

Response to WASC 2009 Action Letter

I. Support for and Development of the EdD program

The 2009 action letter suggested that:

1. The University develop a formal structure of collaboration between the two Colleges that hosted the EdD program;
2. A comprehensive assessment plan be developed for the program;
3. The University develop a share definition of the characteristics of a “doctoral culture” and create policies that supported those qualities.

RESPONSE: The special visit in 2013 yielded 3 main recommendations. A [report](#) prepared by the Director of the EdD Program in Spring 2016 reveals that the program has made significant improvements to its budget issues and concerns about workload.

In spring of 2016 the Graduate Studies Program Committee (GSPC) worked with the directors of both doctoral programs to update the [Undergraduate and Graduate Degree Policy](#) to include descriptions of the standards of faculty and student performance in the doctoral programs. The Faculty Senate is expected to take up the policy revisions during its Fall 2016 meetings.

II. Promotion of Student Success

The 2009 Commission action letter emphasized the need to:

1. Create a permanent oversight entity to student and address challenges and barriers to student persistence and graduation;
2. Expand the connections between the student success initiatives and the University’s graduate programs;
3. Address obvious barriers to timely graduation, such as deficiencies in course scheduling

RESPONSE: Essay 3 of this *Institutional Report* focuses on student success, student learning and graduation and retention and details the campus’ efforts in this area. It was clear from the Commission’s response to the 2012 *Interim Report* that the campus’ efforts in this areas were bearing fruit.

III. Development of Planning and Budgeting

The 2009 Commission action letter requested a focus on the following:

1. **Align budgeting and planning more clearly and coordinate the several levels of planning and budgeting more intentionally;**

RESPONSE: Although the budget is FTES driven, most of the expenditure goes to support salaries, benefits and other mandated expenses negotiated in large part through collective bargaining agreements and funds for specified purposes designated by either the California Legislature or the CSU Board of Trustees. As such the amount of “discretionary” funds beyond our base funding is what is generally available to consider in budget talks. Even so, there are several levels of planning for the “uncommitted” funds to meet university priorities and strategic goals. At the core is the University Budget Advisory Committee which makes recommendations to the President for funding. UBAC membership includes all administrative divisions of the campus. Each division head, typically a Vice president will work with top managers in their units to identify funding priorities and bring it to UBAC for discussion. (see [Appendix 2B](#))

2. **Involve the faculty more in the budget and planning process;**

RESPONSE: At the College-level, Deans work with Department Chairs and department chairs work with their colleagues in the department based on funding priority guidelines (e.g., guidelines to hire faculty) and other department needs based on any curriculum re-design efforts within the discipline as recommended from accreditation or Program Review reports. This process, in addition to UBAC, ensures faculty are engaged in the budget and planning process. In addition, the CFO makes an annual budget presentation to the Faculty Senate outlining state budget allocations and plans to fund institutional priorities.

3. **Improve the transparency of the budget and planning process by providing widespread access to any relevant data;**

RESPONSE: All relevant data to support budget and planning is widely available on the [UBAC](#) website and the [OIR](#) website and is accessible to all in the campus.

4. **Communicate information about financial matters to the campus community on a regular basis;**

RESPONSE: Budget and financial matters are widely communicated via the [President’s Office](#) and [Office of the Chief Financial Officer](#).

5. **Strengthen the campus’ planning efforts through use of advanced analytical tools**

RESPONSE: Platinum Analytics (course demand analytics) – Sac State appointed a Platinum Analytics Strategic Scheduling Team in December 2015. The team met throughout spring semester to validate data and review snapshots and registration reports for fall 2016 based on our first optimization run. Course sections were added with the goal of meeting student demand more effectively. The team is exploring options with the goal of recommending a campus-wide approach to managing reserve capacity. The team is planning for our spring 2017 optimization run that will be conducted after census this fall. Platinum Analytics currently uses historical data from CMS; degree audit and Smart Planner data will be used in the future.

IV. Assessment of Student Learning

The Commission's response to the 2012 interim report revealed significant improvements since the October letter of 2009.

RESPONSE: The concerns raised by the Commission and the University's progress in assessing student learning are dealt with in detail in the essays on educational quality (Essay 3) and the essay on quality assurance (Essay 4.)

However, as a result of the significant transitions in the campus leadership team coupled with a number of years of tight budgets and a decreasing commitment on the part of the state legislature to fund higher education, this continues to be an area of University focus and effort. The Academic Program Review Committee (APROC) and the Provost's Assessment Council have both discussed ways to improve the alignment of assessment and program review with resource allocations, but no formal proposals have been presented. In 2013 the campus underwent a detailed and time-consuming [Instructional Program Priorities \(IPP\) review](#), which appeared to hold some promise, but given serious concerns about the process and rankings by the Faculty Senate, the University has not yet reached a final status on this issue. None the less, program review reports remain the principle mechanism by which academic departments and college deans make resource allocation decisions as part of the budget process. For example, the Provost has established the criteria for requesting faculty positions based on campus priorities for Student Success.