REPORT OF A VISIT TO
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, STANISLAUS
TURLOCK, CALIFORNIA

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I. INTRODUCTION

Organization of This Report

This is a report of a comprehensive re-accreditation visit to California State University Stanislaus conducted for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges from October 13 ó 16, 1998. The report is divided into five sections. The first section, in addition to providing this outline of the report, will present a brief overview of the institution, trace its accreditation history, and outline the structure of the team visit. The second section is designed to aid the institution in its quest to become "learning centered." The leaders of the University specifically requested that careful attention be paid to this topic. Thus, while much of the advice given in this section is technically non-binding, the team gave special attention to examining the institution from a quality systems perspective and spent considerable time formulating its recommendations. The third section is entitled "Compliance." In this section each WASC standard is discussed. Given the team's scope and expanded purpose, the fourth section contains a more detailed discussion of how the team conceptualized, organized and carried out the site visit. Finally, section five contains the recommendations from the team that are directly related to WASC standards and, therefore, must be addressed by the University as part of its ongoing relationship with the association.

A Brief Profile of California State University Stanislaus

CSU Stanislaus was founded in 1957 as part of the California State University System. Since its founding the University primarily has served over 1,000,000 residents of a 10,000 square mile, ethnically diverse, six county service area in the San Joaquin Valley and adjacent central Sierra foothills. Since its beginnings, the primary focus of the University has remained undergraduate education and the preparation of teachers.
  In 1974, a center was opened forty miles to the north of the main campus in Stockton, California. Fall, 1998, head count enrollment was 5,428 on the main campus and 923 at the Stockton Center for a total of 6,351; 4,503 full-time equivalents. Nearly two-thirds of these students are female and two-thirds study full-time. Undergraduates represent just under 80 percent of the total enrollment.

The University is organized into three academic units: a College of Arts, Letters and Sciences (which serves 66 percent of the students), a School of Business Administration (which serves 17 percent), and a School of Education (which serves 17 percent). Together, these units oversee 72 undergraduate and post baccalaureate programs.

The Accreditation History of California State University Stanislaus

CSU Stanislaus was originally accredited by WASC in 1963. Accreditation was renewed in 1965, 1968, 1972, 1978, 1984 and, most recently, in 1991.

The Structure of the Team Visit

In conducting its evaluation, members of the team interviewed senior administrators, staff, students, directors of service departments, alumni, a member of the board, an administrator of the California State University system, representatives from the community, and a cross-section of full-time faculty. Team members also met with the following committees: Master Academic Planning, Graduate Studies and Research, University RPT, Enrollment Management, University Educational Policies, Budget Planning and Assessment, Faculty Development, Facilities Planning, plus the General Education Review Task Force, the General Education Subcommittee and the Department Chairs. Additionally, scheduled meetings and discussions were held with the Senate Executive Committee, the Dean's Council, the President's Cabinet, the Graduate Council, the Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity Task Force, and Student Affairs Directors. Relevant documents were examined along with course syllabi, self-studies, committee minutes, etc. Student leaders were interviewed during a luncheon, while other students were randomly interviewed on campus. A member of the team also visited the branch campus in Stockton.

II. THE QUEST TO BE "LEARNING CENTERED"

The team's observations and recommendations regarding the University's desire to become a truly "learning centered" university are grouped under four rubrics that reflect, in the team's collective judgment, the areas that need to be addressed next. The focus should be on integrating and aligning the activities surrounding these topics.

Defining "Learning-Centered"

Phil Crosby, the noted quality expert, suggests that the only workable definition of quality is "conformance to requirements." Clear requirements provide the essential context within which appropriate activities can be identified and prioritized, work organized and assigned, and meaningful assessment conducted.   The decision to reanimate CSU Stanislaus as a learning-centered university has the potential to have far-reaching and beneficial effects on all aspects of campus activity. Now that the concept has been introduced and embraced by many faculty and staff, the next critical step must be the refinement of a working definition that clearly sets forth the attributes of "learning centered" culture so that the various units on campus can be assured that they are moving in that direction. Currently, the concept is not uniformly well understood. To some faculty, staff members, and administrators it merely means promoting better student learning and thus is seen as merely a fashionable way of stating what has always been the case. Others, while desiring to be on board, in effect trivialize the concept. (For example, "watering the lawn makes for an environment that promotes student learning.")   When asked to describe the attributes of "learning centered," faculty who had attended the summer AAHE conference suggested at least three: (1) formulating the right questions, that is, "a spirit of inquiry"; (2) assessment linked to those questions; and (3) systems that ensure that the answers result in improvements. Their observations could serve as a starting point. In any event, a viable definition needs to be formulated.

Recommendations:

- Clearly define "learning centered" in a way that will engage every part of the campus community.

- Actively promote the importance of a culture of learning and a culture of evidence. The administrative team may wish to discuss ways that they as individual leaders can reinforce the values underlying the concept.

- Align faculty and staff training activities around this concept so that everyone develops a working knowledge of how to ensure that their area is continuously learning.
- Place "Reports on the Status of Learning Centeredness" at the top of every Cabinet and Dean's Council agenda.
- Initiate celebrations, rewards, and development opportunities throughout the campus community to reinforce the goal of being learning centered.
- In parallel with the above efforts, formulate a communications plan so that as the process unfolds the campus community will be kept informed.

Priority Setting

A clear definition will, in and of itself, begin to drive priority setting. Currently, while many faculty and staff feel energized by the new focus and the planning progress on campus, there is also some weariness growing out of an impression that the University appears to be trying to do everything at once and is proliferating new committees with demanding agendas. Indeed, without clear priorities, the 41 objectives and 53 strategic agenda items in the Strategic Plan appear overwhelming. Also, the articulation of priorities is necessary to lessen discontent from sectors of the campus community who see planning themes and goals not funded or under-funded. In other words, the relative importance of the various themes and goals in terms of budget allocations is unclear.
  There are places and activities of convergence between academic affairs and student affairs, but they are not systematic. Student affairs activities, programs and services certainly meet a learning centered focus; however, they may or may not be directly linked to the curriculum and the related learning outcomes. There are numerous examples of such connectedness, but it is, again, more ad hoc than systematic. Ideally, there would be interest and a formal on-going dialogue between academic faculty, student services professions and the student leadership of how learning in the Village, activities programming, clubs and organizations, recreational activities, arts and music, etc., all weave together into some common student learning definitions and outcomes.

Recommendations:

- Annual priorities relating to "learning centeredness" need to be set and communicated down through the organization.

- A step-by-step process for implementing "learning centeredness" in every department and service unit on campus needs to be developed complete with steps, mileposts, deadlines, rewards, celebrations, and the like. The process should be published and widely circulated and discussed.

- Strategies need to be developed to directly integrate and connect co-curricular programming and activities to the curriculum and faculty activity.

Budget Development

The next logical step is to connect the "learning centeredness" initiatives with the budgeting process. This will involve carefully differentiating the role of the Cabinet, MAP, and the Budget, Planning, and Assessment Committee. When accomplished, it should end the perception on the part of some of a lack of connection between the planning function and the allocation of funds.   Recommendation:

- A formal approach to integrating planning and budgeting with the learning-centered concept needs to be developed and disseminated that is systematic, iterative, and integrated with other processes on campus.

Assessment and Feedback

The systematic collection of data is an ongoing process central to planning and establishing priorities. Fortunately, the campus community has recognized the central role assessment and feedback play in continuous improvement. The development of the Academic Assessment Plan moves the institution in the desired direction.

Recommendations:

- The campus personnel need to better understand the full nature of assessment and the different ways it can be achieved. Quantitative and qualitative approaches using a variety of tools need to be part of the full assessment effort. In addition, better coordination of campus resources that impact on assessment is necessary. Institutional Research, the Office of the Provost, the school deans, department chairs and other stakeholders/resource control agents must build an integrated network where assessment activities are coordinated and supported in various ways (money, space, assistance, professional recognition, etc.).
- This Academic Assessment Plan needs to be implemented according to specified timelines and mileposts.
- Systematic protocols need to be developed for assessing entering student preparation, needs and attitudes, and linking these to general education requirements and other managed learning activities.

- Current efforts to reinvigorate and strengthen the Office of Institutional Research need to continue.
- Specific protocols and timelines for measuring the quality of each service provided on campus need to be developed. These will make it possible to zero in on opportunities for improvement identified through the Noel-Levitz survey.
- Information gained through various assessments should be framed as "actionable data" and discussed with appropriate groups on campus. It may be desirable to begin each Cabinet and Dean's Council meeting with a review of some piece of actionable data. This will help to create a culture of inquiry on campus.
- Members of the campus community should be encouraged through admonitions and rewards to recognize, internalize, and take ownership of assessment and outcome-based activities.
- A few critical rolled-up measures should be defined and a review cycle established so that the president and her Cabinet can monitor progress and report it to the community.

III. COMPLIANCE

Standard One: Institutional Integrity

1.A Integrity in the Pursuit of Truth. Through its policies and publications, CSU Stanislaus formally states its commitment to the ideals of freedom of inquiry and expression that are a hallmark of American higher education. A campus ethos of relaxed discussion and mutual respect informally buttresses these commitments. Even though the University represents a very diverse population along several dimensions, a climate has been created where the various groups seem to acknowledge and respect each other's perspectives and opinions. The question raised in the self-study concerning academic freedom does not signal systemic weaknesses in this area; rather, it reflects attempts to deepen the community's (both faculty and students) appreciation for freedom and responsibility.

1.B Integrity in Respect for Persons. A campus climate that is solicitous of students' needs has been created. Students report that faculty "care about them" and are concerned for their academic and social success. Although students are represented on most University committees, during interviews several expressed varying degrees of dissatisfaction with the students role in deliberations on campus; nonetheless, when further questioned it was clear that student leaders, at least, understand how to influence decisions and feel comfortable expressing themselves in an atmosphere free from recrimination.

1.C Integrity in Institutional Relations. University publications contain an accurate and complete representation of policies regarding admissions, diversity, due process, privacy, and the use of human subjects in research. The institution is open, accurate and solicitous in its interaction with schools and businesses in its region. Appropriate financial audits are conducted from the system office and policies are in place relating to conflicts of interest.

1.E Integrity in Relationships with the Commission. The self-study report was accurate and complete. Exceptional efforts were made to facilitate the site-visit team's work. The openness observed with the community also extends to the University's dealings with the Commission.

Standard Two: Institutional Purposes, Planning, and Effectiveness

2.A Clarity of Purposes. As part of the California State University system, CSU Stanislaus approaches planning in the context of the CSU's *California State Master Plan for Higher Education* and the more recent *Cornerstones Report: Choosing Our Future.* During the 1996-97 academic year, the University adopted a revised statement of mission reflecting a pervasive commitment to "creating a learning environment" for all members and functional units that make up the campus community. This focus on "learning centeredness" is reflected in the campus strategic plan (1997), which identified 12 Planning Principles and

Core Values. Additionally, five Planning Themes have been identified, under which 13 goals are subsumed. The themes are: Teaching and Learning, Professional Development, Campus Life, University Relations, and Institutional Processes.

2.B Institutional Planning. Within the above described context, over the past three years CSU Stanislaus has worked to develop a comprehensive strategic plan that is intentional, comprehensive, and based on core values. This effort has been guided by a "Strategic Planning Commission" composed of faculty, students, staff, administration, and representatives from the surrounding community. The resultant plan, *Pathways to Opportunity*, provides a strategic framework for unit planning and decision making on campus.

A variety of other planning groups have been charged with translating the vision reflected in *Pathways to Opportunity* into unit and departmental plans. The MAP (Master Academic Planning) committee has emerged as the central hub and clearing group for aligning and reconciling plans being developed by planning committees working in student affairs, business and finance, and development and University relations.

The University's *Stockton Center Planning Document* addresses the academic, fiscal, and assessment planning for its off-campus site. This document recognizes the diverse needs of students in off-campus programs in flexible and responsive ways.

2.C Institutional Effectiveness. CSU Stanislaus is committed to evaluating its accomplishments as a basis for broad, continuous planning. This commitment is evident in its strategic plan, its Master Academic Planning process, and its various assessment committees, workshops, and Senate actions. In its Mission Statement and planning documents it has defined itself as a learning-centered university, and like most institutions is struggling to meaningfully relate evaluation or assessment to this focus. It has mandated assessment of its instructional programs and supports that mandate with institutional research. It assesses its research activity through the faculty and program review processes. It has assessed some aspects of its co-curricular environment, and perceives the need to deepen this assessment. It should soon be able to consider developing a small set of indicators that would distill or aggregate its various assessment efforts into measures of institutional progress or effectiveness in meeting its overarching goals.

Standard Three: Governance and Administration

Members of the team interviewed a member of the system board and a representative of the CSU system office. Members of the local Advisory Board were also interviewed. It was clear that both groups have a detailed understanding of the University, its current initiatives, and future challenges.

Both groups support the general direction the institution is taking and expressed high expectations for its future success.

With one exception, the senior administrative team including the deans' have all assumed their current positions within the last four years. Consequently, nearly all of the major initiatives being promoted on campus are also in early stages of development. The same can be said for the systems and processes needed to support these initiatives. The administrative team appears to function well in an atmosphere of mutual confidence and trust.

Faculty are extensively involved in planning and deliberative processes. Teams of administrators and faculty have been sent to summer workshops sponsored by AAHE to refine a vision of "learning centeredness." Those who have participated in such sessions are enthusiastic and supportive. The Academic Senate is organized and active on campus. Members from the senate are included on various planning groups, most notable the MAP (Master Academic Planning) committee.

Students are invited to serve on major planning committees and on policy review and enforcement committees. Nonetheless, some complained of meetings being scheduled at times inconvenient to students and of receiving notices after the fact. A student senate is organized and active on campus.

Standard Four: Educational Programs

4.A General Requirements. CSU Stanislaus demonstrates a commitment to high academic standards through its program review and assessment processes and its various planning and faculty development activities. However, with regard to specification of degree objectives, some programs are deficient, in that their objectives are only very generally described, and they do not appear to state the skills, learning methods, affective capabilities, or career preparation practices which they aim to have their students learn.

In regard to measuring the educational effectiveness of programs, while all departments have undertaken to assess their programs of study, many need faculty development and institutional research office help if they are to find informative and useful ways of fulfilling this undertaking. A model in terms of clarity is the graduate program assessment document.

It is clear to many faculty that the concept of learning centeredness entails student outcomes assessment in General Education and the majors, and that such assessment is already being required much more rigorously by the committees that pass on the five-year program reviews. However, department chairs are skeptical: some believe that assessment will steam-roll program creativity, some that it will have no effect on budgets, which are driven instead by FTE, some that it will only tell them what they already know. This skepticism reveals a great need for faculty development in student outcomes assessment.

The Alverno-led workshop last summer was admirable, but limited in effect so far, and the new teaching/learning center should be useful, but its minimal funding has alarmed concerned faculty. There are good intentions for expanded use of the IR office in outcomes assessment, but a mission statement for that office is still in formation. It does not help that the University has traditionally relied on satisfaction or value questionnaires whose data either did not lend itself to pin-point analysis or was not in fact analyzed as to causes or reasons for the opinions expressed. Of course, the main purpose of student outcomes assessment is to suggest ways of improving teaching and learning. So far, there are few examples of academic programs that have profited in this way from their assessments; mostly these are programs whose graduates have pointed to deficiencies in their subject-matter preparation for the workplace.

In regard to the linkages recommended above, the existing assessment plan is really a policy statement on assessment. A comprehensive assessment plan might consider relationships between the competencies being defined by the General Education task force and those desired in the various majors, might look at commonalities among some of these and possible desired learning outcomes of co-curricular activities or library instruction, might consider how faculty portfolios could include materials to document the ways faculty strive to foster such competencies in students through their teaching methods, and the like. It should be noted that any such comprehensive assessment plan should include systematic student input: at present the student government is considering the assessment of teaching (now mainly done through the IDEA form); the students have interesting thoughts on the effectiveness of current methods, and their thinking should have a place in any planning for an assessment plan of this nature.

Other than the assessment plan incorporated into the OIT BATS plan, there is no evidence of assessment practices and feedback in either OIT or the library. At a minimum, efforts should be made to assess how library resources are being used. Everyone seems to agree that library resources need to be improved yet it is not clear what portions of the collection, by discipline, are, or are not, being used. It is also unclear how lack of library resources is impacting the rigor of student research. Such analysis and assessment could do much, it would seem, to enhance learning centeredness.

4.B Undergraduate Programs. CSU Stanislaus meets accepted standards for undergraduate programs. Particularly commendable are its efforts to reconsider its General Education program, starting with a redefinition of its desired student learning outcomes. The existing program meets all the WASC requirements as to skills, breadth, hours, faculty, and transfer of credit, and all courses are subject to rigorous review before they are included in it. The committee now reconsidering the program is pursuing a recommendation of the previous WASC review, which found the program needed greater coherence.

4.C Graduate Programs. Approximately 1,300 students (20 percent) of CSU Stanislaus' 6,351 students are enrolled in graduate degree programs. Fifty percent of the graduate students are enrolled in the Post-Baccalaureate Teaching Credential Programs, and the remaining 50 percent are spread across the Master of Arts or Master of Science Programs in Education, English, History, Psychology, and Marine Science; Interdisciplinary Studies and the Masters of Business Administration, Public Administration, and Social Work.

While the role of graduate education is defined, it needs to be communicated and embraced more extensively across the campus. (Definition: To develop autonomous, analytical, life-long learners who know how to inquire and create; are able to tie their expertise and experience back into the community; and are well prepared to move on to professional positions or doctoral studies.) Graduate admission requirements, procedures, program requirements, and specific learning outcomes are clearly articulated, presented, and communicated in catalog and brochures. Graduate courses meet a set of campus criteria for graduate level coursework developed and recommended by the Graduate Council. For the most part, while course goals, objectives, and learning experiences are aligned with specified learning outcomes, some programs need to reflect more of the "learning-centeredness" theme of the campus.
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Qualified full-time faculty teach 80 percent of the graduate course work. The majority of part-time faculty/lecturers who teach in the graduate programs hold the doctorate degree.

Program review is on a five-year cycle. Strong efforts are made to maintain quality and integrity through the use of exit interviews, student and employer surveys (first and third year).

The continuous dialog around the role of graduate education at CSU Stanislaus including its importance, rigor, quality, and integrity along with continuing efforts to increase the participation of graduate students in the teaching-learning process, research projects, and presentations, augur well for the future of graduate programs.

While there have been some recent allocations of funds and a small amount of revenue generated to increase the visibility of graduate programs, there is a need to improve the linkage between planning for graduate offerings and the budgeting process.

Recruitment of more ethnically and linguistically diverse graduate students into the smaller programs that should be emphasized. Furthermore assessment strategies and approaches that are aligned with the goals and objectives of the program should be developed.

4.D Research and Scholarship. Although CSU Stanislaus is a teaching university, research, scholarship, and creative activities are seen as important components of the teaching and learning process. Faculty scholarship is reported annually by the dean of each college. These reports indicate that 50 percent of the faculty engage in scholarly activity, a number that is slowly increasing. This trend is supported by the publication the *Journal of Research* and by the allocation of funds for a grant writer and a 50 percent increase in grant activity.

There is not a clear definition of scholarship. The University RTP Committee continues to follow what has been in place on campus for some time in its tenure/promotion decisions. Members of the RTP Committee remain uncomfortable in their efforts to assess the files of faculty being considered for promotion and/or tenure.

4.E Special Programs and Courses for Credit. The University has been engaged in discussion, with WASC, regarding the international implementation of the Bachelor of Science in Applied Studies. Through these exchanges approval for international deployment of the degree program has been granted but not acted upon by the University. It is recommended that this degree authorization not be implemented until a thorough internal review of the issues associated with international deployment are examined.

4.F Academic Planning. Academic planning is designed to achieve the aims of the institution and provides the rationale for the use of available human, financial, and physical resources. Systematic planning is based on continuing institutional self-evaluation and assessment of the needs of constituents. Responsibility for the design, approval, and implementation of the curriculum is vested in designated bodies with established channels of communication and control. All appropriate segments of the institution are involved. However, academic planning based on the learning centered theme is just beginning. While there appears to be generally favorable support for this approach, specific, consistent, and comprehensive program assessment is still lacking.

4.G Non-Credit Courses and Programs. The University has made strides in formalizing the integration of a global perspective in the curriculum. Through the development of the Institute for International Studies, a locus of activity has been developed. Past program development activity has also involved University Extended Education, leading to some confusion regarding where programs belong. The relationship between the Institute for International Studies and University Extended Education is currently being discussed. The University is encouraged to continue to clarify the roles of the various units involved in developing special programs and outreach so that efforts of these units can be coordinated rather than thwarted by competition or confusion.

4.H Admissions and Retention. The California State University system admissions standards and criteria are applied appropriately at the Stanislaus campus. The admissions, records, and financial aid functions have been consolidated into an Enrollment Services function which also includes outreach and the recruitment of students. External reviewers have been retained to provide guidance and priorities in enhancing the functioning of the offices and in the creation of a one stop shopping center or "counter services." A consultant firm also assisted the campus in the revision of recruitment publications and targeting campus environmental strengths. An Enrollment Management Committee has been created to broaden the campus constituency involvement in recruitment and retention. The CSU system provides both institutional and comparative system-wide analysis regarding retention and graduation rates. The self-study and campus interviews show that the standards are met regarding admission standards, practices and the verification of graduation requirements.

4.I Academic Credit and Records. The University complies with accepted standards for awarding academic credit and maintaining related records. An anomaly is that according to the self-study, 10 percent of course registration each semester is in individual studies, mostly undergraduate. This seems a large proportion, and raises questions as to the purposes and costs of such instruction. It seems, from anecdotal evidence, that helpful faculty may sometimes provide such instruction in lieu of courses students need but cannot attend. Although students may use only nine credits of individual study toward the degree, and although each such study must be well documented as to goals and activities, this is a matter the University might want to review. A related concern is raised by anecdotal evidence that activities such as student help with recruitment may be rewarded with academic credit.

Standard Five: Faculty and Staff

5.A Faculty Role in Academic Programs. Following discussions with the academic senate, departmental chairs, deans, and the provost, it is clear that faculty exercise central responsibility for development of academic programs, the quality of the programs, and the character of the institution. The size and qualifications of the faculty are adequate to meet its obligations.

Faculty involved in the planning process seem to have a clear understanding of the processes necessary to create an assessment driven learning centered focus for the campus. The campus will benefit by involving a larger number of faculty in the core processes of building a learning centered strategic plan. Through these activities, the faculty will remain well informed regarding the major challenges of this ambitious effort. Enhanced communication will be one of several benefits from this approach.

The institution should provide the faculty and department chairs with the full range of support necessary to create high quality assessment tools to examine

student learning outcomes. In particular, the resources and expertise of Institutional Research should be mobilized for this important task.

5.B Faculty Selection and Evaluation. The faculty play a major role in the selection of new colleagues. Evaluation procedures are clearly defined in the Faculty Handbook and the process is consistent with policy outlined in the CFA-CSU MOU.

The definition of scholarship is particularly important in the context of how research and creative activities will be aligned with the learning centered focus of the campus strategic plan. The campus will be well served by finalizing its current exercise of having departments provide local definitions of scholarships/creative activities.

The University is encouraged to clarify how faculty positions are created at the level of the provost and deans. This will help department chairs and the faculty better understand the allocation of resources and its alignment with the learning centered focus of the campus.

5.C Faculty Welfare and Development. Several committees of the general faculty and Academic Senate are specifically designed to address issues of faculty welfare and development. In particular, the Faculty Development Committee and the Faculty Leaves and Awards Committee focus their efforts on various aspects of this standard.

The University will greatly benefit from appropriate funding of its newly created Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Stabilization of this new agency will help make operational the learning centered focus of the campus strategic plan and make assessment of faculty guided teaching and learning a reality.

The initial goal of the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning will be to consolidate and integrate the faculty teaching and learning activities currently offered on campus. Second, the Center will attempt to explain to faculty the core elements of effective teaching and learning pedagogy. Finally, the Center proposes to enhance current teaching and learning activities. One example would be an effort to build a teaching and learning technology suite in the Center where faculty can explore, experiment and develop technology tools to enhance teaching and learning in their courses, or develop new technology assisted courses.

However, the campus has relatively few resources invested in centralized faculty development at the level of the Faculty Development Committee and the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. In order for the campus to move to a learning centered state, the resources of school deans and the provost will need to be mobilized towards this effort.

The current faculty reward apparatus (i.e., the academic personnel processes; RPT and PSSI actions) will need closer linkage to the full range of activities of faculty in the learning centered institution planned by CSU Stanislaus. Without this linkage it will be impossible to persuade faculty to make long-term commitments to the scholarship of teaching and related professional activities that create a culture of teaching and learning. Creation of this campus culture is crucial if a learning centered campus focus is to be made institutional.

Providing support and validation for adjunct faculty is important for stabilizing the instructional program of the campus. The administration should explore ways to bring recognition and validation to this important sector of the instructional team. Clearly, well understood and approved assessment tools will need to be developed to review the adjunct faculty as the campus attempts to achieve this goal.

Workshops for orientation of new department chairs are necessary to get clarification of roles and responsibilities of these important academic managers. This is particularly important as the campus attempts to institutionalize learning centeredness as its major strategic planning focus.

5.D Staff Selection and Policies. CSU Stanislaus has administrative, professional, technical and other staff in number and quality by training and experience to enable the accomplishment of its major core institutional purposes.

In the creation of a learning centered university it will be useful to convince staff that its voice is important. In this regard, clear documentation of staff development successes and staff input into the creation of the campus strategic plan will serve to achieve this goal.

Refinement of the processes for awarding Performance-Based Salary Increases (PBSI) is necessary. Clearer definition of criteria and standards for these awards and the attendant ranking process will reduce the morale erosion that has occurred among staff. This issue is not unique to CSU Stanislaus since all campuses in the CSU system need to pay serious attention to this most important matter. Professional development should occur more often than once a year at staff development day.

The campus should also create opportunities for staff networking. It appears that opportunities for staff to network with other staff personnel will make the campus function more efficiently.

Standard Six: Library, Computing, and Other Information and Learning Resources

6.A General Requirements. The library enjoys a reputation of providing a high level of quality service to members of the university community. In an exit survey of graduate students 80 percent gave "library assistance" a rating of "excellent/good." Further indication of the strength of library service was confirmed in the *Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory,* administered to 1,200 students in 1997. In that survey the "helpfulness of the library staff" was one of only four areas rated significantly above the national norm. In its interviews the team confirmed the high regard in which library service is held.

6.B Quality of Holdings. The library is well organized. Materials are made accessible through its online catalog. Additional resources are made available through various online databases such as *Lexis-Nexis, Dow-Jones, Expanded Academic Index,* and *Pro-Quest*. The physical facilities currently accommodate the collection and provide sufficient seating for library users. Bibliographic instruction is provided and as many as 50 percent of enrolled students report having had some type of such instruction. With cooperation from the Office of Information Technology plans have been made to upgrade the library's instructional facilities with the addition of computer workstations.

In its 1990 visit the WASC accreditation team noted concern regarding the provision of library services at the Stockton Center. Such services are currently provided by a contractual arrangement that has been made with the University of Pacific. Stockton Center students also receive instruction from a library staff member. Library services will be further enhanced with the addition of a Library Access Center that is planned for the new Stockton Multi-campus Regional Center. The library will provide electronic access to full-text as well as other online databases, library and commercial document delivery services, and reference and instructional services by on-site staff. The status of personnel to be assigned to the Library Access Center is yet to be confirmed.

6.C Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services. The most serious problem the team found regarding the library relates to the status of its collection. This concern was noted and made apparent in the Self-study and reference to it was made in the university's Strategic Plan and the Master Academic Plan. It was further confirmed in various team interviews with both students and faculty. The Master Academic Plan established it as a priority concern. Consequently, additional funds are being provided by the university to augment the library's acquisition budget.

6.D Availability and Use. Use of the library's collection is not high, averaging approximately 15 items circulated per student per year. This may be due in part to the dated nature of the collection. It is recommended that in its effort to strengthen the holdings of the library some type of assessment regarding

collection use be made such as what students (by major) are using the collection and what portions of the collection (by discipline) are being used.

The lack of a library planning document, strategic or otherwise, was noted by the team. In keeping with the planning focus prevalent throughout the campus the team encourages the library to develop a meaningful library plan.

6.F Information Technology. Though progress has been made in upgrading the level of computing resources and services throughout the campus there remain substantial challenges in meeting the increasing demands for them. In referring to a faculty survey, administered in 1997, the Self-study noted that as many as 80 percent of the faculty surveyed indicated that computing resources were inadequate and did not meet faculty needs. This concern was frequently expressed in meetings and interviews and is of serious concern to the team. As one faculty member aptly noted, "OIT is undernourished."

The precipitous increase in the number of computers now on campus, expanded use of the campus network and internet, constant demands for upgrading both hardware and software, and the use of more sophisticated technology in the classroom have all combined to strain the resources available for assistance and maintenance. Consequently delays in service are frequently experienced adding to the frustration of faculty and staff. This is being addressed in part by an augmentation of state funding for the university's *Baseline Hardware/Software Training and Support Plan* (BATS). This year OIT will receive approximately $366,000 for BATS plan implementation. More than half of this will be used for upgrading faculty workstations. There is concern however that much of this will be one-time funding and consequently does not address the need for providing staff required to meet service and maintenance demands. Given the level of concern expressed by faculty and staff, and the growing and increasingly critical role technology plays on the campus, the team recommends that serious consideration be given to resolving service and maintenance issues.

While the challenges noted above are of concern it should be noted that meaningful progress has been made in several areas within OIT. For example, the number of student labs has more than doubled and the labs are equipped with relatively new workstations. A full-time instructional technology consultant has been employed to assist faculty in the design, development and application of multimedia in their teaching efforts. A relatively new computer lab has been established at the Stockton Center. A fiber network has been extended throughout the campus. Thirteen classrooms have been equipped to provide full multimedia capability and other classroom facilities have been upgraded with new television monitors. Additionally a technology plan for the campus has been prepared and submitted for incorporation in the Master Academic Plan.

Standard Seven: Student Services and the Co-Curricular Learning Environment

7.A Co-curricular Educational Growth. The identification of the characteristics and learning needs of the students is not as systematic as would be desirable. However, relevant demographic and enrollment pattern data is readily available and some periodic attitudinal and satisfaction survey activities have occurred at the institutional and departmental level. There is a strong sense of informal recognition and understanding of student needs and interests and anecdotal descriptions characterizing the student experience, but processes need to be formalized and stratified to represent relevant student constituencies with an emphasis on defining and substantiating outcomes.

7.B Coordination and Administration. The student affairs division has made a cycle of planning, evaluation, redesigning and improving services a meaningful part of their operational strategy. The WASC standards for these crucial co-curricular programs are addressed in a coordinated and thoughtful fashion. Important and substantial changes have been made in the coordination and leadership of campus student programs and services since the 1990 WASC visit. Internal planning activities, retreats, use of program or focused external reviews and "best practice" campus visitations are in evidence. Some benchmarking activity through NACUBO and the CSU system is also underway. There is a sense of a variety of mechanisms and continuous effort to think through means of improving customer service, efficiency and campus life. There is a need to formalize student participation in the process through outcomes assessment, focus groups and structured interviews. The implementation of formal, continuous student services outcomes assessment activities suggests the need for these activities to be coordinated, centralized, and disseminated in accordance with planning and evaluation cycles. A 1996 external reviewer, Carol Geer, clearly outlined the 1990 WASC recommendations and the numerous activities and actions that had been taken to address the visitation team report in substantive ways. The student affairs leadership and staff can take pride in the enhanced communication and coordination of programs in the past several years.

Enrollment growth has been achieved and remains a priority of the president, the institution, and the division. A marketing plan in the Development office is in the developmental stages, Web pages are in place, and a one-stop shopping counter services center has been implemented to simplify student enrollment activities. Student housing has been added as have increased campus activities. Student financial aid awarding processes have been streamlined and communicated earlier. A number of retention programs have high utilization and satisfaction. The self-study and student interviews identified an interest in strengthening career services including attention on the development of a formal service-learning and cooperative education program. A first year success initiative is planned. Division plans highlight mission statement, accomplishments, and

priority objectives for the continued review and improvement of services. However, in this context, the challenge remains on how to narrow, sequence and prioritize this extensive combination of external review recommendations and campus plans into achievable, actionable activities that are directly linked to identified staff, space, and fiscal resources.

The current external review and internal planning cycle has netted clear initiatives for continuous improvement and feedback. Within the existing planning framework it is crucial to structure and incorporate the full matrix of assessment and long term student outcomes evaluation. The co-curricular and student services needs of evening, graduate, Stockton and other campus and off-campus sites need formal assessment, and the resource development to match any documented needs.

Meaningful and substantial ways to initiate projects and activities with academic faculty around shared concerns, community building, and prevention should be explored (e.g., service-learning, cooperative education, first year success, academic honesty, learning disabilities, career development, health and wellness, thematic programming).

Standard Eight: Physical Resources

8.A Instructional and Support Facilities. Campus facilities are attractive, and appear well maintained. In the near future, an outside consultant will be used to create a campus-wide assessment of maintenance and repair needs.

The expanded presence for CSU Stanislaus in central Stockton represents a significant opportunity and challenge for the University. Opportunities to tap into a significant population base and serve a diverse array of place bound students are matched by similar potential to support the economic development and revitalization interests of the Stockton community.

The challenge to the University comes in the form of a need to clearly and comprehensively communicate the relevance and impact of the MCRC to the campus community. Faculty have expressed concern regarding their level of involvement in the decision to move forward with the development of the MCRC, and express a lack of confidence that the impact of the new campus will continue to be financially neutral. To find a way to handle challenges and thereby maximize potential of the MCRC, the University will need to engage in an aggressive communication strategy to help members of the campus community understand plans and safeguards designed to insure that the new campus will not drain already stretched resources.

The University has identified and prioritized ADA compliance issues across the campus. While significant progress has been made in completing these projects, the campus is encouraged to continue to make this a priority. Several awkward spaces continue to exist on the campus restricting the access of handicapped

individuals. The institution is encouraged to be diligent in following up on projects related to accessibility

8.B Equipment. The University continues to have significant issues associated with equipment acquisition, especially related to technology and computing. OIT has prepared a planning document that provides a description and listing of needs with accompanying rationale plus a budget plan. This is referred to as the BATS plan. Procedures for assessment are included. Priorities, including a phased implementation of the plan, have been articulated. The plan was funded this year by the Chancellor's Office at $464,200. The plan is also serving as the basis of the planning document that is to be incorporated within MAP. There is no similar library plan and consequently priorities have not been clearly established.

8.C Physical Resource Planning. CSU system has a fully matured capital planning process which has recently undergone process mapping and as a result, some streamlining. Comprehensive planning occurs and is based upon the University's stated academic goals and objectives. The University Facilities Planning Committee (UFPC) is broadly representative and actively involved in planning for expansion, repairs, improvements, and the use of facilities. Physical resource planning enables ready access to campus facilities for various constituencies including the physically limited and distance learners, and provides appropriate safety and security arrangements. Additionally, the University has clear priorities for future campus facility development and those priorities can be linked to both the campus strategic planning framework and the learning centered theme. The campus has also been active in seeking non-state resources to further enhance and accelerate capital development. Current efforts to build a campus reserve fund are intended to protect the University against unanticipated or emergency repairs or replacement problems.

The University has done a commendable job of creating the committee structures, processes, and plans for facility development. There appears to be good alignment between major academic and student affairs initiatives and ongoing facility priorities. The process of reassigning recently vacated spaces provides another opportunity for the institution to model the theme of learning centeredness.

Standard Nine: Financial Resources

9.A Sufficiency of Financial Resources. As a campus within the CSU system, CSU Stanislaus fiscal controls and resource base are largely under the influence of the Chancellor's Office in Long Beach. As with past visiting team efforts, this report focuses upon the more locally controlled activities such as: the level of integration of campus themes with fund raising and development efforts; coordination between fiscal planning and academic planning; links between

priority setting and realistic budget expectations; and assessment processes and practices which relate to fiscal planning and priority setting.

9.B Financial Planning. Financial planning and budgeting are ongoing, realistic, and based upon institutional educational objectives. The University has been engaged in various projects to improve the budget allocation, administration, and accountability projects. These projects include the NACUBO Benchmarking Project, Banner, and the creation of new financial reports. As with 8C, many of these projects were actually initiated before the recent strategic planning process. Greater access and distribution of budget related information is being facilitated through ongoing training for faculty and staff.

9.C Financial Management. In recent years, the University has moved to increase the degree of decentralization of resource planning and accountability. In coordination with the overall strategic planning framework, a MAP process has been put in place. Additionally, as a support for the decentralization, a new integrated financial records system has been installed. Current efforts are focused upon providing necessary training on this system so managers will be able to take full advantage of the increased data/evidence availability. The University is commended for developing a clear and supportive relationship between centralized fiscal functions and units across the campus. Continued efforts to increase the sophistication of departmental and college or school level decision makers is encouraged.

9.D Fundraising and Development. Institutional plans to build campus reserves and to split the existing foundation into two separate nonprofit entities represent two examples of campus level decision making which promote CSU Stanislaus fiscal administration and control.

IV. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK, SCOPE, AND PURPOSE OF THE VISIT

During initial discussions between the team chair and WASC associate director it was recognized that in order to respond to the self study design used by CSU Stanislaus the team would need to review the University in the context of the WASC standards and the learning centered theme. It was decided to use approaches developed for evaluating applicants for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award to aid the team in examining the learning centered theme articulated by the University. An approach was sought that would help the team look at the extent to which the learning centered approach had permeated all aspects of the University. A quality systems-based approach examines the interface between the parts of an institution and the way in which they are focused and aligned to deliver ever-increasing quality. A stands-driven approach, in contrast, primarily focuses on the parts of the institution. With these considerations in mind, two dimensions were identified as the team's task: (1) to certify that CSU Stanislaus meets WASC standards; and (2), to aid the institution in its quest to become "learning centered." In order to accomplish the first task expeditiously so that adequate time could be spent on what it means to be a "learning centered university," members of the team were asked to "score" the self-study prior to coming to campus. Each dimension of the institution and related WASC standards was scored by two team members working independently of each other. Team members were asked to send the chair bulleted argumentsñbased solely on the written self-study to prove that CSU Stanislaus meets, or fails to meet the WASC standard. As these lists were formulated, the institution was given the benefit of the doubt. When something was unclear, incomplete, not addressed, or where additional clarification or definition was needed, it was designated as a "site-visit issue." Results were sent to the team chair and compiled. This made it possible to flag areas of consensus and disagreement so that they could be addressed early in the process. The goal was to concentrate most of the team's attention during its first meeting on methods for verifying impressions and clarifying site-visit issues. Appended is the Table of Responsibilities outlining these assignments. In order to shift the focus to the University's systems, assignments were grouped under seven broad themes modeled after the Baldrige paradigm that capture the essence of a university as a self-renewing system. Specifically: (1) Governance, Leadership, and Institutional Purposes; (2) Planning; (3) Student and Stakeholder Focus; (4) Information and Analysis, i.e., "Culture of Inquiry"; (5) Faculty and Staff Development; (6) Education and Support Process Management; and (7) Financial and Physical Resources. In accomplishing this part of their task, team members were asked to explore the approaches used by the institution in each of these areas, the extent to which approaches were deployed, and the results. Again, borrowing from the Baldrige, the following attributes were suggested.

Quality Systems Approaches are:
- *Systematic, as opposed to ad-hoc;*
- *Prevention-based, as opposed to reactionary;*
- *Self-renewing; in other words, they have short cycles of evaluation and improvement built into them;*
- *Integrated with other approaches in the institution.*

Quality Systems Deployment:
- *Begins with the core processes in the institution; i.e., academic programs;*
- *Extends to encompass all support services;*
- *Finally characterizes all interactions with stakeholders and suppliers.*

Continuously Advancing Results:
- *Begin with improvements;*
- *Progress to trends; i.e., three or more data points;*
- *Can be linked to the deployment of superior approaches; i.e., they do not result from simply changing inputs;*
- *Compare favorably with similar institutions;*
- *Compare favorably with "world class" institutions.*

Since the objective was to help the University achieve its goal of becoming a learning institution it also was necessary for the team to come to a consensus regarding what "learning-centered institution" means. Accordingly, team members were asked to identify the attributes of a learning organization they thought the team should look for during the visit. As a start, the following list was proposed.

A learning organization:
- *Manages by fact; or, to use WASC's more inclusive term, demonstrates a "culture of evidence";*
- *Poses and prioritizes questions in the context of its plans;*
- *Seeks to identify actionable data that can be used to drive improvement;*
- *Acts quickly based upon what it learns;*
- *Incorporates short cycles of evaluation and improvement into its processes;*
- *Designs processes that seek to prevent failure rather than react to problems;*
- *Uses assessment data to prevent failures and improve processes, rather than simply as a basis for sorting and ranking; and*
- *Aligns and integrates all of its processes to focus on learning.*

With these definitions in mind, team members were then asked to compile a second list of strengths, opportunities for improvement, and site-visit issues for their assigned themes. Two weeks before the actual visit, a telephone

conference call was held to discuss the approach.

During the team's organization meeting on campus, it was decided to narrow the "learning centeredness" focus to the alignment, or lack thereof, among four topics: (1) the definition of "learning-centered"; (2) priority setting; (3) budget development; and (4) assessment and feedback. The following matrix was constructed as a conceptual framework for posing questions:

	Definition Of "Learning-Centered"	Priority Setting	Budget Development	Assessment and Feedback
Approach				
Deployment				
Results				

As with most experiments, this one didn't work as well as planned. The process could have been improved if pre-visit scoring assignments had been made earlier, more specific examples had been given, and the consolidation and analysis of initial scoring had been sent back to the team before the actual visit. Such considerations notwithstanding and in spite of the fact that only one team member had experience as a Baldrige examiner the actual analysis proceeded smoothly and, hopefully, the University will benefit from the expanded focus. It is clear that a team made up of members with experience in accreditation can quickly and effectively adapt to a broader mandate.

V. SUMMARY OF MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The following list of recommendations drawn from both Section II and III of this report relate directly to WASC standards. We have separated them out from the other Section III recommendations that relate to the learning centered theme, but not directly to the standards.

1. Given the continuing penetration of technology into every aspect of the academic environment, a comprehensive plan needs to be developed and implemented for providing and maintaining adequate computer resources for faculty and students.

2. The recommendation made in the last site-visit team's report and by an on-campus task force that scholarship be defined needs to be brought to closure.

3. The Academic Assessment Plan needs to be implemented according to specified timelines and mileposts. The University must follow through with its commitment to use assessment to identify its strengths and weaknesses and to set priorities to reinforce its "centers of excellence." This will necessitate linking the budget with assessment and the identification of "centers of excellence."

✔ Quantitative and qualitative assessment approaches using a variety of tools need to be integrated into the plan.

✔ Systematic protocols need to be developed for assessing entering student preparation, needs and attitudes, and linking these to general education requirements and other managed learning activities.

✔ Specific protocols and timelines for measuring the quality of each service provided on campus should be included.

✔ A "dashboard" displaying a few critical rolled-up measures should be defined and a review cycle established so that the president and her Cabinet can monitor progress and report it to the community.

✔ In keeping with the planning focus prevalent throughout the campus, the library needs to develop a library plan. In order to provide a factual basis for developing the plan, a system need to be developed for monitoring what students (by major) are using the collection and what portions of the collection (by discipline) are being used.

✔ Finally, coordination of campus resources that impact assessment should be stressed including Institutional Research, the Office of the Provost, the school deans, and department chairs.