

**UC Santa Cruz Institutional Proposal to the  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)  
May, 2002**

**SECTION 1: INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT**

The University of California at Santa Cruz was founded amidst the political, social, economic and demographic transformations that occurred during the 1960s and 1970s. It was envisioned as an alternative model to the large monolithic university that remains the norm in American higher education (McHenry 1977, Von der Muhll 1984, Kerr, 2001). Its colleges would promote learning in small communities and the combined resources of a major research university would provide world-class libraries, laboratories, and other research and educational opportunities that would benefit both the undergraduate and graduate students.

During its 35-year history, UC Santa Cruz has emerged as an innovative leader in higher education (Kliwer 1999), and it continues in this tradition today. Of the many innovative universities that emerged during the 1960s, UC Santa Cruz is credited for helping to revolutionize American public higher education (Kliwer 1999) by (1) creating relatively small scholarly villages within the context of a larger university where students and faculty engage in teaching and learning, (2) promoting teaching by undergraduate students, (3) emphasizing interdisciplinary curricular development, (4) focusing on student-centered education and (5) providing a very close-knit egalitarian community.

Not only did the UC Santa Cruz faculty build a world-class, innovative and experimental educational institution during those first 30 years, but it also forged a world-class research university. UC Santa Cruz was ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in the nation among more than 200 universities surveyed with regard to the quality of its research productivity (Graham and Diamond 1997). Many of its programs are now rated among the top programs in the nation. Our physical sciences programs were ranked number two in the world, based upon the impact of their research contributions (Institute for Scientific Information, June 2001).

When the Boyer Commission released its 1998 report “Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America’s Research Universities,” its recommendations described the type of research university that had been built through innovation, imagination, insight and hard work by UC Santa Cruz’s faculty, staff, administration and its extremely talented students. The seven major recommendations of the Commission for undergraduate education echoed the pillars upon which the education foundation and philosophies of UC Santa Cruz are built. These include:

- Make research-based learning the standard.
- Construct an inquiry-based freshman year.
- Build on the freshman foundation.
- Remove barriers to interdisciplinary education.
- Link communication skills and course work.
- Use information technology creatively
- Culminate with a capstone experience.

By plan, by design, and by great fortune, UC Santa Cruz has created an outstanding public university that is innovative, creative and poised to meet the challenges required to develop the university for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As Joy Rosenzweig Kliwer summarized (1999):

*...institutional flexibility and adaptability appear to be vital if a distinctive public institution is to meet the changing needs of its student and faculty populations. The University of California, Santa Cruz, has carried on with a sense of its heritage, but with new visions and new dreams. At the age of 31, UC Santa Cruz has reinvented itself”.*

But as is the case for all public institutions of higher education, UC Santa Cruz is facing some enormous challenges brought about by changing societal imperatives, population growth, demographic shifts, the advent of instructional technologies and the cyclical nature of funding for public institutions of higher education.

As UC Santa Cruz begins a new WASC review cycle, the campus is embarking on a period of unprecedented growth. To accommodate the explosion of the college age population in California, each of the UC campuses is expected to grow significantly. Since 1994 UC Santa Cruz has grown from ca 9000 students FTE to 13,000 in 2001-02, and the University of

California Office of the President (UCOP) has targeted the Santa Cruz campus to increase its enrollment to 16,900 FTE by 2010-2011. Current agreements with the city of Santa Cruz limit growth to 15,000 FTE on campus. The remainder of the growth will be accommodated by substantial increases in summer enrollments and off campus programs. By the end of the decade the campus expects to be at build out for the first time in its history.

The period of ensuing growth presents the campus with exciting opportunities to develop and mature as an institution but, because of the cyclical nature of the California economy, UC Santa Cruz also faces significant challenges. In January 1995, the University of California entered into a four-year compact with then-Governor Wilson that sought to provide the University with fiscal stability and the framework to begin planning for the future. Under the terms of the compact, the Governor agreed to provide the University with a minimum (and predictable) level of funding to maintain quality and the University of California agreed to provide an affordable quality higher education to a growing, and increasingly diverse, student population in California. The State and the University more than honored the commitments of the compact.

Based on the success of the compact, UC reached a four-year partnership agreement with Governor Davis. In 2001-02, the State did not fully fund the partnership and it is unlikely, given the State's current fiscal situation, that full funding will be provided in 2002-03. Governor Davis, however, has indicated his intent to fund the partnership agreement as the State's fiscal situation allows. As we enter a new period of fiscal constraints, having planning mechanisms in place that will enable the campus to establish priorities will be especially critical. We must work to ensure that our education programs remain of the highest quality during these periods of enrollment growth and uncertain financial support.

Along with challenges however, growth will provide UC Santa Cruz with the opportunity to expand its graduate programs – a goal of the campus that was iterated in our last long range development plan (1988), but not realized because of the economic downturns that our economy experienced in the 1990's. During this new decade we will double our graduate enrollment from 1000 to 2000 student FTE (from a current 9.5 percent of total enrollment to ca. 15 percent total enrollment). We will increase our graduate student enrollment for two major reasons. The first is that we realize the depth and breadth that graduate students bring to undergraduates in a research university. They enhance the culture of student engagement by fostering the involvement of undergraduate students in the research enterprise of the university. We will develop exciting new interdisciplinary programs to help meet the educational needs of these students and the society in which they will be scholars. The second reason is that our institution has a duty to help provide the ca. 11,000 new graduate students that the state will need during the next decade (Report of the UC Regent's Commission on the Growth and Support of Graduate Education, September 2001). California is last among 15 of the largest states in the growth in its graduate enrollments during the last decade. And in the past 30 years, graduate enrollment in UC has grown only 7 percent compared to over 100 percent growth in undergraduate enrollments.

Under the direction of a new Chancellor and Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost, the campus instituted a new planning process to guide growth and development in a way that is consistent with the Santa Cruz mission. The new process was introduced over three years ago with the formation of the Millennium Committee and is scheduled to culminate with a final planning document in Spring 2002. In addition, the EVC/Campus Provost has recently appointed a Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education (VPUE) to provide a single point of vision and leadership for undergraduate education and a new full-time Dean of Graduate Studies to help guide the campus in expansion of its graduate programs. We look forward to the opportunity provided by the WASC review process to ensure that our operations are consistent with the goals set forth in our mission statement and planning documents. By focusing the educational effectiveness component of the review on graduate and undergraduate educational effectiveness and student learning, we will be able to better assess how well we are performing in these two areas that are central to our mission, and ultimately to better serve our students.

## **SECTION 2: GOALS AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE ACCREDITATION REVIEW PROCESS**

It is our intention to use the WASC review process, with its emphasis on accountability and evidence-based decision making to improve both our graduate and undergraduate academic programs and to strengthen the campus' and its capacity to collect and use data effectively, to disseminate information quickly and efficiently, and to incorporate evidence in the planning and decision-making processes. Many of our data collection systems, including the Student Information System, are antiquated and cumbersome, and do not allow crucial flexibility and easy access. The campus is currently pursuing several new data management systems, including a new Academic Information System, SCIIPI, as well as upgrading the student information domain in the Data Warehouse. We are particular aware of the need to focus on issues of student and curricular diversity and will design our software systems to capture critical diversity data<sup>1</sup>. These systems will make data more accessible to both

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<sup>1</sup> UC Santa Cruz is part of a 10-member consortium of selective colleges and universities in California (funded by the Packard and Irvine Foundations) to increase the number of academically very successful underrepresented minority undergraduates. As part of

internal and external constituencies and will enable us to use data to undertake “data-driven institutional reform” that will help us realize the following goals:

- While increasing our graduate student enrollments, develop programs that meet the academic needs of today’s students and prepare students for a broad array of careers in a global environment. Develop graduate programs incorporating best practices that ensure excellence, breadth and depth. Assure that the overriding purpose of graduate education is the education of graduate students not the interests or needs of the institution or the faculty.
- Gain a more comprehensive understanding of the patterns of student engagement at UC Santa Cruz, and develop mechanisms to use that information to initiate strategies and programs that capitalize on the strengths and address weaknesses of the Santa Cruz experience.
- Reassess the role of the college system at UC Santa Cruz in the context of student engagement, and begin to formulate strategies to maximize the opportunities provided by the collegiate system that would enhance that academic engagement.
- Restructure the Departmental Review process in such a way as to place greater emphasis on assessing undergraduate curricula. As part of the review process envisioned, departments would articulate their goals with respect to both their graduate students and undergraduate majors, as well as to students from outside the major, to propose appropriate student learning outcomes, and to begin to devise means for assessing those outcomes.

### **SECTION 3: CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSAL AND REVIEW PROCESS**

In September 2001 the Vice Provost/Dean of Undergraduate Education (VPDUE) convened a WASC Steering/Working Committee charged with guiding the campus through the accreditation review. The Steering/Working Committee consists of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, and representatives from the Graduate Division, the Academic Senate (Committees on Planning and Budget, Committee on Teaching, Graduate Council, Committee on Educational Policy, Chair of the Academic Senate), at-large faculty members from each academic division and the School of Engineering, undergraduate and graduate student representatives, the Offices of Institutional Research and Policy Studies, and the Division of Student Affairs. During the fall quarter the committee met to develop the themes for the self-study and to draft the proposal. During the winter quarter the VPDUE will present this proposal to each major constituent group on campus for full vetting. These groups include the relevant Academic Senate Committee, the Senate’s Advisory Committee (SAC), academic divisions, their deans and faculty members, college provosts (Council of Provosts) undergraduate, graduate and alumni groups (GSA, SUA, Alumni Council), The Campus Provost’s Advisory Council (PAC), the Academic Support Committee (ASC), the Council of Vice Chancellors and the Chancellor’s Cabinet.

During the period of review the VPDUE will continue to involve all campus constituencies, including senior administration, academic senate leadership, faculty at large, students, and staff involved with the delivery of services. A variety of methods will be used to keep the campus informed about the process and to solicit feedback, including a WASC website, presentations to key campus constituencies, articles in *Currents* (the faculty staff newspaper), and e-mails to campus listserves.

### **SECTION 4: DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE PREPARATORY AND EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEWS WILL BE STAGED**

The Preparatory Review scheduled for Spring 2004 will demonstrate that UC Santa Cruz meets the Core Commitment to Institutional Capacity, that is the institution functions with clear purpose, fiscal stability, and has in place organizational structures and process appropriate to it’s purposes. Scheduled for Spring 2005, the Educational Effectiveness Review will evidence that UC Santa Cruz has clearly articulated appropriate educational objectives at both the institutional and program levels, and that it employs program review to ensure student accomplishments at a level appropriate to the degrees awarded.

### **SECTION 5: PROPOSED FORMAT FOR PRESENTATION OF EVIDENCE TO DEMONSTRATE COMPLIANCE WITH COMMISSION STANDARDS**

WASC has proposed four integrated standards for addressing the core commitments to Institutional Capacity and Educational Effectiveness. They are:

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this consortium, we will use data-gathering methods that will enable inter-institutional comparison of qualitative and quantitative data about student academic success and engagement.

1. Defining institutional purposes and educational objectives.
2. Achieving educational objectives through core functions.
3. Developing and deploying resources and organizational structures to assure sustainability.
4. Creating an organization committed to learning and improvement.

UC Santa Cruz will demonstrate that it meets the broad intent of the standards through a web-based data and policy portfolio. The portfolio will include all prescribed data as well as selected data and policies that address the essence of the four standards. It will concentrate on identifying those data and policies that best illustrate that the campus operates at or above threshold levels for accreditation. Organization of the portfolio will be around an introductory statement on the purposes and design of the portfolio and summary data describing the campus, reflective essays describing why the data elements were selected, what they mean to the campus, and how they fulfill the essence of each of the standards, and an integrative essay summarizing the review, including recommendations for improvement and follow up. The portfolio will be presented in an open, electronic format, and will be standing and accessible to internal and external constituents.

## **SECTION 6: FORMAT FOR THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW AND THEMES OR ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED**

### Topic 1: Growth and Improvement of Graduate Student Programs

UC Santa Cruz has set a goal to significantly increase the number of graduate students, and to improve retention and graduation rates and decrease time-to-degree. "Graduate students" in this context encompasses not only doctoral students, but significant increases at the masters' level as well. This goal is in accordance with state and national directives and is reflected in our major 10-year planning documents. We will use the opportunity of major growth to:

- Establish and/or facilitate the expansion of new forms of programs, such as Graduate Groups and interdisciplinary programs that work especially to cross-divisional and other traditional academic boundaries to prepare for future needs of the state and the nation.
- Develop additional programs for our graduate students that will provide them with the skills and education outside of their own disciplines that may be required for their future success (i.e., value-added educational experiences, such as certification and other professional post-graduate programs to meet public needs). Examine whether placing some of these programs in a college may be helpful in accomplishing various goals for high-quality graduate preparation. Examine, as well, the role that UC Santa Cruz Extension should play in this value-added programming.
- Assure that the objectives outlined by the UC Regents Commission on Graduate Education (see below) are integral to our institution and its graduate programs. Grow our graduate enrollments in ways that ensure quality.
- Grow our graduate enrollments in ways that ensure quality.

A recent UC Regent's Commission on the Growth and Support of Graduate Education (September 2001) concluded that UC must increase systemwide graduate student enrollment by 11,000 by 2010. As stated in the report, the commission's conclusions were based on three factors:

1. California's economy is increasingly dependent on research and innovation, and graduate education is the key training ground for the people who will produce discovery.
2. The state's postsecondary institution must hire 40,000 faculty in the next decade to serve the state's educational needs; postsecondary faculty can only be produced in sufficient numbers to meet California's needs by increasing the number of UC graduate students.
3. Advanced degrees are the path for upward mobility not only for those who achieve graduate degrees, but also for people at all educational levels, since the business, scientific and cultural leaders that come from the ranks of UC graduate students create jobs and opportunities for many other people.

UC Santa Cruz has the lowest proportion of graduate to undergraduate enrollment of any UC campus (9.5 percent UC Santa Cruz vs. 17-19 percent systemwide). Historically the campus originated as a liberal arts undergraduate campus with a commitment to provide our primarily undergraduate students with the best educational experience possible. Though some

graduate programs evolved with our undergraduate programs, the long-term development plans to significantly increase graduate students was not realized nor was our goal to develop professional schools<sup>2</sup>. This was the direct result of changes in the UC funding models for graduate education and a downturn in the state's economy in the 1990's that slowed the growth of our graduate programs significantly. We realize that growth of graduate student enrollment will pose a number of challenges that must be addressed campuswide.<sup>3</sup>

The prospect of significantly increasing our graduate programs at this point in time provides us the opportunity to put into place programs and processes that will ensure the highest quality of experience for our graduate students and to address the issues of the overproduction of narrowly trained graduate students referred to by William H. Danforth, who served as the Chair of the 1998 AAU Committee on Graduate Education:

*“Although graduate education in the United States is widely recognized as the best in the world, it is criticized for overproduction of Ph.D.s, narrow training, an emphasis on research over teaching, and insufficient mentoring of students.”*

During the last decade, numerous studies have been undertaken to assess the quality of graduate education in the U.S (e.g. AAU Committee on Graduate Education, October 1998, The National Science Board's report “The Federal Role in Science and Engineering Graduate and Postdoctoral Education, February 1998, National Academy of Sciences Reports, 1995,1998 and surveys such as the survey of 32,000 graduates students conducted by the National Association of Graduate and Professional Students, October 2001, González, 2001). We will use the opportunity afforded by growth of our graduate programs to implement best practices as recommended by these and other studies. As we expand our graduate programs we will reexamine current graduate programs and develop new programs to meet evolving student and societal needs. In designing these programs, the interests of our students will be paramount in designing curricula that prepare students for a broad array of careers. We will strive to build a diverse graduate student body that will enrich the educational environment and prepare students to work in a global environment.

Our specific objectives are those of the UC Regent's Commission on Graduate Education:

1. Make graduate education a higher internal financial priority in allocation decisions and redeploy existing financial support dollars in ways that facilitate competitiveness without compromising the quality of our undergraduate programs.
2. Ensure that graduate student housing is a priority, especially for first-year students.
3. Make our campus' environment among the best in the nation for graduate students by ensuring that our programs:
  - o foster diversity;
  - o provide mentoring;
  - o foster the development of students as scholars and teachers by consciously designing new opportunities for professional practice;
  - o create community spaces where graduate students can interact;
  - o expand career planning and placement and other student services.
4. Develop benchmarks to monitor success in graduate education.

Each of these objectives carries with it implied measurements. We will use the WASC process to develop and test these measures (see section 7 of this document).

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<sup>2</sup> Although several professional schools had been part of the planning of UC Santa Cruz, including a school of engineering and a school of forestry, it was not until 1997 that our first professional school – the Baskin School of Engineering – was established.

<sup>3</sup> Until approximately ten years ago, California provided three times the financial support for each graduate student as was provided for an undergraduate. Currently, equal support is provided per student for both graduate and undergraduate education, but the cost of training a graduate student remains significantly higher than for an undergraduate. We realize that funding of graduate education is one of the challenges that must be addressed.

Topic 2. Enhance Undergraduate Academic Engagement:<sup>4</sup>

Excellence in undergraduate education is explicit to the mission of UC Santa Cruz. Indeed, quality undergraduate education historically has been, and remains a distinguishing hallmark of this campus. But how exactly is “quality” defined? Typically, quality ratings, such as those used by the media, focus on student selectivity, resources, and reputation. While these are clearly important measures of an institution, they provide very little useful information to potential students, the public, or the institution itself about the quality of the actual undergraduate educational experience.

Perhaps a better indicator of educational quality is the extent to which institutions contribute to student learning and personal development. Research within the field of education clearly indicates that the best predictor of positive student outcomes in such areas as critical thinking, problem solving, effective communication, and responsible citizenship, is the time and energy that students devote to educationally purposeful activities. Those institutions that provide quality undergraduate education, then, are those that most fully engage students in appropriate activities and provide them with meaningful learning experiences. Institutional practices associated with high levels of student engagement include those that encourage high student effort, faculty-student interaction, active learning, and peer cooperation. Also important to student learning are institutional environments where performance expectations are high and clearly articulated, where students receive prompt feedback, and that students perceive as supportive, inclusive, and respectful of diversity

To assess as an institution how well we have been fostering a culture of undergraduate academic engagement, UC Santa Cruz elected to join 275 other four-year colleges and universities to participate in the inaugural launch of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). We also participated in the 2001 NSSE survey. As we begin the WASC accreditation process, the results of these surveys will be used to inform campus-wide discussions of educational effectiveness, to identify strengths and weaknesses of the UC Santa Cruz undergraduate curriculum, and to develop strategic plans for addressing weaknesses and enhancing strengths.

The most encouraging finding of these surveys is that in comparison to similar institutions UC Santa Cruz provides an academically challenging undergraduate education. UC Santa Cruz students were assigned more reading, and first year students did more writing than is typical at other research universities. Coursework emphasized critical thinking and in-depth analysis, and students here were more likely to discuss ideas from their courses with faculty and others outside of class. The University of California Santa Cruz was founded on a mission to provide a liberal arts type education at a public university. That legacy is apparent in the results of this survey.

Perhaps the most disappointing finding of this study is that during their first year at UC Santa Cruz students engaged with faculty less than they might. This is particularly true with respect to discussing career plans, but is somewhat true of other types of interactions as well. It appears that career preparation may not be a strong feature of a UC Santa Cruz education. Both first-year students and seniors felt that they gained fewer computing and information technology skills, and seniors felt they had obtained fewer job or career skills than students at other research universities.

As the campus begins a period of mandated growth, particularly in graduate education, UC Santa Cruz can only maintain its “uncommon commitment to undergraduate education” if our undergraduate students continue to be engaged in an academically challenging curriculum. We will continue to build upon our successes in fostering undergraduate academic engagement and we will address areas in need of improvement. These include:

*A. Increasing opportunities for faculty-student interactions.* Several studies of retention and undergraduate student success (Astin 2001, Light 2001, Kuh 2001) specifically identify this as one of the most important aspects of the undergraduate learning experience. We will examine:

- how we can more effectively utilize our colleges to affect better faculty-student interactions, particularly at the lower-division level and among faculty and transfer students.
- what role our faculty should play in academic/career advising of students and establish mechanisms whereby this can be accomplished and the faculty rewarded for this activity.
- what capstone experiences will most benefit our students and promote one-on-one faculty/student interaction.

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<sup>4</sup> Academic engagement refers to the degree to which students are involved in active mastery of course material and development of academic competencies.

*B. Increase opportunities for students to participate in research activities – either on-campus or through off-campus academic internships.* In a recent study of Harvard undergraduates, students describe one-to one research courses as the most intense of all academic experiences and these experiences as well as internships offer the most learning and the greatest challenges (Light, 2001). Specifically we will:

- Promote the incorporation of research and discovery-based learning into curricula and courses beginning in the first year.
- Encourage team learning through group research activities and curricula.
- Increase the number of academic internships and work with the faculty to promote incorporation of internships into their curricular requirements.
- Promote the opportunities of students to be involved in on-campus research by establishing an office on campus that will function as a clearinghouse – providing information on opportunities, fund sources, skill workshops and recognition programs.

*C. Improve overall campus advising for undergraduates.* As concluded from the recent Harvard study (Light 2001), “good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience.” Our goals to improve campus advising are:

- To provide students with timely and relevant information, taking advantage of the anticipated benefits of an improved academic information system.
- To enable proactive monitoring of student progress to improve retention and graduation rates.
- To create a framework that elicits and incorporates faculty participation in undergraduate advising through mentoring.

### Topic #3. Improve Undergraduate and Graduate Program Review Procedures

Historically, reviews of programs, be they of graduate or undergraduate programs, have been departmentally based. Because we are now developing many more interdisciplinary programs (graduate groups, centers) and because the campus has realized the need to assess other campuswide programs such as general education and our colleges, the campus plans to develop new procedures designed to provide more detailed assessment of our undergraduate and graduate educational programs.

Currently academic departments are reviewed on a five-year cycle. The process is initiated when the Academic Senate, working with the administration, develops a charge consisting of a series of topics to be examined in a departmental self-study. Much of the self-study by a department is descriptive – outlining what the department is doing with respect to its curriculum (undergraduate and graduate), its research productivity, how it is utilizing space, and what are its needs. The self-review is sent to an external committee prior to their 1-1/2 day visit to the campus. However, because of the limited time available to the external committee, there is relatively little time for them to spend on assessing the quality of the program, with the exception of the graduate program and research productivity.

We will use the opportunity that the WASC reaccreditation process provides to thoroughly examine our current review procedures and to determine how we might improve these, particularly in terms of how we might incorporate regular reviews of our undergraduate general education programs and our colleges, and how we can begin to get at outcome performance measures in assessing our departments. In addition, we will explore how to incorporate these department-level reviews into the campus context of measurements described in topic #1.

One idea that we will explore will be to determine if the review procedures now used by WASC might provide a better model for our own internal reviews than our current procedures. For example, according to this model, a department or program, once they complete a 5-year review, would be asked to begin their next review cycle. They would be charged with developing a proposal to improve their programs during the following 5-year period, and would be required to develop assessment metrics that would enable them to determine if they reached their goals. After five years, they would report on their progress in a self-study that would provide, in addition to their initial proposal, the self-study that would be sent to the external review committee. We will need to determine how as an institution, we can better link program reviews to institutional decision-making.

## **SECTION 7. PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOME ASSESSMENT FOR THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW**

Several steps in the proposed implementation such as inventorying existing programs and practices have been currently initiated as part of our long-term strategic planning process. Part of this process is also establishing

mechanisms that will link future institutional resource allocations to programs with demonstrated success – based on learning outcome and other measures.

Topic #1 – Expansion of our graduate student enrollments and programs and the development of value-added programs to enhance the educational experience of graduate students.

As part of our long-term strategic planning process currently underway, faculty, Academic Deans and the Chancellor’s Cabinet are identifying graduate programs that will be targeted for growth and are identifying new ideas for graduate program development – many of which are interdisciplinary in nature. Recommended programs will have to be approved by both the Graduate Council and by the UC wide Academic Senate to determine if they meet needs criteria established by systemwide. Each new program will be reviewed on a regular five-year cycle. If the program is part of a department, its assessment will be the administrative responsibility of that department. The assessment of interdisciplinary graduate programs will be the responsibility of the Dean of Graduate Studies who will also assume responsibility for assuring that every graduate program meets the excellence objectives as designated by the UC Regent’s Commission on Graduate Education.

Because of the relative small number of our graduate programs compared to other UC campuses, and because of the very high cost of living that our graduate students face in this geographic area, we must find means to provide “value-added” educational experiences for our students if we are to succeed in competing for the very best. The interests of our students will be paramount in designing graduate curricula that prepare them for a broad array of careers. We will build a diverse student body that will enrich the educational environment and prepare students to work in a global environment.

Accordingly, we will need to assess how we are currently using our temporary teaching support funds to determine if these funds might be reallocated to support graduate students. And we must develop much more comprehensive programs that prepare our graduate students to enter the classroom and provide the best educational experience possible to our undergraduate students. We will need to solve the plaguing problem of housing for our graduate students and will examine designating some existing student housing to graduate housing (short-term solution) and building additional affordable on-campus and off-campus housing for our graduate students (long-term solution).

In addition, we will examine whether the idea to build a graduate college would help meet many of the needs of our graduate students as suggested by several recent studies undertaken by our Senate’s graduate council, an administrative taskforce on the colleges and our graduate students. We will specifically address whether a graduate college should:

- Be virtual or occupy real space on campus
- Provide housing that might bring graduate students and post-doctoral fellows together residentially
- Create community spaces where graduate students can interact
- Provide career planning, placement and counseling services as well as mentoring (with post-docs, faculty).
- Administer interdivisional graduate groups
- Present curricula and certification programs designed to prepare them more broadly than their traditional program-based training (example here include a Certification in Advanced Instruction Technology, Certification in Teaching Undergraduate Writing, Certificate in Conflict Resolution, a Center for Advanced College Teaching – designed to help prepare the ca. 40,000 university teachers that will be required in California, particularly in CSU and the community college system, during the next decade).
- Evaluate graduate programs and recommend resource allocations based on assessment outcome.
- Confer degrees.

Topic #2. Enhance Undergraduate Student Engagement.

*A. Increasing opportunities for faculty-student interactions.* To improve learning, we are in the process of examining the effectiveness of all campuswide programs that are designed to engage our faculty and students. We will examine specifically how best to utilize our residential learning communities to provide more opportunities for our students, particularly our lower-division and transfer students, to connect more directly with our research faculty. We will determine if 1-2 unit undergraduate seminars, designed to present the research excitement of faculty in small groups, will enhance student interest and participation in the research enterprise and if these seminars might help to provide cohort-learning that will lead to cohort advising and mentoring by faculty with this group of students.

*B. Improving opportunities for undergraduate students to participate in on-campus and off-campus research and academic internships.* We will establish an Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP), which will be a virtual and on-site clearinghouse, designed to match students with research and service-learning projects on-campus and off-campus. This office will be responsible for assessing the quality of all campuswide programs and will make recommendations for resource allocations to programs based on their outcome assessment measures. The program will track students who participate in this program after graduation to determine the effectiveness of these experiences in helping students reach life goals.

*C. Improving campus advising.* We have just completed a thorough analysis and assessment of campus advising and have made several recommendations to improve advising as part of the long-term strategic plan for the campus. As recommended by this study, we will develop advising clusters that will require that incoming students identify general interest areas (not majors *per se* but rather clusters of majors related to specific areas such as art, communication, education, engineering, health sciences, physical sciences, environmental sciences, social sciences, area studies, liberal studies, etc.). Students will select no more than 3 interest areas at the time they file their intent-to-register form and the campus will provide lists of students interested in certain fields to prospective departments. In this way, departments may become engaged advising students long before they declare their major<sup>5</sup> – engaging these students in specific advising events (i.e., advising day), and reaching them via departmental e-newsletters. In addition, during the next six years, we will be transitioning to a new academic information system that will have a web-based student support module – providing on-line advising, degree auditing, class scheduling and many other capabilities that will assist our students. We anticipate that by moving to this system, we will remove from the faculty the burden of providing advising services to students that could be better delivered by highly trained staff advisors and establish processes whereby faculty will interact with students as mentors and in providing career advice to students.

In addition to assessment of each program that we will develop, we will employ two campuswide surveys to assess the level of student engagement and we will likely continue to participate in the National Survey of Student Engagement. Beginning in the spring of 2003 we will require that each graduating senior complete a graduation survey that asks them to self-assess their level of student engagement and make suggestions for how their undergraduate experience might have been improved. This survey instrument will be delivered on-line through our new academic advising system and will be part of the electronic forms required for a student to file for graduation. Data will be compiled and distributed campuswide during the following fall quarter.

In addition, like other UC campuses, we will participate in the new UC-funded joint faculty-institutional research project called SERU21 (Student Experience in a Research University in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century). Our campus will serve as a beta test site for this survey during the current academic year. The questions in this survey will be designed to examine the level of academic engagement of undergraduate students and it will survey a large number of students on each of the UC general campuses after their first year and again at the end of four years. Some questions will be the same as those administered by the NSSE instrument to allow for comparisons with comparable research institutions nationwide. The survey will assess institutional practices associated with high levels of student engagement including those that encourage high student effort, faculty student interaction, active learning, and peer cooperation.

### Topic #3. Improve undergraduate and graduate program review procedures.

We are initiating an administrative review of our current program review procedures; as part of the WASC process, we will develop new procedures by establishing a collaborative working group between the WASC working committee, the academic senate and the administration. These procedures will be designed to ensure that departments, colleges and programs assess the quality of their programs, rather than merely specify what is being done and by whom. We will begin to regularly assess graduation and retention rates by departments and programs and will work with programs to develop fair and discipline-appropriate ways of assessing the quality of student learning in their programs. We will establish mechanisms whereby the learning success of students in departments is factored into institution decision-making that determines resource allocations for departments and programs.

## **SECTION 7: BASIC DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

Please see attached Basic Descriptive Data Profile

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<sup>5</sup> Like many other similar selective universities, approximately 40 percent of our incoming students enter as “undecided” students and many of these do not declare their major until after 6 or 7 academic quarters.

**SECTION 8: OFF-SITE PROGRAMS**

None.

**SECTION 9: INSTITUTIONAL STIPULATION STATEMENT**

- UC Santa Cruz is using the review process to demonstrate its fulfillment of the two Core Commitments; we will engage in the process with seriousness, and data presented will be accurate and will fairly present the institution.
- UC Santa Cruz has published and publicly available policies in force as identified by the Commission for this purpose in Appendix 1 of the WASC Handbook. Such policies will be available on request through the period of accreditation.
- UC Santa Cruz will abide by procedures adopted by the Commission to meet Department of Education procedural requirements (USDE) as outlined in Section VI of the WASC Handbook.
- UC Santa Cruz will submit all regularly required data, and any data specifically requested by the Commission during the period of Accreditation.

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M.R.C. Greenwood  
Chancellor

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