is the same as the national rate, as compared to just 36% for the CSU consortium.

Listed below are some highlights from the 2002 National Survey of Student Engagement:

- Both CSUS freshmen and seniors gave a “good” rating to their overall CSUS experiences.
- CSUS freshmen and seniors indicated less frequent conversations and collaboration with faculty when compared to the national or Master’s comparison groups <sup>(1)</sup>.
- CSUS freshmen and seniors rate the quality of advising between “fair” and “good,” which is a lower response when compared to the national or Master’s comparison groups.
- CSUS freshmen and seniors read fewer assigned textbooks and/or books than do those of the national or Master’s comparison groups.
- Freshmen and seniors at CSUS spend more time working for pay off campus and less time preparing for classes than do freshmen and seniors in the Master’s and national comparison groups.

Some selected findings on how CSUS students spend their time:

	CSUS Freshmen	CSUS Seniors
Preparing for class	6-10 hrs/wk	11-15 hrs/wk
Using campus library	Less than 1 hrs/wk	1-4 hrs/wk
Using a computer for class assignments	1-4 hrs/wk	5-10 hrs/wk
Working for pay off campus	6-10 hrs/wk	11-15 hrs/wk

(1) National = All four-year participating colleges and universities  
Master’s comparison group = Master’s I & II category as defined by the 2000 Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education

For more information, please visit: [www.oir.csus.edu/NSSE2002](http://www.oir.csus.edu/NSSE2002)

## The Summer Student Services Survey - Planned for the Future

Assessing student needs may be a little bit like making a New Year’s resolution – people talk about it, but they don’t often act on it. In the case of New Year’s resolutions, that may be because people often set unrealistic goals. But when discussing the topic of assessment, it becomes clear that there are techniques that, when properly employed, can produce a very effective assessment of student needs.

By implementing a Summer Student Services survey, we hope to obtain student opinions regarding the availability of student services and course offerings during the Summer semester. In this pursuit, we will ask students to complete a short (5-10 minutes) survey form.

The results of this survey will enable us to better understand student concerns and find ways to improve services offered that will enhance the educational experience for CSUS students and improve persistence; thereby, increasing continued learning opportunities. The survey will be administered in class to a sample of students enrolled in summer sessions.

The Summer Student Services survey was first administered in 2001. If you are interested in viewing the results of the Summer 2001 survey, please visit the following website: <http://www.oir.csus.edu/summerservicesurvey>.

## The Golden Years of California State University

California State University, Sacramento was founded in 1947, the very beginning of the famous “baby boom”, a period of expanding population and economic prosperity following World War II.

In order to accommodate the droves of young men and women returning from war wanting to attend college, California began a massive building campaign, which included: new community colleges, new University of California campuses and new State Colleges. CSU campuses were created in Sacramento, Los Angeles, Pomona, and San Luis Obispo in 1947; in Long Beach in 1949; in Bakersfield, Northridge, and Sonoma in 1956; in Fullerton in 1957; in Hayward in 1959; in Stanislaus in 1960; and in

Dominguez Hills and San Bernardino in 1965. These new campuses quickly filled up, but by the early 1970s an era of slow and stable growth began to emerge.

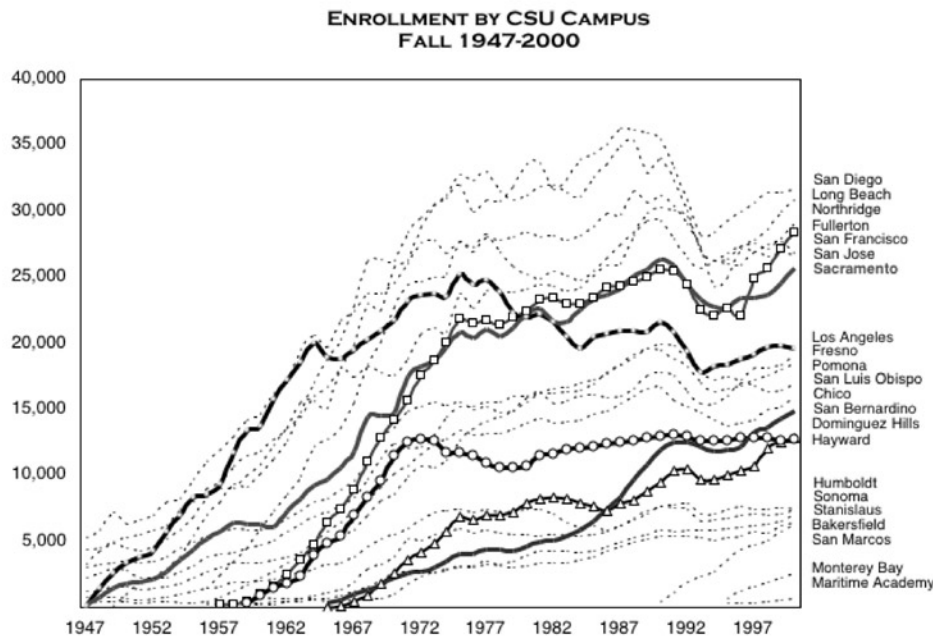
More recently, new campuses were developed at San Marcos in 1990; Maritime Academy in 1994; and Monterey Bay in 1995.

The chart above illustrates the enrollment growth patterns of the 22 CSU campuses (excluding the Callexico Center near the Mexican border). In general, similarly sized campuses can be compared in terms of budget and per-student expenditure, and therefore naturally cluster into three “tiers”.

- The first tier, known as “The Seven Sisters,” consists of seven campuses near the top rankings in total enrollment: San Diego, Long Beach, Northridge, Fullerton, San Francisco, San Jose and Sacramento, all in the 20 to 30 thousand range.

- The second tier contains eight campuses with enrollments in the 10 to 20 thousand student ranges. This group is characterized by more specific programs and/or regional features, as exemplified by the two Cal Poly campuses.
- The third tier of campuses consists of mostly new, expansion campuses that are either still starting up or are occupying outlying geographic areas.

The CSU growth chart has a few noteworthy features, as well. While reviewing the chart you may notice that Sacramento tends to consistently maintain a lower track than those of its sister campuses. Closest in behavior to Sacramento is Fullerton, although a sudden surge appears to have happened after 1996. Los Angeles, a onetime leader in enrollment growth, seems to have slowed its pace, and by the end of the 1970s had already dropped down into “tier 2”.



Hayward has followed a flat, almost horizontal track, indicating that they are operating at capacity. Dominguez Hills is still showing substantial growth, while the current leader in sustained growth is San Bernardino.

It is important to recognize that there are underlying reasons that help to shape these growth curves. Our

emphasis, however, is directed toward the final conspicuous feature of the growth chart that shows a deep decline caused, in great part, by the 1992 California budget crisis. At that time, a number of campuses were forced to curtail services and restrict new admissions. That burden was borne mostly by those campuses in the first tier.

As you may well know, Californians are currently facing another budget crunch, the depth of which is still being debated. It may be of some comfort, however, to glance at the growth chart and note that after 1992, we did bounce back—showing the resiliency that often arises out of dire necessity.

## Wondering about WASC?

**C**SUS is gearing up for its WASC accreditation; since the Office of Institutional Research is involved in this process, we thought it might be useful to highlight some of the more frequently asked questions in regard to accreditation to help the campus community better understand its importance as well as to relate some of the current efforts being made in this area.

### What is WASC Accreditation?

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) is one of six regional accrediting associations in the United States. WASC was formed in 1962 to promote the welfare, interests, and development of education and holds great significance in the Western region. WASC grants accreditation to institutions not individual programs, or in the case of CSUS, individual colleges.

### Why are institutions accredited through WASC? Is it mandated by a government agency?

No institution in the United States is required to be accredited; however, eligible institutions seek to become accredited because of the known benefits. In attaining WASC accreditation, an institution shows that it has met established standards and proves that it is working toward achieving its stated goals and objectives. Accreditation also encourages institutional development and improvement through self-study and review. The higher education community, students, parents, governmental agencies, and the general public view WASC accreditation as an indicator of effective educational practices and institutional quality.

### What is the primary focus of the WASC accreditation process?

The evaluation of an institution's educational capacity and effectiveness are the primary focus of the current WASC accreditation process, though that process has been interpreted and structured differently in the past. During the 1996-1997 review, WASC focused on assessment and the compilation of evidence to substantiate claims regarding the university's educational effectiveness. At that time, program and institutional assessment were relatively new ideas, and CSUS invested considerable energy and resources in the development of a comprehensive assessment infrastructure.

In the years since our last review, WASC has shifted its emphasis from a focus on assessment and data to a focus on student learning. Operating under the assumption that all universities are now active participants in "Cultures of

Evidence," this shift is the next logical step in an attempt to change the paradigm of academe from one that is based on knowledge and content to one that emanates from a learning-centered perspective. In the next review, WASC will be looking for a coherent linkage between institutional and programmatic assessment and how that assessment is used to affect student learning. In order for CSUS to evolve further in this direction, certain changes and innovations will be required in the current planning and budgeting infrastructure. All levels of the university community will need to be included in these changes.

### What is involved in the WASC accreditation process?

The WASC accreditation process involves a detailed evaluation of an institution's educational capacity and effectiveness. There are three formal stages in the WASC accreditation process with the first being an Institutional Proposal, which for CSUS is due in October of 2004. Its purpose is to guide the entire review process by setting the stage for issues the University would like to address. The second stage is the Preparatory Review, which is due in spring of 2005, it is designed to enable WASC to determine whether or not an institution fulfills its commitment to Institutional Capacity. Institutional Capacity refers to the institution functioning with clear purposes, high levels of integrity, fiscal stability, and organizational structures and processes to fulfill its purposes. The third stage is the Educational Effectiveness Review, due in spring 2007, which is intended to be significantly different from the Preparatory Review in that it allows the institution to reflect upon its chosen educational objectives and the extent to which they have been met.

### What is CSUS doing in preparation for the WASC review?

A WASC Steering Committee has been appointed for CSUS and meets regularly to plan for the upcoming review. The group is now in the process of reviewing all WASC standards and available data to decide upon the areas the University would like to address. The standards fall into four broad categories: 1) Defining Institutional Purpose and Ensuring Educational Objectives; 2) Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions; 3) Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Sustainability and 4) Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement. Once this initial work has been done, the group will begin the first draft of the Institutional Proposal for CSUS. That draft will be submitted for review and once it has been accepted by WASC, the steering committee will move further into the second phase, the Preparatory Review. For more information about CSUS preparation for the WASC review, please visit [www.oir.csus.edu/wasc](http://www.oir.csus.edu/wasc).

## CASPER Survey Questions Got You Curious?

**H**ow satisfied are CSUS students with the methods employed by faculty? How much of a problem is credit card debt for students? The answers to these questions and many others have been provided by the CASPER telephone and web-based registration surveys. Since 1995, this survey has been administered every spring and fall to students prior to their registering for classes. The implementation of a summer semester CASPER survey occurred for the first time in 2002.

The purpose of this survey is to examine student needs and perceptions about such topics as:

- a) academic issues (via fall semester surveys) including advising, General Education, pedagogical strategies, service learning, internships, fieldwork experiences, class scheduling and lab facilities, learning strategies, and student-faculty collaboration.
- b) issues related to support services and campus life (via spring semester surveys) including clubs and organizations, services and resources, campus climate, and social activities.

By combining traditional assessment methodology and modern technology, the survey allows us to collect information from a large and representative sample of students in a relatively unobtrusive manner.

The CASPER survey questions serve two main functions. The first is to inform the Council for University Planning, the body that annually reviews University evidence regarding the progress made on planning objectives and key performance indicators for each of the CSUS Strategic Plan's themes. Many questions are developed and used on a regular basis for this purpose. The second function is to supply various campus units with specific information. Some survey administrations focus on a particular issue. For example, in order to meet NCAA reporting requirements, all students registering in spring 1995 were asked about their interest in participating in athletics. For the purposes of program review, the fall 1998 survey was devoted to General Education. The fall 2000 survey focused on campus life in order to report on the Year of Unity efforts.

The Office of Institutional Research analyzes responses to the surveys and prepares reports based on those findings for the relevant groups. We also prepare a summary report for each survey as feedback to the students that participated in it, as well as to inform the larger community of the survey findings. The summary reports are available at [www.oir.csus.edu/CASPER](http://www.oir.csus.edu/CASPER).

## The OIR Welcomes a New Administrative Support Coordinator

**W**e are pleased to welcome a new administrative support coordinator, Jon Shiveley in the Office of Institutional Research. Jon joined the OIR staff in September 2002. He received a Bachelor's Degree in Advertising and a minor in Creative Writing from San Jose State University. Jon comes to us from SYSCO Food Services of San Francisco where he developed and maintained the company's internet and intranet websites, and coordinated multiple promotional events and activities.

staff

## Institutional Research

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