WASC Accreditation Meeting Spring 2003
Summary Information From Small Group Discussions
Tuesday, April 15, 2003; Noon - 1:30

Note: The planning committee appreciates the time so many folks took to come to this initial accreditation meeting. The broader the involvement of faculty, staff, students, and administrators the more accurate the picture we can paint for WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges). Those who participated have already helped shape the nature of the review as well as provide information that will become part of our self-study report.

The five areas around which small discussion groups focused were:

Planning & Decision Making
Curriculum & Assessment
Student Services
Administrative Services (e.g., Human Resources, Peoplesoft)
Budget

Planning and Decision Making Notes
Bob Cooper and Pam Stacks, facilitators

Introductions.

Short overview by Pam and Bob.

Questions:
1. Will the sub-group we are currently part of translate into a long-term commitment with frequent meetings? No. Two purposes today. (1) Give an over of the accreditation
process. (2) Take the information generated by the sub-groups today and inform the process. The issues raised will be posted on the web.

2. Who is the Steering Committee? The current Steering Committee is a tentative assignment. The Senate will approve the membership of the committee. The current committee membership was given.

3. Who is the Chair of the process? Bethany Shifflett.

4. Is the former WASC report and evaluation on the web? No, because it is not currently available in electronic form. Indicate that we do have specific issues that need to be addressed (such as assessment of the student learning outcomes) and those will be posted on the web. Also indicated that the form of this review is considerably different from reviews from the past.

5. WASC appears to be a huge job. How will we do it? Our focus is on determining a process of decision-making.

**Discussion:**

1. Need for mission statements at all levels to guide processes and priorities.

2. Goals are the place where more specificity arises.

3. We are talking about a variety of processes.
   a. Budget Priority Process only deals with new funds.
   b. Process for adding new faculty positions
      i. One process seems to be a lot of side deals. Perceived to be a bad way to approach.
      ii. Bottom-up process is working well. Faculty in departments or programs evaluate needs, forward to Deans, forwarded to Provost for approval.
   c. Program Planning is a good process. Need better follow-through. When resources are not required, change happens quickly.
   d. Planning Councils within the Colleges haven’t really coalesced.
   e. In the Admin and Finance Division – developing scorecard for collecting data – outcome based measures. Very reactive at this stage, no planning discipline. How to keep in step with the rest of the campus needs? Not yet a planning discipline in place. Need for strategic planning and financial planning.

4. Planning is very decentralized.
   a. Colleges have it working.
c. Where is the integrative function for decentralized plans?

d. Plans sometimes just effervesce.

5. Planning versus the decision making? Who is in charge of making a decision at the end of a planning process?

6. How to get all constituents involved in planning processes? Particularly across Divisions?

7. IPAR – Support for planning possible. Need hierarchy structure of planning – planning our planning.

8. Academic Senate role? This group has received uneven information or piecemeal information. Mostly via email from the Senate Chair for specific issues (such as SOTES, Department Voting rights, etc.) Consistent emails with background information (parallel to the CSU emails that Bethany Shifflett has sent for the local have to go that Senate business). Know that web site is available but have to make the effort to go there.

9. CSU Chair’s survey (Sally Veregge our representative). What is the role of Chairs on our campus? What is their training? Is the training aligned with the roles assigned?

10. Communication is still an important issue. Again, especially across Divisions.

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**Budget Notes**

Irene Miura & Sandy Dewitz Facilitators

Outcomes related to the topic: 1) to define and to prioritize goals with assessment plans and cost/benefit analyses; and 2) to assure congruence between priorities and resource allocations.

Processes on our campus: 1) What procedures would most strengthen SJSU’s ability to reach campus consensus on an alignment between budget priorities and academic programs offered? and 2) Are the current processes fully effective in guaranteeing such alignment?

**Resource allocation on our campus:**

- Without a stable budget, the processes for aligning budget priorities and academic program offerings are not (nor can they be) smooth. It is difficult to build consensus when outside influences affect our budget.
- Programmatic decisions should not be driven by resource availability. The priorities
should be set so that decisions (in both good and bad budget times) are based on agreed upon priorities.

**Budget priorities:**

- On our campus, the budget priorities are too encompassing to be effective. They don’t eliminate anyone or anything. Specificity is difficult to achieve.
- One priority is to protect instruction in lean budget times—difficult to do, but we have managed to meet that priority.

**Who sets the priorities:**

- The system has set service to upper division students as a top priority for the CSU. If we had an extra $xxx for classes, it would first go for additional upper division courses; then lower division courses; and graduate level courses would be last.
- A matrix of priorities has been based on the California Master Plan for Higher Education. For example, in enrollment management, the priorities might be access versus quality. The CSU’s priority is access. Access is easier to measure than quality; therefore, the Legislature promotes access (measured by the number of students served).

**Culture of evidence:**

- If we were to set as a priority over the coming years--to improve quality of instruction or restore it to previous levels--how would we provide the quantitative and qualitative evidence that quality had declined? Could we use measures such as papers published, student-faculty-ratio (SFR), library collections, graduate courses, and conference attendance?
- Demonstration of the effects of these factors on student outcomes is difficult to measure. The feedback loop from goal--to movement toward the goal--to a measure of whether or not you’ve reached the goal—is difficult to quantify.
- Measures of faculty workload across the nation were done in the 1980s and 1990s. These are now being compared. Is faculty workload a measure of quality of instruction?
- Chairs survey in the CSU. If chairs are happier now that they are paid a stipend, how does that affect student achievement? Should student achievement be an outcome for determining whether or not to put our money there?
- We have lots of task forces at work putting together many suggestions that require allocation of resources. Very few of these suggestions require measures of how they affect student outcomes.

**Student outcomes:**

- SJSU has one of the lowest SFRs in the CSU (this may be a function of types of students and programs). We have increased our assigned time over the years, but according to our student survey data (NSSE), students say faculty are not accessible to students. It is difficult to show that X (e.g., assigned time) that we think leads to quality of instruction and positive student outcomes actually does so.
About 2/3 of the discretionary academic budget is going into quality initiatives. There is no formal process to establish priorities for that budget, and it sometimes comes down to a struggle between entrepreneurial versus strategic planning principles when determining the allocations.

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**Student Services Notes**
Annette Nellen & ST Saffold Facilitators

**What we do well**

Themes:

- Using technology to make certain resources available 24/7 and in one place.
- Tutoring available to many
- Help exists for frosh to transition

**Graduate Studies**

- One-stop shopping in one place
- Students can do everything online
- Process applications in 5 weeks (rather than 3 – 4 months)
- Improved collaboration with departments

**Library**

- Make resources available 24/7
- Virtual reference service – ask questions 24/7
- Work with departments to work with students to do research
- Incorporate info competency into undergrad classes
- Enrollment services – coordinated student support services – one place, one director

**English Dept**

- About 5% of 1A and 1B students get tutoring funded by the dept
- Have trained upper division students to do tutoring
- Problems – (1) not enough money and (2) getting weak students to write at university level.

**Freshmen**
Mandatory advising and orientation
Matrices for course selection/assignment
MUSE and learning communities and peer mentors

LARC and their outreach to departments to identify their needs.
Transportation options
Career Center – career fairs and additional services
Added computer labs
Access to housing options
Tuition waivers for TAs
Faculty mentor program
DRC’s adaptive technology lab
BSAC

Weaknesses

Themes:

- Insufficient coordination among services in how delivered and communicated to students.
- Lack of diversity across campus staff and faculty

Coordination of services
Communication about services
Telling admitted students about prestigious programs at SJSU – doesn’t really happen
Presenting university education to students as a bureaucracy and “checking off boxes” to get a degree rather than becoming an education person.
Need better training for tutors and coordination of training
Lack of diversity among faculty
Possible loss of orientation program for transfer students
· Relationship with feeder community colleges needs work

· Informing students about available resources (library, tutoring, advising)

**What should be the process for determining when resources should be allocated?**

· It is difficult to get projects funded.

· Need to identify and coordinate priorities; prevent duplication of effort and funds.

· Need a strategic plan.

· Need for coordination of goals and the people who are the decision makers– need to a central clearinghouse.

· Need to have more assessment of expenditures to be sure they are effective. Try to make assessment workable – perhaps a “grand jury” of cross section of SJSU community to provide input in addition to surveys.

**Information needed**

· Basic stats – time to graduation, retention rate, time from application to letter to students

· Better way to identify problems – need to be specific

· Exit surveys of students

· Why do students chose SJSU?

· How does the community think we are doing?

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*Administrative Services Notes*

Bethany Shifflett facilitator

**Introductions**

**Overview of Accreditation Process for SJSU**

· Proposal is sent to WASC (Western Association of Schools & Colleges) outlining the context for the review as well as defining specific goals and outcomes for the
accreditation review in light of issues arising from the institution’s own planning and development processes and emerging from the institution’s examination of itself under the new accreditation Standards, as well as specific issues raised by the Commission as a result of the last institutional review;’ (from WASC accreditation handbook). Note: Our proposal accepted - though WASC has asked for clarification on focus.

- Preparatory Review is the 1st of the two reviews conducted by WASC. Its focus is on demonstrating SJSU's capacity to deliver its educational programs. WASC provides this description: the Preparatory Review is intended to be a focused review which includes a site visit with clearly defined purposes and procedures. These are to:

  1. Audit and verify the information provided in the Institutional Presentation, and to assure that the data presented fairly and accurately portray the state of the institution at the time of review.

  2. Evaluate key institutional resources, structures, and processes in the light of the Commission’s Standards to assure that the institution operates at or above threshold levels acceptable for accreditation (or candidacy) and, where appropriate, to identify any capacity-related issues that need to be carried forward in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

  3. Assess the institution’s preparedness to undertake the Educational Effectiveness Review as proposed, and to assist the institution in refining its focus and plan for that review.

- Educational Effectiveness Review is the 2nd of the two reviews. It is focused on the extent to which the institution fulfills its educational objectives.
- Institutional Portfolio. Described by Portland State University as a web site for self-evaluation, reflection, and planning, an institutional portfolio is one component of the institutional presentation to WASC.

Two Handouts Shared

- One page summary of proposal.
- One page summary of WASC standards

**Discussion focused on Challenges/Opportunities in the area of Administrative Support Services**

**Access**

Constituents, particularly new and current students, need to find that information is easily accessible. It becomes very important when trying to find answers that a person be
available to answer questions. It is extremely important that the person reached be knowledgeable.

Each staff/faculty member interacting with the public, and particularly students, needs to think and act from a PR perspective. We WANT the students to choose to come to SJSU and meet their educational goals here at SJSU.

Something akin to 'night college' needed to accommodate students on campus outside of normal business hours.

**Resources**

Voice mail: Messages need to lead to information and when message left they need to be returned in a timely manner.

Admissions & Records division needs to be focused/trained on retention/recruitment. Attitude matters.

Signage on buildings needs to be improved.

Maps need to be functional rather than decorative.

More is needed for transfer students to facilitate the transition. Particularly with help registering their 1st semester.

Web site needs to be made more intuitive; needs a better search facility; needs more forms available.

**Peoplesoft (CMS)**

Its newness presently affecting integrity of data

Seen as too rigid - can't accommodate actual needs. We're shaping our behavior/processes around the software rather than the software supporting our processes.

Finance component fine. HR very cumbersome. Putting 1 person in charge a huge burden - in a one person office it is unreasonable with respect to workload and ability to get work done.

The software MUST be modified to allow saving along the way. Presently you must complete 'a process' before saving. In the real world of department offices, phones, walk-in questions, and a whole host of regular interruptions make it impossible to complete various processes. Presently, when interrupted and CMS times out - all work is lost.

On the positive side, the potential for a rich resource there. We will have the ability to 'mine' information in a more thorough and complete manner.
Administrative Processes

Enrollment services - too many hurdles.

Recruitment and show rate affected when materials lost, notification takes unreasonably long, and turn around time for requests of information too long.

Retention affected when mis-information, conflicting information, or lack of information leads to delays in advancing to the degree for students. All resources (web, staff, faculty, administrators) need to be working from the same source of information.

Curriculum & Assessment Notes
Thalia Anagnos & Miki Donoho Facilitators

The following three questions were asked to participants

1. What do we do well/poorly at each level: department/unit, college/division, university?
2. How should we go about (processes) defining goals, objectives, and priorities at each level?
3. What information is needed to help define goals, objectives, priorities and measure progress toward them?

Doing Well
- Broad educational exposure that students get
- Semester abroad program and the ease with which units from participating campuses are accepted at SJSU
- Internships
- Library – good connection with other libraries and excellent access to online databases.
- Requirement of writing in all GE courses. Suggest that it be required in ALL courses.
- Where they exist, advisory boards for departments provide excellent planning and review (should encourage advisory boards in all programs)

What could We Do Better

Units to Graduation
- Try and reduce the units to graduation by requiring advising when students are juniors
- The process for reducing to 120 units is not tied back to the real needs of the program. Need a better process for correlating number of units in the program with students and program needs.

Remediation
- Resources for remediation seem to be declining – lost the writing center, relying more and more on community colleges that also don’t have adequate resources.
- Re-establish a writing center for students
· Better articulation with K-12 so that remediation can be taken care of in K-12. (Note: SJSU English department is working with teachers at high schools to define goals for their programs)
· Need to provide faculty resources (such as faculty development) to help them improve student’s writing skills
· Develop an SJSU Academy to help students with remediation (use Foundation funds to help support it)

Advising
· Support advising efforts by providing some release for it

Course Offerings
· How summer session fits into the budget/offering of classes – a concept that was originally developed to increase offerings is now actually reducing offerings
· Better systems for determining how to maximize courses offerings such as when and how offer classes (online, which semesters/sessions, cross-listed, shared resources with other departments, etc.)

University Processes
· All processes on campus need to become more agile and share with each other more
· There seems to be a lack of coordination among members of the administration.
· Process of getting new courses accepted into the curriculum is cumbersome. Need to be more agile and responsive so that programs can immediately adjust to identified needs.
· Need a better understanding of the quality of programs in other countries so that we can accept courses from these countries when students apply to our programs
· Need to use technology effectively for both curriculum and assessment (web-based surveys for assessment, email lists for communication with students resources to support faculty so that they don’t spend excessive amount of time developing the electronic resources. An example was given of having technicians who could help faculty build a template web page)

Processes for defining goals, objectives, priorities
· Top goal: Become the university (programs) of choice for students and employers. All programs (academic, administrative and student services) should support this goal for the university
· Need to build a strategic plan from the ground up, starting with departments, then colleges, then the university. In the past the strategic plan seemed to come from the top down and missed important curricular issues.
· Get local industry involved with strategic planning, including employers who help us identify what is needed and graduates to discuss what they need, what worked well and what didn’t.
· Should have a survey of graduates who graduated 10 years ago because they have a good perspective on what SJSU provided fro them. Sometimes recent graduates haven’t put things into perspective yet.
· Faculty indicated that they knew little about how most process for anything on this
campus work. They would like to have some documentation of processes, so that they could better understand how they work.
· A system for sharing of best practices and ways to avoid bottlenecks.
· Need to determine priority for use of funds with respect to remediation and regular courses (how much for each) What should we be expecting of CCs and SJSU?

For those who would like to browse a little for more information, check below.

SJSU Proposal to WASC (full version)
WASC Standards (Summary)
WASC Web Site
Handbook of Accreditation (WASC standards found here)
A Guide to Using Evidence in Accreditation Process

Link to SJSU Accreditation site which will be built out as WASC review proceeds

Links to other CSU accreditation sites
  - CSU Long Beach
  - CSU San Bernadino

Link to Portland State University's Institutional Portfolio