REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING TEAM

CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW

To California State University Monterey Bay


Date of visit
September 16 – 18, 2009

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

Reaffirmation of Accreditation

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### A.   Brief Description of CSUMB

Founded in 1994 as the 21st campus of the California State University System, California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB) adopted a vision that committed the institution to "serving the working class and historically underserved populations . . . [through] multilingual multicultural, gender-equitable learning . . . and to develop a culture of innovation . . . through a collaborative orientation" (Vision Statement).   CSUMB strives to maintain a focus on the tri-county (Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito) area (October 2007 Institutional Proposal for Reaccreditation, p. 1). Consistent with its vision, CSUMB provides "an outcomes-base education" (CPR Report, p. 17) and service learning, which "was an integral part" of the vision and has evolved and been streamlined to become less labor intensive" (CFR 2.9, CPR Report, p. 22).

"Applied, active and project-based learning activities" are stressed as Core Values of the institution.  Programs that reflect this value were developed at times when resources were more plentiful and are now causing the institution to reflect on not only how to "scale up" the academic model (CPR Report p. 19), but also how to do so in a time of shrinking resources.

The campus, located on approximately 1,300 acres of the former Fort Ord Army base, has encountered physical and environmental challenges (CPR Report, p. 27) that have required the institution to lower its 1998 Master Plan goal of serving 25,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) students to a more modest 12,000 FTE (CPR Report, p. 9).  The campus found that few of the existing Fort Ord structures could be easily adapted for educational use; therefore, the campus

embarked on a program of demolishing existing structures to make way for new, more appropriate buildings (CPR Report, pp 9-10).

CSUMB has been visited by four WASC teams: two Candidacy visits and the initial accreditation CPR and EE Visits. CSUMB was granted Candidacy in 1998 and Initial Accreditation in 2003. Since initial accreditation, the University has had four programs approved through the Substantive Change process: the joint Doctorate of Education in Collaborative Leadership (2005), which is currently in "teach out" (Program Teach Out Agreement, Jan. 2007); the online Executive MBA (2007); the MS in Coastal and Watershed Science and Policy (2008); and the Master of Public Policy (2008).

The institution and its 272 full- and part-time faculty members offer 18 undergraduate degrees, 30 concentrations, 20 minors, 7 graduate degrees, and several teacher certificate options. According to the CPR Report, in the fall of 2008, 42% of the course credits were offered by full-time faculty through its four colleges to slightly fewer than 4,000 students (Summary Data Form, p. 41).

**B. The Capacity and Preparatory Review Report**

**1. Alignment with the Proposal**

CSUMB developed a hybrid approach proposal for accreditation review. The proposal identified a planning focus for the CPR and three themes for the Educational Effectiveness Review. While the proposal indicated that the CPR would concentrate on three outcomes—integrated planning, retention, and academic space—the resulting CPR Report provided uneven attention. The report devoted approximately 17 pages to reflective essays based on the WASC standards, which the proposal did not indicate would be part of the CPR Report. Only 7 pages were dedicated to the CPR areas of focus, identified in the proposal (Proposal, p. 8). The lack of

alignment between the proposal and the CPR report created confusion for the visiting team

since the proposal is a guide to the campus visit (CFR 1.9, WASC Resource Book for Fall 2009

Visits, p. 7).

**2. Quality and Rigor of Review Report**

As stated in the report itself (p. 16), the CPR report was authored by different teams and groups

of individuals. The report is not a self-contained informative document, clearly telling its own

story, but resembles more a reference guide to the 800 pages included on an accompanying CD.

The report also does not connect a reader easily with CFRs. Although CFRs are referred to in the

report's section titles, they are not referenced in the text, and not all the information within each

section pertains to the standards listed.

The CPR Report mentions challenges facing the institution, such as student retention,

but does not provide insight into work currently being done; instead, the Report employs

general statements such as "have worked on these issues" (p. 36) or "there are many

challenges." The Report briefly mentions a retention study, a retention retreat, and a

developing retention plan ( p. 15), but provides little insight into data already gathered or

campus responses to the issues. Upon coming to the campus, the visiting team was provided

with more detailed analyses of retention issues. Moreover, in meetings with faculty,

administrators, staff, and students (9/16-17/09), the visiting team found the campus to be

significantly more engaged in addressing issues than is apparent from the CPR Report.

In preparing for the Educational Effectiveness Review, CSUMB will need to demonstrate

that it has gathered and analyzed data effectively and used that information to improve

performance in areas of student learning, program review, and retention/completion for

various student groups. A strong narrative and data analysis, with focus on themes surrounding student success, the academic model, and the capstone, will provide a sound foundation for the EER visit.

### C. Response to Previous Commission Issues

The 2003 WASC Commission Action Letter identifies four issues for further attention:

- Sustaining the University's Vision as a Vital and Dynamic Force;
- Focusing on the "Missing Middle";
- Deepening the Commitment to Learning-centeredness; and
- Sustaining Innovative Practices.

However, CSUMB apparently viewed the issues identified in the Commission Action Letter more as "wise words" than as "directive for action" (CPR Report, p. 36) that WASC required be specifically addressed (CFR 1.9). The Proposal (pages 5-6) refers to these items as "not a formal recommendation" and notes that the Visiting Team "suggested" the four areas of concern. The CPR Report states (p. 36) that "The letter held no particular charge or directive for action." Apparently because the institution did not perceive the Action Letter to be directive, the Report does not include detailed individual responses to these Commission concerns. On the other hand, meetings with faculty and administrators strongly indicated the campus's ongoing attention to three of the four concerns. The "missing middle" has received less attention, perhaps in part because there is no consensus on what exactly is meant by the phrase (meeting with faculty 9/16/09).

## SECTION II -  EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY
### II. A. Standard 1:  Institutional Purposes and Integrity
#### (1) Institutional Purpose and Mission

As one of the 23 campuses of the California State University system, CSU Monterey Bay, chartered in 1994, shares a common purpose with a network of schools aligned with the Master Plan for Higher Education in California. CSU Monterey Bay's vision (CFR 1.1) focuses on

commitments to values such as interdisciplinary approaches, ethical reflection and practice, and "a desire to serve the educational needs of a 21st Century Californian, American, and global citizenry" (2007 Institutional Proposal for Reaccreditation, p.1). The vision is outlined in the recently adopted Strategic and Academic planning documents (CPR Report, Appendix F) and is widely understood and valued throughout the campus (meetings with faculty, administration, staff and students 9/16-17, 2009). It was striking to the visiting team how pervasive the vision is across campus.

In 2002, the CSUMB faculty Senate endorsed and adopted the American Association of University Professors Statement of Principles of Academic Freedom and Tenure (CFR 1.4, Academic Senate Executive Committee minutes, #02-01/02-ASEC). The campus Constitution of the Academic Senate (CPR, Appendix O) outlines faculty policies, practices, and evaluation procedures (CFR 3.3). Faculty Senate minutes from September 2006 indicate a need to develop a faculty handbook to assist faculty with areas such as academic integrity; however, the visiting team did not see a handbook.

CSU Monterey Bay has a clearly stated academic model that seeks an outcome-based approach to education (CPR Report, p.17). Through a newly developed program review process, the institution hopes to more clearly determine learning outcomes and align resources to support the academic mission. The CPR Report suggests (pp.12-13) that new procedures better support transfer articulation and enhance pathways for first-year and transfer students (CFR 2.12, 2.14). The institution is working to align more effectively the curricular requirements of the general education program (called the ULR) and curriculum in the majors (CPR Report, pp.12-13). All in all, CSUMB has an appropriate evidence model that will help it determine if it is achieving its educational purposes and learning objectives (CFR 1.2). It is critical, as a next step, that the

institution use outcomes data to improve programs and student learning over the short and long term.

Still a "developing university" (CPR Report, p. 30), CSUMB faces significant opportunities and significant challenges. With an outcomes-based approach, an experimental curriculum, and difficult facilities issues, CSUMB has been challenged to maintain its vision within funding constraints and with student recruitment and retention concerns (Institutional Proposal for Reaccreditation, pp.3-4). With the arrival of a new president slightly over three years ago, planning efforts have been underway throughout the university to reaffirm the university vision and address a wide array of issues (CFR 1.3, CPR Report, pp.10-16 and 9/16/09 meetings).

The CPR Report states that, like most universities, CSUMB maintains a diverse array of affiliations and partnerships that include public and private entities as well as religious and cultural bodies (p. 18). The report further attests that these affiliations do not impede CSUMB from maintaining a steady focus as an autonomous educational institution (CFR 1.6).

CSU Monterey Bay shows evidence that it represents itself truthfully to students and the public. Policies appear to be generally mature and give fair and equitable treatment of issues (CFR 1.7). The general policies of the CSU system help ensure public accountability and transparency (http://policy.csumb.edu/site/x16011.xml).

The CPR report indicates (p.18) that operational integrity is maintained through "committees, audits, financial reports, and public forums" and that staff receive appropriate training to maintain sound business practices. Meetings with faculty (9/16 -17/09) indicate that policies are reviewed regularly and grievance processes are followed (CFR 1.8). Policies show general alignment with WASC policies (http://policy.csumb.edu/site/x16011.xml); however, the

visiting team did find that the institution had not always followed up with WASC on the status of substantive changes.

**II.A Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions**

In developing infrastructure to support learning, one focal point for CSUMB has been moving from developing learning outcomes for academic programs to assessing student learning (CFR 2.3). Assessment efforts have been undertaken both in the academic majors and in the University Learning Requirements (ULRs), which incorporate General Education and other university requirements for graduation (CFR 2.2a, CPR Report, p. 12). In the majors, emphasis has been on moving outcomes assessment from the course to the program level (CFR 2.3). Efforts are underway to engage faculty more fully both in confirming that learning expectations are being met and in sharing responsibility for students' successful outcomes attainment (CFR 2.4, 2.6). Efforts to analyze and use student learning outcomes in future program reviews are also underway (CFR 2.7, CPR Report, p. 20). The program review process focuses on the assessment of student learning in Major Learning Outcomes (MLOs) (Appendix J, p. 523), and the Program Review Procedure Manual incorporates guidelines for addressing learning outcomes assessment as a "center-piece" for the program review process (Appendix B, p. 130; Appendix J, p. 519). Three academic programs implemented the new program review process in 2007-2008, and seven programs conducted reviews in 2008-2009 (Appendix J, p. 523).

Systematic ULR-based outcomes assessment efforts are described as a "work in progress" (CPR Report, p. 20), and plans for developing a common rubric for work that is applicable across all courses and sections that fulfill each ULR are underway (CFR 2.4). The campus' Center for Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) is providing faculty development and support for these systematic learning assessment efforts (CFR 3.4). The campus identifies

learning outcomes assessment work as illustrating that appropriate linkages among scholarship, teaching, student learning and service are recognized and promoted (CFR 2.9).

"Scaling up" the academic model has been a second focal point for infrastructure development to support student learning. Special emphasis has been placed on three "labor intensive" components of CSUMB's academic model: Capstone and Undergraduate Research, Service Learning, and Student Academic Support Services (CPR Report, p. 21). Senior capstone projects are required of all students, and faculty are "united in their convictions" that capstones contribute significantly both to the student learning experience and its assessment. In preparation for the Educational Effectiveness Review, the campus is engaged in a capstone study (CFR 2.3, CPR Report, p. 21). Undergraduate research efforts expand upon the capstone program and aim to foster mentored experiences for undergraduates that promote enthusiasm for research and encourage consideration of post-baccalaureate study (CPR Report, p. 22). Scalability considerations involve ensuring rich experiences for students while balancing faculty workload issues (meeting with faculty 9/17/09).

Taken together, the Capstone, Undergraduate Research, and Service Learning components of CSUMB's academic model provide evidence that the campus values and promotes scholarship, creative activity, and curricular and instructional innovation (CFR 2.8). CSUMB's final focal point for infrastructure development highlights academic services to support traditionally underserved students (CFR 2.13). Current California budget issues have prompted employment of new strategies to "stretch and enhance" these services (CPR Report, p. 23).

Other institutional efforts to support student success are not specifically addressed in the CPR Report but are referenced in materials provided by the campus. For example, toward

ensuring that students understand academic program requirements and receive timely, useful, and regular information and advising about relevant requirements (CFR 2.12), CSUMB has established goals for "develop[ing]" academic advising as a signature strength" (Appendix J, p. 516). Moreover, in the 2008-2013 Academic Plan and Gap Analysis, "enhance the quality and rigor of the undergraduate curriculum" and "assure that faculty with appropriate expertise teach at all levels," are identified as academic priorities. Specific goals for each priority are delineated (Appendix J, p. 517-518). (These priorities relate directly to CFRs 2.1, 2.2a, and 2.5.) A key challenge in addressing quality and rigor is that CSUMB faculty define rigor in different and sometimes contradictory ways (meeting with faculty 9/16/09). In response, the campus intends to engage campus community members in college-based and campus-wide discussions about rigor aimed at reaching common understanding and implementing a practice of rigor on campus that is multivariate but readily recognizable (Appendix J., p. 517).

In accordance with CFR 2.10, CSUMB also administers the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) every three years and uses the results to inform campus planning and improvements. Student success (by areas of study) is currently tracked via the CSUMB Cohort Study. Moreover, the 2001-2007 Retention Study has generated substantial amounts of data that the campus uses to formulate plans for improving retention rates. The campus acknowledges that it does not regularly track student success by demographic category (all noted in Appendix A, p. 110). Gathering, disaggregating, and analyzing retention data needs to be a focus for the campus in preparing for the EER.

Transfer matriculation (CFR 2.14) is a particular area of concern for CSUMB in that the campus currently attracts a "low" number of transfer students (Appendix J, p. 524). A Transfer Task Force, composed of faculty, staff, and the Registrar, was established in Fall 2007

(Appendix J, p. 524). Now the campus' multifaceted response includes (1) newly developed advising sheets and degree pathways provided to community college counselors to facilitate advising of prospective transfer students; (2) new degree pathways postings on the CSUMB website; (3) new department brochures; and (4) new, clear lists of degree requirements incorporated in the Catalog and on the university website. Noteworthy, however, is the fact that both lower-division and upper-division transfer students are graduating at higher rates than CSUMB's native students (Appendix J, p. 524).

Finally, with respect to CFR 2.2b, CSUMB describes the scholarly "graduate culture" as evolving and notes that attention is being paid to its development (CFR 2.2b, Appendix A, p. 109). The 2008-2013 Academic Plan and Gap Analysis highlights "develop[ing], organiz[ing], and coordinat[ing] a common infrastructure for graduate programs" as an academic priority and identifies key considerations and goals related to that desired outcome (p. 521).

## II.A Standard 3:  Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Sustainability

### (1)  Faculty and Staff

The number of CSUMB full-time faculty appears sufficient to maintain its academic programs (CFR 3.1). Between fall 2004 and fall 2008, faculty increased at a rate consistent with the rate of increase in enrollment for that period. Faculty increased from 99 to 111, or approximately 12.1%, while headcount enrollment for that same period increased from 3,955 students to 4,340 students, or approximately 11.6%.

A long-standing issue recognized by the University has been the larger proportion of courses delivered by part-time faculty compared to full-time faculty (CPR report p. 24). In addition, the University noted that insufficient numbers of tenured faculty limits the number of faculty available for academic advising, other departmental work, and shared governance (CPR

Report p. 24). However, the University has been addressing the issue despite the difficulties of meeting the demands of a new institution in difficult budgetary times (CFR 3.2).

In fall 2004, CSUMB staff included 357 full-time and 46 part-time positions. By fall 2008, full-time positions increased to 396, and part-time positions increased to 49—increases of approximately 10.9% and 6.5% respectively. Staff positions have not kept pace with the development of the University in terms of enrollment growth and the expected growth in institutional support programs and infrastructure for the relatively new campus (CFR 3.1). Furthermore, the furlough of state employees implemented for FY 2009 has placed additional stress on staff employees. Despite these challenges, according to the Vice President for Administration and Finance (meeting 9/16/09), the institution's staff have been able to accomplish their work effectively. The VPAF attributes this success to employees' extraordinary dedication to the institution. This observation was confirmed at the visiting team's open forum for staff attended by approximately 40 employees (meeting 9/16/09).

**(2) Finances**

From FY 2004 through FY 2008, the University's finances have been relatively stable (CFR 3.5). State appropriations for both operating and capital purposes generally have kept pace with expanding enrollments as well as with the requirements of developing a campus. In FY 2005, tuition and fees collected totaled $6,300,890; these increased to $8,612,871 in FY 2008. State general fund allocations for operations from CSU Chancellor's Office (CSUCO) were $47,131,550 for FY 2006; $49,937,090 for FY 2007 and $53,574,750 for FY 2008 (final budget allocation memoranda from CSU Assistant Vice Chancellor for Budget)). In addition, in FY 2006, $71,500,101 of state capital appropriations (CSUMB Financial Statements June 30, 2007) was allocated to CSUMB for capital investments.

Based on student applicant data, CSUMB can expect long-term fiscal viability (CFR 3.5). Similar to other CSU campuses, CSUMB funding is enrollment driven. Primary sources of fungible operating revenue are (1) state general funds allocated to CSU campuses on the basis of projected enrollment and (2) tuition and fees charged to students, which totaled $8,612,871 in FY 2008.

The institution continues to attract new students. Applicant data from the past five years show that, between fall 2004 and fall 2008, applications for first-time freshmen increased 72.6%, from 5,529 to 9,545. Transfer students increased 30.8%, from 1,482 to 1,939, and Masters applicants increased 55.9%, from 118 to 184. In every year since fall 2004, applications have increased over the previous year. An analysis of actual headcount enrollment trends between fall 2004 and fall 2008 indicates that, while enrollment decreased from fall 2004 to fall 2005, enrollment increased every year over the previous year after fall 2005. Enrollment for fall 2005 was 3,773 students, while, for fall 2008, it was 4,340 students—an increase of approximately 15% over the four-year period (Data Exhibits 1.1 through 1.4).

The financial and economic problems encountered by the state of California have resulted in cumulative reductions in CSUMB's general fund allocation totaling approximately $5.5 M over the last three years (meeting with VPAF 9/16/09). These reductions amount to more than 10% of its annual operating budget of approximately $53 M. The furlough of state employees negotiated by the state administration and government employee unions for FY 2009 will generate approximately $3.9 M in budget savings at CSUMB (meeting with VPAF 9/16/09). The campus has been able to minimize the impact of the furlough on instruction and support services by scheduling furlough days primarily on non-teaching days for faculty and non-critical working periods for staff.

In addition, reserves built up by the housing program made possible by transfer of former military housing units to CSUMB have allowed supplemental funding for high priority needs despite cuts in state general funds. Finally, while the CSUCO has reduced enrollment for the system, the CSUMB enrollment cap was actually increased. As a result, the institution has so far been able to weather state budget cuts while preserving critical functions.

The University recognizes the challenges that lie ahead. CSUMB is revamping its funding model (meeting with VPAF 9/16/09). The continued build out of the new campus may provide unique opportunities for fund raising through naming opportunities such as occurred with the Tanimura and Antle Family Memorial Library completed in FY 2008.  Similarly, the University's strong commitment to community involvement continues to build broader and stronger ties to the surrounding communities (meetings with staff and with Vice President for Advancement 9/16/09).

**(3) Information Resources**

From 2004/2005 through 2007/2008, information resources available through CSUMB's library have increased consistently with increases in students and faculty (CFR 3.6). Total library collections increased by 10.4% during that period. Electronic books increased approximately 56%, and current periodicals, including electronic versions, have increased over 84%, adding significantly to the diversity of its collections.  The University chose not to cut the library budget for FY 2009, while budgets for all other units in Academic Affairs were reduced. The Tanimura and Antle Family Memorial Library, planned to accommodate 675,000 volumes and support 8,000 FTE students, provides ample room for long-term growth.

Information technology resources for the campus are impressive and appear to support educational, academic and administrative functions (CFR 3.7). Each classroom and lab is

equipped with appropriate teaching technology resources; instructors are annually provided

teaching software in desired "academic load sets"; the campus has an extensive internet access

network; and the library has 70 public access computers and makes laptops available for

checkout.

(4) **Organizational Structures and Decision Making Processes**

As  part of the California State University System, CSU Monterey Bay is organized in a way

similar to the other 22 campuses. The president is hired and evaluated by the CSU Chancellor

and CSU Board of Trustees (CFR 3.9).  The four CSUMB colleges report to a provost who,

along with three other vice presidents, report to the President (CFR 3.8, 3.10). CSUMB

leadership appears to encourage shared governance and broad campus participation in functions

such as new policy development and planning and budgeting (CPR Report p. 25 and meetings

with faculty 9/16-17/09). Any division may initiate new policy proposals (CPR report p. 29). The

integration of planning and budgeting has been collaborative, with input from students, faculty,

staff and administrators in establishing priorities and formulating budgets (CFR 4.1, meetings

with faculty and students 9/16/09). The Budget Advisory Group (BAG) was formally constituted

to include faculty senate members (meeting with VPAF 9/16/09). Deliberations by the BAG are

the primary process for assuring that approved budget items are consistent with planning

priorities. The VPAF has made deliberate efforts to communicate budget issues, processes, and

financial conditions to the campus community. Since January 2006 at least 30 budget

presentations by the administration were made to the BAG, faculty senate, student organizations

and the campus (Budget Presentations by Date).

(5) **Shared Governance**

As enrollment and infrastructure scales to expected levels, CSUMB needs to continue adapting its organizational structures to ensure sustainability (CFR 3.11). For example, as the institution grows and matures, it is increasingly necessary for the creation of a university-wide Curriculum Committee and other revisions to the Bylaws and Constitution. The faculty did not endorse revised Bylaws and the Constitution in spring 2009 (CPR report p. 16). However, faculty indicated (9/16/09 meetings with faculty and administrators) that a healthy resolution is expected during the 2009-2010 academic year. More representative structures will help the institution scale its shared governance.

Shared governance with students is exemplified by students' active participation on campus committees, including those preparing the WASC self study report (meeting with students 9/16/09). After a two-year vacancy, the appointment of a new Associated Students advisor has brought stability and momentum to this critical component of the campus' shared governance structure. As a reflection of this stability, the site visit team learned that all 23 student government seats will be filled for the first time in recent memory (meeting with student leaders 9/16/09).

**II. A Standard 4:  Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement**

CSUMB faculty and staff remain "strongly committed to fostering ethical reflection and practice, development of communication skills, higher-order learning, social justice, multiculturalism, service learning, second language acquisition, collaboration, and to engaging students with student-centered pedagogies"  (CFR 2.8, 2.9). The strength of the service learning program is illustrated by recent national recognition in terms of student learning about social responsibility and civic engagement (Institutional Proposal for Reaccreditation, p. 2). Faculty and staff are

committed to a student-centered campus culture (Institutional Proposal for Reaccreditation, p. 1 and meetings with faculty and staff 9/16-17/09).

During the past three years, CSUMB has taken significant steps to prepare for its WASC reaccreditation Capacity and Educational Effectiveness Reviews. In May 2007, the president convened a University Strategic Planning Committee to undertake development of a ten-year strategic plan. Planning was informed by the University's regional and state conditions—data related to student demographics, academic programs, and retention and graduation rates (CFR 4.1). Attention was also paid to the University's founding values, vision and commitments. The CSU System-wide planning initiative, "Access to Excellence" (ATE), served as a reference source. A new strategic plan, along with data-informed decision making, priorities for new academic programs, and transparency in budget and resources allocation, will help guide the next ten years.

The four major goals of the plan—(1) Increase Student Success, (2) Continue to develop as a Comprehensive State University, (3) Increase Institutional Capacity, and (4) Attract, Retain, and Develop Faculty, Staff and Administrators—correspond to the challenges explained in the institution's proposal for reaccreditation (CPR Report, p. 31). An important feature of the planning model and process is a clear expectation that planning throughout the University provides a "pivotal function" for all other university plans (CPR Report, p. 31). The attention given to this aspiration is appropriate, given that one of the challenges noted in the University's Institutional Proposal (p. 10) speaks to the need for greater transparency in decision- making, especially related to budgeting and priorities (CFR 4.1).

In 2007-2008 an exercise in examining vision and values was used to cement shared purpose between the Strategic Planning Committee and the Academic Planning Group (Capacity

and Preparatory Review Report, p.31). Now intentional planning practices appear to encourage engagement by a broad cross-section of the University. A multifaceted approach to the work includes prioritizing resources, monitoring progress, and defining the strengths and weaknesses of the institution (CFR 4.2, 4.3, Capacity and Preparatory Review Report, p.30). Important processes in the University are expected to be data driven although this continues to be challenging for CSUMB (CFR 4.4 and meetings with administrators and faculty 9/16-17/09).

In the current serious budget situation, University leadership now must select strategically among valuable and competing areas that the University can support.  In consultation with the Budget Advisory Group, the VPAF is working closely with senior leadership to prioritize and allocate resources to support academic, personnel, fiscal, physical, and technological needs (Capacity and Preparatory Review Report, p.31). Members of the senior leadership appear cooperative and focused on preserving the institution's historic strengths—collaboration, engagement, institutional loyalty and student centeredness  (meeting with Senior Leadership 9/17/09).

CSUMB has undergone significant turnover in senior leadership in the last few years. None of the senior leadership at the time of initial accreditation remains at the institution. However, it appears that new appointments to senior roles have brought needed stability and a strong sense of collegiality to the University (CFR 3.10, 4.6).

**B.  Planning Focus**

**(1) Budget and Integration**
In spring 2007 a number of critical factors provided an opportunity for CSUMB to frame the Capacity and Preparatory Review in the context of integrating planning with budgeting. CSUMB's first strategic plan, covering the planning period 2002-2007, expired just as a new

president was hired and new senior leadership team appointed. Moreover, CSUMB's

Institutional Proposal for reaffirmation of accreditation had to be prepared.

In spring 2007, committees for Strategic Planning, Academic Planning, WASC Steering, WASC Capacity, and WASC Educational Effectiveness were established. The strategic planning process engaged campus and external communities (CFR 4.8) to eventually formulate four strategic goals and key initiatives necessary to implement each goal. By fall 2008 the new Strategic Plan was adopted (CPR report p. 11).

On a somewhat parallel track, an Academic Planning process began in fall 2007. This process resulted in academic priorities that would align with both CSUMB and CSU system strategic plans. Within a five-year planning horizon, these academic priorities were intended to provide guidance for planning at the college level.  The five-year plan, completed in spring 2009, is intended to guide college-level programming in 2009-2010.

In its institutional proposal for reaccreditation, the University identified the development of an annual budget preparation process along with the Strategic Plan and Five-Year academic Plan as activities in the Capacity and Preparatory Review (Institutional Proposal for Reaccreditation, p.8).  The process involves review of college budget requests by the Budget Advisory Group (BAG) appointed by the president.  BAG's role is to provide "insight, communication, advice, and recommendation in light of the institution's overall plans and each area's more specific planning" (CPR Report p.13). The University considers BAG a critical entity in integrating university planning with budgeting (CFR 4.2, 4.3). By careful development and integration of strategic goals, key initiatives, academic priorities and college level planning and budget preparation, CSUMB has developed a logical system for aligning budgets with priorities(CFR 4.2). This system should provide the University with the capacity to manage its

programs and operations in both good and bad budgetary times. In addition, the University

Corporation at Monterey Bay provides a strong supporting role.  The Corporation, a nonprofit

501(c)(3) public benefit corporation established in1994, is a recognized auxiliary of the

California State University (http://csumb.org/site/x18580.xml). Corporation operations and

services provide an important source of net revenue to the University's budget, supporting

innovation and funding critical needs when the state budget falls short.

 (2) **Academic Space**

CSU Monterey Bay has both an unusual physical location—situated on a repurposed military

installation originally commissioned in 1917—and a strong vision statement focusing on an

integrated, technology-enabled, and year-round physical plant. The tensions between the

physical aspects of the University and its academic vision are not easily resolved (CFR 3.6).

However, the university has made significant progress since 1994 with strong support from the

CSU system office. Challenges in water supply, landfill repurposing, ordinance cleanup, and

necessary prescribed burns add to the complexity of planning and maintenance not typical on a

university campus (http://csumb.edu/site/x9459.xml).

 To investigate capacity issues in preparation for the WASC self- study, the university

used a space subgroup of a full committee charged with characterizing major issues and

anticipating future needs. Although the space planning section of the CPR may not have had as

broad campus involvement as other sections, the report appended to the CPR effectively

summarizes space utilization data, integrates data from consultants, and provides

recommendations (CPR, Appendix N, Academic Space Planning Report) within system-wide

CSU standards for space allocation. With enrollment not yet at full capacity and economic

conditions slowing progress, however, CSU Monterey Bay faces complex issues in space

management and planning. For example, state funding allocations will lag enrollment growth, potentially hindering facility development.

The 2007 master plan paints an aspirational picture of a campus committed to sustainable practices, a natural environment, and energy efficiency. However, the current physical plant continues to have significant environmental challenges and cleanup issues. These challenges could prove taxing to long-term financing and draw resources from the campus's ambitious pedagogical vision. Many original Fort Ord facilities cannot be restored to a condition optimal for instruction. Some of this square footage should be brought off line until it is renovated. Additionally, much existing classified space is mismatched to its purpose, which may disadvantage the institution.

**(3) Diversity**

The University reports that its faculty is less diverse than it was in its earliest years (CFR 3.2, CPR Report p. 23), and one of the goals is to more effectively recruit and retain "under-represented faculty." According to Data Exhibit 4.1, of those faculty identifying ethnicity, approximately 51% are non-white or Hispanic. This percentage has remained relatively consistent for the five years reported. The staff appears to be somewhat less diverse, according to Data Exhibit 4.3; of those reporting ethnicity, approximately 40% are non-white and/or Hispanic. Although the University recognizes challenges to maintaining a diverse workforce, CSUMB reports that it has been relatively successful in recruiting and retaining females and minority males over the past five years (meetings with administrators and staff 9/16/09). The institution is now focusing on professional development for incumbents as well as the hiring of members of under-represented groups (CFR 3.4).

As an Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), CSU Monterey Bay serves historically under-represented students from the tri-county area. The student population has averaged between 52-54% non-white and/or Hispanic. Of the under-represented groups, Hispanic students are the most represented, averaging approximately 27%; however, the CPR Report (p. 24) states that this "trails the regional Latino population." At 4%, the percentage of African-American students exceeds that of the regional population. The data suggest that CSUMB serves larger proportions of under-represented students than the CSU system average and the state four-year institution average. (CFR 1.5) Themes of multiculturalism run through the institution's literature and policies as well as through curriculum (CFR 3.2, meeting with faculty 9/16/09).

Policies and practices (http://hr.csumb.edu/site/x9049.xml) surrounding diversity appear to have had impact (CFR 1.5). Based on meetings with faculty, staff, and students, the campus climate appears to be relatively welcoming of diversity; however, from reading a number of confidential emails received by the team, the visiting team realized that this sentiment is not universally shared among all groups and constituencies across the campus (CFR 2.10).

(4) **Outcomes Approach**

Early in its short history, CSU Monterey Bay adopted an educational model based on student learning outcomes (CFR 2.3, 2.4, CPR Report, p. 6). However, only recently has the university moved beyond the course level to examine student learning outcomes on the broader level of General Education (termed University Learning Requirements or URLs) and the majors (CPR Report, p. 6). The CPR Report as well as meetings with administrators and faculty (9/16-17/09) underscore a commitment to gather and use data more effectively and "make evidence-based decisions" (CFR 4.7, CPR Report, p. 32). To that end, the university established an Institutional Assessment and Research office, provided access to a common data set, developed a program

review process, and adopted technology to facilitate data gathering and analysis (CPR report, pp. 32-33).

Planning and assessment are now playing a more significant role both in the majors and the University Learning Requirements. Focused efforts are underway with regard to capstones, undergraduate research, service learning, and student academic support services. Meetings with the president, the deans and provost, the WASC Steering and Capacity Committees, and faculty (9/16/09) highlighted the goal noted in the CPR Report (pp. 31-33) that the university is making a transition from a culture of anecdote to a culture of evidence.

The Institutional Assessment and Research (IAR) office has been designed to provide support beyond basic activities (CFR 4.5, CPR Report, pp. 32). The new program review process (CPR Report, Appendix B) includes a calendar for programs to go through the process. Data from these reviews will be fundamental to creating feedback loops for program improvement and assessment of learning outcomes. The first round of program reviews shows strong interest in curriculum and learning but reveals inconsistent understanding of assessment best practices as well as inconsistent gathering and use of data (CFR 4.6). The Environmental Science, Technology and Policy program review, which reflects a conscious effort to use multiple types of student feedback to improve curriculum and pedagogy, could be a model for other programs going through the process. Realizing differences in faculty training and experience, the deans are making a conscious effort to develop stronger skills for faculty and chairs in data gathering and analysis (meeting with provost and deans 9/16/09). Overall, faculty members indicated a positive attitude toward program review as it has increased reflection at the program level, helped them see that planning must be ongoing and consistent, not episodic, and that a culture of evidence is not in opposition to the strong vision of CSUMB (9/16/09 meeting with faculty).

Ultimately, an outcomes-based education requires a faculty actively engaged in the study of the impact of their activities and committed to the scholarship of teaching and learning. CSUMB faculty are grappling with this challenge and creating a more intentional, goal-driven and evidence-based environment (meetings with provost and faculty 9/16/09). Results from a variety of planning, data-gathering, and analysis efforts will help the university determine the effectiveness of its unique approach in terms of both helping students learn and retaining them at CSUMB (CFR 4.7, 4.8).

Campus reaction to the recent retention study (CPR Report, p. 15 and Appendix M) demonstrates further that the campus is serious about being more outcomes based and data driven (meetings with president, provost and deans, and faculty 9/16/09). The retention study, exhaustive in tables of subgroups, rates, charts, and graphs, was followed by a university retention retreat in spring 2008 (CFR 4.3). The IAR office is also undertaking a cohort study by major, tracking who is leaving CSUMB and who is staying (meeting with Provost 9/16/09). For retention to improve significantly, enrollment management planning will need to link with institutional academic and strategic plans and program reviews as well as with a financial plan (CFR 4.5). Meetings with administrators and faculty (9/16/09) stressed that this alignment is happening (CFR 4.6). Projections indicate that first-time freshman retention for fall 2009 will have increased over retention numbers from fall 2008. This success could be attributed partially to the economic situation, but it is very likely that increased intentionality across the university will also be responsible for positive change (CFR 4.3).

## C. Student Success

CSUMB strives for its students to "develop foundational knowledge, skills, and abilities that allow them to effect meaningful change in society" (Appendix I, p. 505). Further, the university

aspires to "fully develop as a state comprehensive university in the CSU, providing high quality education within the context of our academic values and commitments" (Appendix J, p. 522). On these foundations, the university is building a framework for ensuring student success (CFR 2.3). The Educational Effectiveness Committee, composed of faculty, staff, and administrators, is responsible for addressing the themes and research questions that compose the institution's self-study. The committee envisions this work as a way to "inform the growth and development of campus programs and policies and as scholarly research for publication" (October 2007 Proposal for Reaccreditation, p. 11).

As evidence of commitment to student success, CSUMB personnel cite the provost's providing mini-grants to support studies of direct assessment of student learning in order to broaden the base of faculty knowledgeable about assessment (meeting with enrollment management team 9/16/09) and the provost's support of faculty teams to attend the WASC Assessment Conference. Other indicators of commitment to student success are steady increases in pass rates for students enrolled in remedial writing and math classes (Appendix J. p. 523).

While celebrating these accomplishments, the campus community is also mindful of areas in which improvements are needed, and it appears to be proactive in seeking improvement. In 2006, for example, the university hired a consulting firm to evaluate how prospective students and parents perceive the campus. The findings were used to inform communication about degree requirements, pathways to graduation, and affordability (CPR Report, p. 7). CSUMB's Strategic Plan 2008-2013 identifies "increas[ing] student success" as one of the campus' major goals. Specific student success goals—which encompass the areas of assessment of student learning, remediation, transfer matriculation, retention rates, and graduation rates—have been established and are elaborated upon in terms of projected "evidence of student success in 2013" (Appendix J,

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p. 524). Faculty and staff appear to share a commitment to addressing these issues but may not yet completely understand or agree on what is needed to improve student success (meetings with faculty and staff 9/16-17/09).

Toward accomplishing these goals, the university has identified four key initiatives: (1) developing academic advising as a signature strength; (2) enhancing opportunities for active learning and undergraduate research; (3) implementing student success grants; (4) and maximizing retention and graduation rates (Appendix I, p. 506).

Within the Capacity and Preparatory Review report and supplemental materials, the campus focuses in depth on retention issues, identifying poor retention rate as a major source of concern. Authors of CSUMB's Institutional Proposal for Reaccreditation (October 2007) note the campus' retention problems as attributable either to "a failure to deeply attach students to each other and to the university during students' early experiences at CSUMB" or to "students not finding the kind of academic programs that they desire at CSUMB" (p. 12).

The campus has recently invested considerable energy collecting and analyzing pertinent student success data as part of a multi-year Retention Study (2001-2007) that has informed the development of interventions to increase retention and enhance student success (CPR Report, p. 36). Included in those analyses were key comparisons with peer institutions, both within the California State University system and nationally (Appendix M, pp. 638-645). CSUMB has also compiled 6-year graduation and attrition rates over time and analyzed those institutional data by cohort and major. Based on information contained in the Retention Study report, comparative data from peer institutions do not appear to have been included in these analyses (Appendix M, pp. 612-625).

Overall, Retention Study findings revealed that many non-returning students (40%) are freshmen, although just under one-quarter of juniors and seniors, and 15% of sophomores also elect not to continue their CSUMB studies. One especially troubling pattern is that there has been a five-year trend of increasing attrition for freshmen; findings show that, relative to seniors, freshmen indicate significantly less satisfying educational experiences (Appendix M, p.553). Among degree-seeking, first-time full-time freshmen, CSUMB has ranked last or near last in retention among the California State University campuses (Appendix M, pp. 639-645). The campus' first-year student retention is also notably lower than that of its national peer group ("less selective") institutions based on comparative figures provided by the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (Appendix M, p. 638).

Irrespective of whether they are upper- or lower-division students, the overwhelming majority of those who depart are in good academic standing. Results also showed that those living in residence halls and who are engaged in major programs (as opposed to "undecided") students are comparatively more likely to persist, as are transfer students (although transfer retention rates are also below the campus' expectations), full-time students, those who are traditionally aged undergraduates, and those receiving $5,000 or more in financial aid. Regional differences in persistence were also evident, with varying effects for upper- and lower-division students. It does not appear that CSUMB's attrition problem affects one ethnic group more than another (Appendix M, pp. 552-554). Finally, and importantly, while the percentage of enrolled students selecting CSUMB as their first or second choice institution is 85%, CSUMB's rank as the first choice institution has fallen over time. In 2006, 22% of entering freshmen indicated that chances were "very good" that they would transfer to another college, up from just 12% in 1999 (Appendix M, p. 553). The most recent graduation data provided (2004) reflect a cumulative

CSUMB graduation rate of 66% across undergraduate degree-granting programs (Appendix M, p. 622).

In response to these findings, CSUMB prepared a Retention Planning Status Report (campus email 9/16/09) that details "top priorities" for enhancing student retention: (1) clarify and communicate degree requirements; (2) support the first-year experience; and (3) enhance academic rigor throughout the degree program (pp. 1-2). Within the report, the Enrollment Management Council describes "work accomplished" and "work underway" for each priority area. "Outcome success indicators" are provided within the document's Retention Planning Strategic Matrix (pp. 10-11). The institution's commitment to improving retention is also evident in the 2006-2011 Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, which details a series of Retention Goals and Strategies. Strategies include a "reinvigorated" academic advising program that will become one of the campus' "signature strength(s)" (p. 14 of document; p. 746 of appendix material). A second strategy is increasing interaction between full-time faculty and lower-division students and helping faculty clarify degree pathway and audit systems for their students via advising (p. 15/p. 747). A third strategy is expanding the first-year experience through curricular and co-curricular initiatives and making it more responsive to students' needs, increasing student programming and outreach, and creating a "parents network" for e-mail information (p. 15/p. 747). Site visit team conversations (9/16/09) with the Enrollment Management Council/Enrollment Management Team provided strong evidence of the university's investment in these efforts.

**SECTION III – FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

CSUMB is a vibrant institution that continues to embrace its vision, adapt to its environment and plan for the future. Administrators, faculty, and staff are enthusiastic and committed to the

vision. Student success appears to be paramount, and decision-making is founded on what is perceived to be best for the students (CFR 1.1, 1.2). Based on the materials provided, information learned through meetings with groups and individuals, and the evaluation of Institutional Capacity reported in this document, CSUMB appears to have the capacity needed to meet the WASC Standards and to accomplish it mission.

**Commendations**

1. The team wishes to commend the institution on the gracious hospitality provided during the visit. The organization of the visit was excellent; the University accommodated our various scheduling requests and provided all additional materials requested. The University was open and generous in its sharing of information with the team.

2. The University is to be commended on numerous processes, policies, and plans developed and implemented since the last WASC visit. These processes, policies, and plans will aid the University in using resources more effectively and should make it easier for the institution to achieve its goals.

3. The University is to be commended for conservation and thoughtful allocation of resources in support of continued capacity building these challenging times.

4. The University is to be commended for open communication and relationship building across departments and units even during challenging economic times. The institution is encouraged to continue and expand an inclusive and collaborative approach in future planning and initiatives.

5. The University is to be commended for the commitment of employees and students to the vision of the University. Faculty, staff, and students with whom we spoke are familiar with the vision and refer to it regularly and enthusiastically.

**Major Recommendations**

1.  It is recommended that CSUMB continue strengthening feedback loops, based on data analysis and synthesis, that will result in continuous improvement, especially in areas such as program review and student success (CFR 2.10, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7).

2.  It is recommended that the University prioritize development of appropriate committees, governance structures, and academic decision-making processes needed to support continued growth and development (CFR 2.12, 2.14, 3.11). Examples include a Curriculum Committee, clear paths to degrees, and effective advising processes.

3.   Based on the limited response to the 2003 Action Letter, it is recommended that CSUMB be more responsive to WASC instructions (CFR 1.9).

**SECTION IV.  PREPARATION FOR EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW**

The institution is making good progress towards its EER. It was evident from the visit that CSUMB is actively using the WASC review to accelerate institutional priorities and progress. With strong focus on themes surrounding student success, the academic model, and the capstone, significant work is underway to support the review of education effectiveness. CSUMB can move confidently toward the EER on schedule.