

June 17, 2024

HERBERT LEE,
Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

RE: WASC Draft Institutional Report

Dear Herbie,

The Academic Senate has reviewed your proposed WASC draft institutional report. The Committees on Educational Policy (CEP), Teaching (COT), and Graduate Council (GC) have reviewed and responded. Their communications are enclosed for your consideration.

The Senate appreciates the opportunity to provide consultation on the draft report and looks forward to reviewing the final proposal.

Sincerely,



Patty Gallagher, Chair
Academic Senate

Enc: Senate Committee Responses (Bundled)

cc: David Lee Cuthbert, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy
Andrew Fisher, Chair, Graduate Council
Elisabeth Cameron, Chair, Committee on Teaching
Mary Laurence, Senior Academic Planning Analyst
Peter Biehl, Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies
Matthew McCarthy, Vice Chair, Academic Senate
Richard Hughey, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education and Global Engagement
Andrea Cohen, Director of Strategy and Chief of Staff, Academic Affairs
Julian Fernald, Director, Institutional Research, Analytics, and Planning Support
Anna Sher, Director
Matthew Mednick, Executive Director, Academic Senate

June 3, 2024

PATTY GALLAGHER, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: WASC Draft Institutional Report

Dear Patty,

The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) has received the WASC draft institutional report.

CEP notes with concern that the university's plans in this accreditation document calls for significant growth in student population without much mention of whether assurances have been made regarding the ability of the institution to provide space for this growth, both in terms of classroom space and facilities usage space.

The section on substantive change—designating many majors on campus as “distance education”—doesn't express an overall campus commitment to in-person education. Instead, it appears to leave open the door to the online-ification of campus majors in a manner inconsistent with the branding, overall mission, and faculty governance of the campus. In addition, students enrolled in this distance education will conceivably have access to campus facilities placing additional burden on already limited resources.

Additionally, we suggest that there be parallel information regarding our AANAPISI status and that this be more transparent and discoverable on UC Santa Cruz's website.

Sincerely,



David Lee Cuthbert, Chair
Committee on Educational Policy

cc: Andrew Fisher, Chair, Graduate Council
Elisabeth Cameron, Chair, Committee on Teaching
Gabriela Arredondo, Chair, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Kent Eaton, Chair, Committee on International Education
Laura Giuliano, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid

May 30, 2024

PATTY GALLAGHER, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: WASC Draft Institutional Report

Dear Patty,

The Committee on Teaching (COT) has considered the draft for the WASC Institutional Report. We were pleased to see that the Teaching and Learning Center was highlighted throughout the draft as a data-driven resource for program assessment, creating innovation in addressing inequities, student preparation through Project REAL, and technology enhanced instruction with a focus on equity. We appreciate the inclusion of our status as an HSI and would recommend that AANAPISI also be included. We also note that we are not physically able to support our students to be successful and graduate in a timely manner without dealing with the problems of lack of classroom space. Is this an issue that needs to be addressed in the WASC report?

We have no other comments.

Sincerely,



Elisabeth Cameron, Chair
Committee on Teaching

cc: David Lee Cuthbert, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy
Andrew Fisher, Chair, Graduate Council
Gabriela Arredondo, Chair, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Kent Eaton, Chair, Committee on International Education
Laura Giuliano, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid

May 21, 2024

PATTY GALLAGHER, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: Divisional Review of WASC Draft Institutional Report

Dear Patty,

At its meeting of May 2, 2024, Graduate Council (GC) discussed UC Santa Cruz's draft institutional report for WASC ten-year reaccreditation, scheduled for spring 2025. GC members thought broadly about the report but primarily focused on graduate students, graduate programs, and graduate advising.

GC members were disappointed that the draft report said so little about graduate students, education, and research. GC appreciates that the primary audience for this document is WASC, and thus UCSC is focused on areas of particular WASC interest, especially where the campus can make demonstrable progress in coming years. That said, this document also comprises a compendium of UCSC's institutional priorities, discussing strengths and values around social justice, protecting the environment, delivering a high-quality student experience, and enhancing diversity. In addition to offering an outstanding undergraduate experience, UCSC (and UC more broadly) is also committed to world class graduate education and research. These priorities are vital to the campus mission, not just because they are intrinsically worthy, but also because graduate education and research greatly improve the quality of undergraduate education. A document of this kind, that fails to explain links between graduate and undergraduate missions, sends a disheartening message to the campus community and risks diminishing our focus and effectiveness over time.

The draft WASC report notes that graduate student enrollment at UCSC has apparently stabilized in recent years to ~1900 students, comprising ~10% of total student enrollment, one of the lowest graduate student percentages in the UC system. The draft report suggests that this level is to be accepted as normal going forward, and that the decades-long push to grow this percentage has come to an end. While GC acknowledges that graduate growth is challenging for many programs, the campus has yet to come together to plan for the future of graduate education, including appropriate sizes for graduate programs. This issue needs to be approached thoughtfully, including considerable discussion across UCSC, within the Faculty Senate and between faculty, programs, students, and the administration, to arrive at strategic and reasonable graduate numbers, based on the aggregate of goals and considerations for the campus.

Indeed there is a strong case to be made that UCSC urgently needs to prioritize graduate education in key areas and disciplines. Many UCSC graduate programs are currently undersized, lacking sufficient numbers to support thriving communities and offer a rich and foundational curriculum. Without critical mass, many programs will find it impossible to advance their stature, and other programs that have or have had world-class reputations may see those hard-won reputations erode. If UCSC is to maintain leadership and excellence in key areas, including impactful graduate programs that produce outstanding research, benefit undergraduate education, and enrich the campus community more broadly, we must maintain a long-term focus on helping graduate education to thrive. We should not be shy about stating this aspiration and

ambition, even in a report that emphasizes the undergraduate mission.

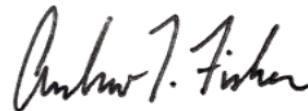
In addition, it is projected that the number of high-school graduates in California will decrease in coming years.¹ UCSC must increase efforts to attract and yield large numbers of outstanding undergraduate applicants, both in-state and out-of-state. One of the best ways to do this is to enhance the profile and stature of graduate programs, thereby improving UCSC's academic reputation across California, the U.S., and around the world. Disregarding the importance of graduate programs elides this connection and makes improving UCSC's reputation more difficult. Weakening of graduate programs will make it harder to provide an outstanding undergraduate experience in coming years.

The draft report also discusses various planning activities and improvement initiatives from around campus, in large part to communicate to WASC that UCSC is a well-run institution that plans ahead and looks for opportunities to improve outcomes for students, departments, and programs. One improvement initiative that is not discussed in the WASC report is the work done by the Implementation Task Force (ITF) on graduate education, culminating in [a detailed written report with specific recommendations](#). This report represents an impressive, years-long effort to identify needs and improve graduate programs and student outcomes, including specific and actionable recommendations, supported by evidence, for making rapid and significant progress. GC recognizes that budgets are tight and immediate options for enhancing graduate student support are limited, but it makes little sense to ignore a multi-year research and planning effort of this kind, which has been endorsed by GC, the Graduate Division, and the administration, as we plan a trajectory for the future.

Finally, GC notes that the report states "...the average time-to-degree for UCSC doctoral students was 6.2 elapsed years...[which is]...consistent with university goals of a normative time for doctoral degree completion of seven years." [The UCSC senate manual](#) states that the maximum (normative) time to degree for a Ph.D. at UCSC is six years, with the exception of the Departments of Anthropology, History, History of Consciousness, and Literature, for whom it is seven years. Text in the WASC report should be updated accordingly.

We thank VPAA Lee and others who helped write this important report.

Sincerely,



Andrew T. Fisher, Chair
Graduate Council

cc: Gabriela Arredondo, Chair, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Elisabeth Cameron, Chair, Committee on Teaching
David Lee Cuthbert, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy
Laura Giuliano, Chair, Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid
Matthew Mednick, Executive Director, Academic Senate

¹ <https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/4828>