

**REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING TEAM**  
**CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW**  
**To California State University, Stanislaus**

November 17, 2008

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
Reaffirmation of Accreditation

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The evaluation team in conducting its review was able to evaluate the institution under the WASC Commission Standards and the Core Commitment for Institutional Capacity and therefore submits this Report to the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges for action and to the institution for consideration.

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## **SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT**

### **A. Description of Institution and Visit**

#### History and Mission

CSU Stanislaus is part of the California State University, a 23-campus system across California. It began in 1957, when the State Legislature established what was then known as Stanislaus State College. In 1965, the College moved to its permanent campus. It was awarded university status and renamed California State University, Stanislaus in 1985. CSU Stanislaus is now a university of some 8,800 students with approximately 310 full-time and 210 part-time faculty. It offers 40 undergraduate degree programs, seven post-baccalaureate credential programs, 23 master's degrees, and the Ed.D. through six colleges, four of which were recently formed, to create a new organizational structure for the University.

Located in the Central Valley, CSU Stanislaus serves six counties in a rapidly growing region. With its main campus located in Turlock, the University has residential facilities for over 600 students but principally serves commuting students. It also has a branch campus in Stockton—recognized by WASC as a regional center--where about 1,100 students are served in primarily upper-division and graduate courses. CSU Stanislaus serves a highly diverse student population, including many first-generation and adult students, 30% of whom are Hispanic and 67% of whom are women. It has experienced steady enrollment growth for over 20 years and demand for college education remains strong in the service region. Financial constraints of the State of California have caused a slight reduction in enrollments for the 2008-09 year despite increased demand.

Faculty, staff, administrators, and students of CSU Stanislaus have a strong sense of mission and are committed to creating a learning environment which encourages all members of the campus community to expand their intellectual, creative, and social horizons.

### Recent Accreditation History

CSU Stanislaus was first accredited by the Commission in 1963 and has been continuously accredited since then. The last comprehensive visit was in October 1998, and the Commission reaffirmed accreditation in 1999, scheduling the next comprehensive visit for fall 2008.

Although initially asked to file a fifth-year interim report on recommendations of the 1998 team report, this request was cancelled to accommodate the new accreditation model. In the intervening period, the Commission has acted to approve an off-campus M.S. in Genetic Counseling and an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership.

### Description of Visit

The visiting team was composed of six members from five universities and one national association. In preparation for the visit the team reviewed the institution's May 2006 proposal, prior accreditation and Commission actions, recent reports including the October 1998 site visit report, the July 2008 CPR Report, and many appendices, web-based documents, data, and other information contained on a CD. The team visited the Turlock campus on October 1-3, 2008, and one team member visited the Stockton Center on September 30, 2008. A report of that visit appears in Appendix A.

During the visit, the team met with the inquiry circles and related, contributing committees and offices as well as with separate open meetings for faculty, students, and staff. In addition there was an invitational meeting with community leaders. All together, the team participated in 30 scheduled meetings during the two full days of its visit.

As part of the visit to the Turlock campus, two of the team members conducted a follow-up visit for the new Ed.D. program. A report of that review appears in Appendix B.

## **B. The Capacity and Preparatory Review Report: Alignment with the Proposal and Quality and Rigor of the Review and Report**

### Approach to and Intended Outcomes for the Review

Based on the thematic approach, the CPR report and process had six intended outcomes within the framework of the overall accreditation review: demonstration of institutional commitment to the CPR review; refinement of a sustainable institutional research infrastructure; refinement of institutional capacity and systems for quality assurance; refinement and support for faculty development; refinement of the role of the Library and information technology in support of teaching and learning; and development of increased capacity in areas identified by the inquiry circles. The institution elected to work toward these outcomes through the four inquiry circles, each of which had a core issue or theme to address in a comprehensive way. The four themes were: 1) how effectively does the University engage a highly diverse student population in learning; 2) how effectively does the University infrastructure support learning; 3) how effectively does the university create and sustain a community of faculty committed to teaching and learning; and 4) how effectively does the University support research, scholarship, and creative activity as appropriate to its mission. Each inquiry group identified specific researchable questions to guide and focus its work based initially on extensive and broad-ranging discussion.

### Overall Quality of CPR Report

The Capacity and Preparatory Review Report was organized around the four themes mentioned above and consisted of six essays – one for each of the themes, along with an introductory essay and a concluding essay. The report was well-written and accurately described many of the key features and initiatives of the University. In addition, the report was accompanied by a wide variety of appendices and exhibits, and included links to additional exhibits available on a web site. The supporting exhibits were well organized, easy to access, and mapped to the Standards and CFRs.

### **C. Response to Previous Commission Issues**

In its letter reaffirming the accreditation of the University in 1999, the WASC Commission highlighted three areas for development and improvement: Effectiveness Strategies, Faculty Roles, and the Library. Each of these areas was adopted within the current self study and is addressed within the body of the Capacity and Preparatory Review Report.

#### Effectiveness Strategies

The 1998 Site Visit Team recommended the implementation of the assessment-based quality assurance plan elaborated in the self study. The Commission acknowledged that campus effectiveness strategies were in the “early stages” and specifically recommended developing “modes of assessing progress and of integrating those data into the program review process.” The Commission also endorsed the visiting team’s concern that existing “data and systems [do not] meet current needs, let alone those that will develop.”

Since then, the University has taken a number of steps to enhance its capacity to measure student learning and to integrate effectiveness strategies into the everyday operations of the University. A description and analysis of those efforts appears in section II. B. of this report.

#### Faculty Roles

In 1999 the Commission urged “closure” on the issue of expectations for research, a concern raised originally in the 1990 review. The Commission also recommended aligning “review and reward systems with the needs of a learning-centered institution,” “improving support for research needs,” and generally clarifying the “definition and role of research” to alleviate “confusion and misunderstanding.”

Since then, CSU Stanislaus has considerably enhanced its capacity for research, scholarship and creative activity (RSCA). However, there is still a great deal of ambiguity and an apparent lack of consensus about what constitutes RSCA and how this is connected to the teaching

mission of a campus that prides itself on being a student-centered institution. This issue is discussed in more detail in section II. D. of this report.

### Library

The Commission letter shared “a concern voiced in the self study that only 20% of the faculty report that the Library is adequate to meet their needs” and urged “the University to develop a plan to address the dated nature of the collection.” The Site Visit Team made additional recommendations regarding the availability and usage of the collection.

Since then, the Library has seen an increase in the number of staff and the size of its physical collections, and improvements in programming, services, and information technology resources. As discussed later in this report, Library resources and services provide good support for teaching and learning, but it does not appear that the University’s higher research profile has been met with a commensurate increase in new resources for the Library to address faculty demands.

## **SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY UNDER THE STANDARDS**

### **A. Theme 1: Engaging a Diverse Student Body**

#### Definitions

Diversity. CSU Stanislaus has a very diverse student body and an increasingly diverse faculty. Moreover, self-study materials and on-campus interviews demonstrate a clear commitment to and celebration of diversity that goes beyond mere statistics (CFR 1.5).

Engagement. The self-study report defines engagement as “a set of values, behavior, and strategies that...motivate students to become actively involved in the acquisition of knowledge and skills and in the development of personal values.” Engagement is also discussed in terms of a series of attractions – to campus, academic programs, success and degree completion, and ethical community leadership. Commitment to these concepts of engagement is reinforced in the

University's Mission Statement, the University Values Statement, and the University Strategic Plan (CFRs 1.1, 2.11, 2.13, 2.14).

Learning Communities. Two types of learning communities are described in the self-study report. Academic learning communities are organized to create learning cohorts or to address specific learning outcomes. These include academic departments and cohort-based academic programs (CFRs 2.2, 2.2a, 2.2b). Affinity groups coalesce around shared cultural, professional, religious, political, recreational, social, and service concerns. In 2006-07, the University sponsored 71 chartered affinity groups (CFR 2.11).

#### Promoting Opportunities

The self-study report describes a variety of programs that promote student engagement in learning. These range from academic to co-curricular, and are focused on various stages of a student's academic career. For example, the First-Year Experience Program integrates two lower-division General Education courses and a special two-unit seminar within a specific theme, forming a community for first-time, first-year students. For transfer students, the Summit Program is a multiple-term upper-division General Education learning community that links two courses under a common theme across two terms. Other examples include the Faculty Mentor Program, which provides faculty mentors and educational and recreational programs to first-generation and educationally or economically disadvantaged students; the Office of Service Learning, which provides and estimated 2,000 students with opportunities to participate in service-based courses; and Supplemental Instruction, which provides group study to students in historically difficult courses.

The range of programs offered is well suited to the various student needs and interests at CSU Stanislaus, and some of these programs, such as Supplemental Instruction and the Office of Service Learning, serve a large number of students (CFRs 1.5, 2.11, 2.13). However, other programs that are described in the self-study report are currently limited in scope and appear to

face some challenges in their extensibility or sustainability. For example, while the Faculty Mentor Program receives generally positive evaluations from protégés, the number of protégés who attend mentor-protégé interaction events is typically around 43, which is a relatively small proportion of the target population. This program also faces challenges in recruiting sufficient numbers of faculty mentors, leading to a protégé-mentor ratio of twelve to one – a substantial load that limits the amount of one-on-one interaction can have with protégés. However, as noted in the assessment report for this program, the University recognizes the challenges and has developed a plan for addressing them (CFR 4.4).

The broader point is that the discussion of engagement in the self-study was limited to programs and services that touch various subsets of the student population. Certainly all of these programs play an important role in student engagement and success; however, what was entirely absent was a discussion of campus-wide engagement efforts, in the form of curricula or pedagogy. For example, the team was surprised that General Education was not covered in this section, when it seems like the best and most widespread opportunity to foster engagement and diversity. The team encourages the University to proceed with its plan to focus on General Education in the EER.

#### Measuring Diversity, Engagement, and Student Learning

The primary method for assessing diversity in the curriculum is through satisfaction of the multicultural requirement for General Education, while assessment of student engagement and learning is accomplished through the National Survey of Student Engagement, the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement, the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement, and Academic Program Review. An in-depth discussion of assessment structures, processes, and methods, including the assessment of General Education, appears in section II. B. 4. below.

## **B. Theme 2: Infrastructure to Support Learning**

### **1. The University Library in Support of Learning and Engagement**

Physical Collection and Access to Resources. The 1999 WASC team noted that the most serious problem in the Library related to the status of its collection. The Library's Support Unit Review included an analysis of holdings by discipline, revealing that the collection reflects and supports subjects being taught. As noted in the self-study, the Library has seen modest but steady growth of physical (print) collections over the last decade. Print periodical subscriptions are the exception, having declined approximately 40 percent in the last 10 years. This decline reflects the cancellation of print periodicals when they are available in electronic form. The problem reflected in the 1999 WASC report seems to have been addressed substantively if incompletely because the move to electronic databases has improved the content available to both faculty and students who now indicate a preference for the electronic access of materials (CFRs 3.6, 3.7).

Library User Services. The Dean of Library Services reported that the turn style counts for students have increased nine percent between 2005-6 and 2006-07, with the addition in the library of a tutoring center on the first floor (in collaboration with Student Affairs) and a computer lab on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor (in collaboration with the Office of Information Technology) containing 48 computers equipped with the same suite of software as those in other student computer laboratories (CFR 3.7).

There has also been an increase in the use of electronic databases. The use of collections (check-out and in-house) has declined by more than 65 percent since 2002-03, but the use of electronic resources has nearly doubled since 2002-03. Similarly, the use of inter-library loan has increased and is expected to increase even more with the University's launch this year of an on-line inter-library loan service involving a consortium of 40 libraries. Faculty and graduate students have been the primary users of interlibrary loan in the past, but undergraduate students

are expected to increase their usage with the on-line access. In addition, in 2007-08, the University Library upgraded to an integrated library catalog system that has improved access and functionality (CFRs 3.6, 3.7).

Finally, an instructional program provided by the library faculty comprises sessions tailored to specific course needs, multiple sections of a two-credit course focused on library research methods, and one-on-one instruction either at the Reference Desk or by appointment. These services are intended to increase students' awareness of library resources and research methods and increase their competence and effectiveness as information users. In 2006-07, library faculty conducted close to 200 formal instructional sessions to a total of more than 4000 students (CFR 2.13). The Library's Support Unit Review notes that the Library needs to collect data that will assess student learning as a result of their instructional programs, and the team encourages the Library to do so. Based on the documents made available, the Library has not developed the capacity to assess the library's role in student engagement and learning (CFR 4.3).

General comments expressed to the team indicated that students and faculty are pleased with the services provided by the library faculty and staff.

Budget and Staff. The Library budget has fluctuated over the past decade, increasing from 4.0% of the University's total budget to 4.7% in 2003-04. Decreases in base budgets that occurred in the statewide budget crises in 2004-05 and 2005-06 were partially offset by one-time budget augmentations. Currently, the 2007-08 Library budget represents 3.1% of the total University budget (CFRs 3.5, 4.2). Reallocation of the budget has provided for the increase in electronic materials.

Analysis of library positions since 1998 shows an increase from eight faculty (librarian) members in 1996-97 to nine in 2007-08. The same ten-year period shows an increase from 13 staff positions in 1996-97 to 16 in 2006-07. A ratio of two staff to one librarian is typical among peer institutions, and based on this ratio the Library seems appropriately staffed. As a longer

term goal, the Library seeks to enhance its instructional program for students, which would require more professional librarians.

## 2. Technological Resources in Support of Learning and Student Engagement

The University provides technological resources and support through the Office of Information Technology (OIT). The responsibilities of OIT include academic and administrative computing, campus telephone and information networks, and distance learning. The campus has recently reorganized OIT to increase its participation and enhance its effective capacity. In addition, staffing resources have been increased with additional funding provided to OIT (CFRs 3.6, 3.7, 3.11).

In 2003 the campus completed the *Academic Technology Plan* that emphasizes making learning accessible to students and establishes a set of principles by which technology should enhance teaching and learning. The Plan identifies several areas of need, including specialized laboratories, distance learning, assistive technology, information competency, proficiency expectations for students, accreditation, and technical support. Although progress has been made, the campus has identified areas two areas where additional capacity is needed – the use of learning management systems and instructional design, production, and training.

A sustainable model for funding technological support has been a challenge for the campus since the 1999 WASC visit. During the current visit, the President announced a significant gift (\$54m over 30 years) that is devoted to the up-grading of technological support. Plans include making every classroom a “smart” classroom, providing free wireless access throughout campus, and eventually, free laptops to students with financial need, and ensuring that equipment is rotated every three years. Increasing faculty development for use of technology in the classroom and on-line instruction will also be supported. The President has expressed a goal of each school’s having at least one on-line degree program. This external support will make long term planning possible and greatly aid CSU Stanislaus in refining its technological

capacities (CFRs 2.13, 3.4, 3.6, 3.7) but only if there is adequate planning and faculty development programming sufficient to meet WASC expectations for new on-line programs.

Overall, the team commends the campus on the increased support for and attention to the use of technology to support learning. However, during the team visit, staff members indicated that their highest frustration continues to be the lack of automation of campus administrative functions (CFR 4.2). The team encourages the campus to focus some resources on the use of technology to streamline administrative functioning.

### 3. Services in Support of Student Learning

Student Advising. Student academic advising is addressed at both institutional and departmental levels. The Advising Resource Center offers a mandatory New Student Orientation providing first-contact advising to both first-year and transfer students. Once students declare a major they are assigned an advisor from within their major department; until that time they are advised by the Advising Resource Center (CFRs 2.12, 2.14).

In 2006 a task force was convened to review current policies and make recommendations for improvement. Associated Students, Inc. cited the unevenness of advising across departments and individual faculty members. Several additional concerns were identified in the report, which recommended revisions to academic advising policies and procedures and articulated broad advising principles. In spring 2008, a revised Advising Policy was approved by the Academic Senate and President. However, during the team visit, students expressed frustration with the quality of advising they received, related to both general education and the major (CFRs 2.12, 3.4). The team suggests that the new policy be accompanied by an action plan with specific timelines for implementation.

Support for Underprepared Students and Students with Disabilities. The University offers a variety of programs and services to support the academic success of students. These include the *Successful Remediation Committee*, which has increased workshops and advising to assist

students in completing their remediation course work; the *Tutoring Center*, which offers free one-on-one or group tutoring to all students; the *English for Speakers of Other Languages Program*, which offers several ESL courses to serve a wide range of students; and *Student Support Services and the Educational Opportunity Program*, which are two grant-funded services specializing in support for students who qualify for the CSU system but may not be prepared to take full advantage of the University because of their educational or economic background (CFRs 1.5, 1.7, 2.6, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14). In addition, the Office of Disability Resource Services provides accommodations and support services to assist students with special needs to participate in all aspects of the University's programs and to achieve their educational goals. These services are supplemented by assistive technology provided by computer laboratories and the University Library (CFRs 2.5, 3.6, 4.2).

Class Scheduling and Accommodation of Transfer Students: The University receives a large number of transfer students each year and has put in place effective practices for communication and coordination with the principal community colleges that supply transfer students. In the past, concerns were raised about the availability of courses at times most convenient to transfer students, who typically must balance work, family, and travel to Turlock or Stockton with course scheduling. As noted earlier, increased use of technology to support enrollment management as well as direct student services will undoubtedly enable the University to enhance its commitment to serving transfer students.

#### 4. Policies, Procedures, and Practices for Assessment of Student Learning

Since the last WASC review report in 1999, the University has taken a number of steps to enhance its capacity to measure student learning and to integrate effectiveness strategies into the everyday operations of the University. These efforts have been guided by the findings of two formal external reviews of assessment – one by Barbara Cambridge and one by Mary Allen –

and have resulted in enhanced infrastructure, structures, and processes to support the collection, dissemination, and use of assessment data at both the program and university level (CFR 4.4).

Infrastructure. At the university level, the Faculty Coordinator for the Assessment of Student Learning was established in 1999 and was charged with working to enhance student success, classroom teaching innovation, and formal and informal assessments as well as encouraging professional development and providing leadership for faculty assessment of student learning (CFRs 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 3.11, 4.3, 4.6, 4.7). Although this position represents a key component of the comprehensive assessment system the University has put in place, during the team visit there seemed to be confusion around the role of and resources available to the Faculty Coordinator.

In fall 2004, the assessment and institutional research functions, which previously resided in one office, were reorganized into two offices. The Office of Assessment and Quality Assurance, led by the Associate Vice President for Assessment and Quality Assurance, was created to provide leadership and coordination for university-wide assessment and quality assurance. Institutional Research is charged with central data collection and data management so as to inform institutional and systemic evaluations. A new Director of IR has been appointed, and he is seeking input from each unit regarding the usefulness of current IR reports, the gaps in data, and the ways in which the office may be more helpful to the units in analysis and interpretation of data. The staffing of the Institutional Research office (five FTE) seems appropriate (CFRs 3.1, 4.5). During the team visit, there seemed to be confusion around the relationship of the IR office to assessment data generated at the course and program levels. Roles and responsibilities in this area should be clarified if the University is to meet expectations for the EER.

At the program level, in 2005 the role of Program Assessment Coordinators (PACs) was created. In each department a faculty member is given assigned time (or the equivalent) to work

with department or program faculty to facilitate program-level assessment. In several different interviews during the team visit, faculty expressed appreciation for the creation of the PACs, noting that it represented institutional commitment to supporting for assessment (CFR 4.6).

Structures. Several committees have been created at CSU Stanislaus to support the assessment process, including the Assessment Leadership Team, the Assessment of Student Learning Subcommittee (of the University Educational Policies Committee), the Assessment Council, and the Graduate Council. In general, each group appears to serve important functions, and the Assessment Council in particular seems to provide real benefits to the participants. This is an interdisciplinary group, comprising Program Assessment Coordinators (PACs) and the Faculty Assessment Coordinator for the Assessment of Student Learning, which meets monthly to review new information in assessment and share ideas and best practices. The Assessment Council as a resource for the PACs has facilitated assessment-related discussions at both program and University levels (CFRs 3.11, 4.3, 4.6).

Processes and Methods. The *Academic Program Review* process is the principal vehicle for assessing and improving the quality of academic programs. The Academic Program Review policy was substantially revised in 2004 and now cites “the identification and evaluation of student learning goals as a key indicator of program effectiveness.” Reviews are conducted every seven years (or as required by disciplinary accreditation rules). The team reviewed the sample program reviews available and found the inclusion of student learning outcomes to be uneven, and programs tend to rely heavily on indirect measures of student learning. By the time of the EER, the University will be expected to have put into place and to be using systematically a range of direct measures of actual student learning based on evaluations of student work and performance. While PACs and others directly responsible for assessment activities appear to have a good understanding of the forms of effective direct assessment methods (including those recommended by the external consultants and by WASC through its information resources and

conferences), the implementation of such assessments does not appear to be institutionalized across all disciplines or to be fully understood by many faculty, including part-time faculty. The program reviews tended to be more descriptive than analytical, particularly in the evaluation of students' achievement of expected levels of learning on specific dimensions. It was also noted that the use of external reviewers has not yet become a standard part of the review. The team encourages the University to continue its refinements of the Academic Program Review process (CFRs 2.2, 2.3, 2.7, 4.5, 4.7).

The Team also encourages the University to pay particular attention to the review of graduate program quality. The Academic Program review process needs to be evaluated with graduate programs in mind. Improvements might be specific to graduate programs. For example, recommendations for change should be addressed to the correct constituencies: the dean, the Provost, the President, and others as appropriate. There should be a follow-up process and a procedure to close the review by a certain date. External evaluators should be asked to provide input to the Graduate Council in the reviews of all graduate programs (CFR 2.7).

The *Support Unit Review* was initiated in 2004 for the improvement of administrative processes. Reviews occur every five years and involve a self-study report and an external review. They examine management and efficiency, resource allocation, the effectiveness of the unit's support for the University's mission, values, and goals, and how the unit contributes to and/or supports student success. Methods vary by unit. According to the policy, a strategic implementation plan is developed (based on the conclusions) that includes future goals, strategies, and expected outcomes (CFRs 1.1, 1.2, 1.8, 2.11, 4.2). In addition, the Division of Student Affairs has developed assessment rubrics and strategic planning processes that identify and prioritize the values surrounding student development, learning outcomes, and the division mission and actions. A comprehensive review, including an external review team, is planned for 2008-09 to examine the effectiveness of these efforts. (CFRs 2.3, 2.7, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14).

As noted in the self-study, formal assessment of the General Education Program has not developed to the same extent as assessment of other academic programs. Currently, assessment of General Education appears to be conducted primarily through surveys and reviews of individual GE courses. The team concurs with the consultant on assessment (Mary Allen) in emphasizing need for accelerating authentic assessment of the General Education program with direct measures of learning, as noted. To facilitate this process, the campus established a Faculty Director of General Education, and the new director began this new role very recently. A primary task of the new director is the completion of the General Education Academic Program Review.

Complementing program-level assessment are university wide assessment methods that serve the dual purpose of informing program assessment and giving an overall perspective on institutional effectiveness. According to the *University-Wide Assessment Methods Administration* (2008), assessment measures that are administered on a regular basis include the Graduating Senior Survey, alumni surveys, the National Survey of Student Engagement, the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement, and the Writing Proficiency Screening Test. More recently, the campus has begun participating in the Collegiate Learning Assessment. The team noted that, as with the program reviews, specific standards or benchmarks for attainment have not been specified for the various measures.

Several documents have been created internally to guide assessment efforts, including *Principles of Assessment of Student Learning* (2004), *Ten Methods used at CSU Stanislaus to Examine Institutional Effectiveness* (2008), and *Roles and Responsibilities for Assessment-related Functions: Who's Responsible for What* (2008). The *Assessment Action Plan* (2008) organizes and records assessment initiatives. It is reviewed annually by the Assessment Leadership Team, among others, and updated to reflect achievements. The campus appears to

have the policies and procedures in place to enable steady progress in the assessment of student learning (CFRs 4.4, 4.8).

The University demonstrates the capacity to support student learning through a comprehensive structure for assessment. The revised *Academic Program Review* process shows promise in assessing student learning at both the baccalaureate and graduate levels. Leadership and guidance is provided by the Office of Assessment and Quality Assurance, and the new leadership of the Office of Institutional Research indicates commitment to move beyond the traditional role of IR and to provide direct assistance to programs as they grapple with assessment data. Finally, it is evident that the infrastructure for faculty's assessment efforts has been greatly enhanced by the Faculty Development Center, the Faculty Assessment Coordinator, and the Program Assessment Coordinators. As these entities learn to work together, their relative roles and relationships should be clarified. A number of policies and procedures have been developed since the last self study that should provide the guidance needed for campus-wide implementation of the assessment plan. At the time of the EER, the Team should thus expect to see concrete results of direct assessment efforts, as well as criteria for success, measures of goal attainment, benchmarks, and aspirations for quality and achievement, especially for student learning. (CFRs 1.2, 4.4)

### **C. Theme 3: A Community of Teachers in Support of Learning**

#### **1. Creating Teacher-Scholar Communities**

The emphasis on building an engaged community of teacher-scholars, committed to teaching, student success, and scholarship, fits well with the mission of the institution and the CSU Strategic Plan (CFRs 1.4, 3.1, 3.3, 4.1).

CSU Stanislaus builds a sense of community among faculty in a variety ways, including General Faculty meetings, valuing service on campus-wide and departmental committees, e-communities, interdisciplinary programs, and programs run by the Faculty Development Center.

Many of these structures are typical of many campuses, and the breadth and variety are strengths for CSU Stanislaus. Indeed, the team observed a strong shared sense of identity with the institution on the part of faculty and staff (CFR 3.11). The connection of these activities to their actual impact on enhancing or reinforcing faculty engagement would be useful for the EER report.

## 2. University Support for Teacher-Scholars

Curricular Development. Appropriate control over the development and approval of the curriculum by faculty seems to be in place (CFR 3.11). In addition, there is an indication from departments, colleges, and the President's Advisory Board and the Foundation Board that planning is done to ensure that curriculum and program development meet and are responsive to student and community needs (CFRs 1.5, 3.8, 3.11, 4.6, 4.7). Processes seem to be in place for each college to gather information and feedback on the curriculum; however, goals and criteria for determining priorities for making choices among competing interests are not as apparent. The alignment of these needs with the institutional strategic plan, resource allocations, and clearly articulating how coordination of college and program developed needs and priorities fit within institutional priorities would be helpful for the EER. One example that illustrates how institutional planning priorities can be translated into curricular choices and support for pedagogies and teaching is the Strategic Plan goal of global leadership. However, it was puzzling to the team that general education is mentioned as potentially NOT incorporating this goal into its curriculum (p.20 of CPR report), since GE is mentioned in the plan summary as including global learning (Select Exhibit E) (CFR 2.2a). The Team noted on several occasions the value of enhanced centralized or University-wide review, planning, and decision-making and attention to GE concerns needs such a centralized focus.

Infrastructure and Other Support for Teaching. Considerable changes in infrastructure in support of this theme have occurred, as evidenced by the new buildings, lab renovations and the

new Faculty Development Center (CFRs 3.6, 3.7, 4.1, 4.2, 2.9, 3.4). In addition, new policies for more effective scheduling and greater use of technology mediated instruction demonstrate responsiveness to student needs within the restrictions of limited resources (CFRs 3.11, 4.2, 4.3, 3.6, 4.2, 4.1, 4.3). The inclusion of Support Units in the program review process also demonstrates the commitment to all parts of the university in advancing teaching and learning (CFRs 1.3, 1.8, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 3.10).

The Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (FCETL) appears to be very active in support of enhanced pedagogy and technology instruction (CFRs 2.4, 3.2, 3.4). According to the self-study, the Center offered 95 sessions in 2006-07 related to the improvement of teaching strategies, and during the team visit faculty expressed appreciation for the programming offered by the Center. The team also noted, however, that attendance at many FCETL events was rather low. The team encourages the University to strategize ways for the FCETL and its programming to reach more faculty and to enhance efficiency in a time of resource constraints.

The average teaching load for tenured or tenure-track faculty is approximately seven courses per year, which is high for the purpose of increasing research, scholarship and creative activity. However, efforts are made locally to adjust loads for institutional priorities (CFRs 2.8, 2.9, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4). Other resources are made available by the university and colleges to support faculty scholarship (CFRs 2.8, 2.9).

The Library now has its own strategic plan and is involved in the planning of new academic programs. Information Technology also has its own plan. An important component of these resources for teaching and learning would be a set of benchmarks and goals for developing collections, replacement schedules, incorporation of new technologies, basis for determining under-served areas of the campus, etc. in preparation for the EER (CFRs 3.6, 3.7, 4.2).

### 3. Recruiting, Retaining and Developing a Diverse Faculty

According to the self-study, the University is committed to making the diversity of the faculty better match the diversity of the students. Reflecting this commitment, the University developed a *Faculty Recruitment and Appointment Manual*. In addition, there has been a faculty diversity committee since 2007, which is charged with developing recommendations and promoting processes which enhance the recruitment, retention and promotion of faculty and staff who support the university's mission and vision regarding diversity (CFRs 1.5, 3.3, 4.2). These measures appear to have yielded good results. According to a faculty hiring analysis provided to the team, there have been significant increases in the number of women and faculty of color in last three years (CFR 1.5).

Related to faculty retention, there appear to be good orientation and welcome events and support for new faculty, including a *Faculty Survival Guide* and reduced teaching loads (CFRs 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4). Teaching and learning are recognized with awards (CFRs 2.8, 2.9, 3.4) and incorporated into the guidelines for Retention, Promotion, and Tenure (RPT). However, as noted in the self study, teaching importance and criteria for effectiveness and for service are not uniformly articulated (elaborated) across departments especially compared to research (CFRs 1.1, 1.4, 2.8, 2.9, 3.3, 4.4).

#### 4. Effectiveness of Teaching and Learning

There appears to be heavy reliance on surveys and other self-report instruments for assessing teaching effectiveness and student engagement and learning. For example, the primary method for evaluating teaching effectiveness is the Individual Development and Educational Assessment (IDEA) form, which is required to be administered in two courses annually and to be discussed in the RPT process (CFRS 2.3, 2.4, 3.3, 3.6, 4.4, 4.7). Some departments also use peer observations of in-class teaching, but it is unclear how widespread this practice is. Other methods for measuring student learning include campus exit surveys, alumni surveys, the National Survey of Student Engagement, and the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement. As

noted earlier in this report, these are all indirect measures, and direct measures of student learning in programs and general education are only occasionally appearing in assessment plans and program reviews. It should also be noted that indirect measures may provide useful information about student learning aggregated at the University-level, but it is difficult to translate the findings into specific, useful plans for improving teaching and learning in courses and programs. More direct measures of assessing student learning will be expected by the time of the EER.

Finally, the scholarship of teaching and learning provides another venue for understanding and supporting the teaching and learning process, and departmental elaborations often include the scholarship of teaching and learning as part of the scholarship options for faculty (CFRs 1.4, 3.4, 4.7).

In general, there are comprehensive structures, activities and processes in place to support and sustain a community of teachers in support of learning. The self study process has spurred much useful planning and implementation to prepare to achieve outcomes. Looking ahead to the EER, the team encourages the University to set specific expectations and criteria for levels of support and achievement, particularly those that move beyond specific programs, departments and colleges.

#### **D. Theme 4: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity**

Since its last WASC review, CSU Stanislaus has considerably enhanced its capacity for research, scholarship and creative activity (RSCA) in a variety of ways (CFR 2.8).

In terms of progress on defining RSCA, in 2000 the Academic Senate and President approved a broad working definition of research. In addition, faculty members in all departments have created elaborations for scholarship. However, based on conversations with faculty during the visit there is still a great deal of ambiguity and an apparent lack of consensus about what constitutes RSCA and how this is connected to the teaching mission of a campus that

prides itself on being a student-centered institution. As noted in the self-study, “the issue of elaborations is complex and requires ongoing discussions between faculty and administration, particularly as related to the desired level of specificity for the departmental RSCA expectations.” The team encourages the campus to continue these conversations in order to arrive at clearer campus-wide and department-specific definitions. In addition, relevant policies should be updated by appropriate bodies, including the faculty senate (CFR 1.1, 1.2).

The campus has done better in terms of recognizing RSCA in visible ways, such as campus awards, listing of publications in the *Research Compendium* and participation in the soon-to-be-revived *Journal of Research*. CSU Stanislaus also is a member of various disciplinary honorary societies, highlighting the presence of its faculty in the world of RSCA. The existence of various centers and institutes on campus further underscores this reality. Another important indicator of RSCA is the campus’s extramural research funding, which has gone from under \$5 million to over \$22 million in the past five years. The Team found the current indirect cost recovery policy of the campus laudable and advises that it be maintained. Discussions of increasing the principal investigator’s share in order to provide further incentives for research should be continued and resolved (CFR 2.8).

There is evidence that RSCA informs teaching in multiple ways, including joint student/faculty projects that greatly improve the learning experience, both at the graduate and undergraduate levels (CFR 2.9). The Team was impressed by CSU Stanislaus’s leadership regarding diversity issues, particularly in applying for grants to support minority participation in RSCA. The Team encourages CSU Stanislaus to continue to seek funds to support research by a diverse group of investigators and about the diverse population the campus serves (CFR 1.5).

Student research of all kinds is very important, and the Team was pleased to see that the campus was expanding capacity in this area. Student and faculty mentor participation has increased 400% over the last five years, and this past year both graduate and undergraduate

students placed first in their sessions at the CSU system-wide annual Student Research Competition. The Team applauds CSU Stanislaus's success and encourages it to expand its student research options, including those offered by the Student Research Council. Program quality depends on many factors, including student engagement in research. As CSU Stanislaus expands its graduate programs, it is important to ensure that undergraduate research programs geared to preparing students for graduate school elsewhere continue to flourish.

The campus has appropriately included student participation among the four criteria it uses to award research grants to faculty members (CFR 2.9). The number and monetary value of these might have to increase, both to support increasing RSCA and to account for inflation. In this regard, the Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity Policy Committee and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs should be strengthened further. It is important to note the recent elevation of the position of Director to the level of Assistant Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs. Since the current office was created, the ratio of submitted to funded proposals has increased steadily. An enhanced office would help the campus improve its sponsored research record.

In addition to obtaining more research dollars per faculty member, increasing the number of faculty members participating in sponsored research, a figure which appears to have remained fairly constant would ensure that research is more broadly shared as a value and as a mission-related activity. The current level of participation might be a function of a relatively small number of faculty members in disciplines where sponsored research is prevalent, but it could also reflect lack of involvement and/or time on the part of faculty members. It could be instructive to determine the productivity of faculty members in non-sponsored research fields. As the campus recruits new faculty, it should do so with attention to how the University can maintain or expand solid research programs in a student-centered setting. Appropriate working conditions, such as adequate facilities and start-ups, manageable teaching loads and sufficient

sabbatical time must be in place in order for these faculty members to develop programs of research. In this regard, the Team was surprised to learn that faculty members were not applying for sabbatical leaves in numbers proportionate to eligibility. The campus should understand what is impeding faculty from availing themselves of this important opportunity, among other things, because sabbatical time is as valuable for enhancing teaching as it is for research (CFR 3.4).

Other support for RSCA comes in the form of a one- or two-course teaching reduction for first-year faculty to allow them to develop both their RSCA agenda and their curricular contributions. The team also heard during the visit that, in addition, some departments offer start-up grants to support faculty research. However, faculty teaching and service loads remain high, and this should be examined as an enhanced RSCA agenda will inevitably displace some of the teaching and service activities that are currently carried out by the faculty. The Team appreciates how difficult it is for the University to address these issues—and especially the balance between teaching and research—but CSU Stanislaus will be well served by bringing to conclusion the lingering uncertainties and ambiguities through meaningful, clearly stated policies.

With respect to the library, although the collection is not large, the campus has access to the holdings of other institutions of higher learning. In addition, reallocation of the budget has enabled the Library to provide \$500 for library acquisitions to each new faculty member to support their research. In general, faculty members currently seem to be able to obtain the materials they need for their research through interlibrary loan. It is unclear, however, whether the library can obtain books through interlibrary loan with sufficient speed to meet the needs of students. As the number and importance of graduate programs grows, and as expectations for scholarship increase, the library will have to enhance quick access to research materials owned by other institutions in addition to increasing its holdings. The campus might want to evaluate

existing agreements with other CSU campuses and the UC system in order to satisfy enhanced student and faculty need for access to research collections (CFR 3.6).

The Team regards building faculty capacity as one of the most important tasks for any institution of higher learning, including CSU Stanislaus. The Team encourages the Provost, deans and department chairs to focus on developing plans to hire, retain and promote faculty members within the clearly defined mission of CSU Stanislaus as it may be reaffirmed or restated. It would be particularly important for these new faculty members to reflect the region's diverse student population. As noted earlier, information about recent faculty hires indicates that the faculty is indeed becoming more diverse. In particular, the percentage of Latino faculty members appears to be increasing, a positive development, since CSU Stanislaus is a Hispanic-serving institution (CFR 1.5, 3.2).

## **E. Addressing Student Success**

### **1. Goals for Student Success**

The mission of CSU Stanislaus appears to support student success, e.g. “encourage(s) personalized student learning” and describes itself as a “student centered community.” However, there is no evidence presented on whether there are specific goals or how they are set.

### **2. Retention**

Data on retention/attrition were presented only in aggregate and not by demographic categories, or by major or degree level in materials readily available to the team; however, disaggregated data were available among resource materials in the team room. General first-year retention data show little variation over the past eight years, hovering around 80% for native freshmen, and at 86% for transfer students.

### **3. Time to Degree and Graduation Rates**

Six year graduation rates are reported for ethnic and gender categories and for undergraduate and graduate level students. Over 50% of undergraduates graduate within 6 years

of matriculation. No consistent patterns of improvement or decline appear over the last three years of data although there are two notable exceptions – the graduation rate for women has declined over the past three years as has the rate for African Americans. The graduation rate for African Americans is less than half the rates for Hispanics, White/non-Hispanics and Asians.

Transfer students graduate at approximately 75% rates, showing uniformly strong rates across race and gender, although African Americans still lag behind other ethnic groups by about 10%.

Graduate completion rates approximate undergraduate rates, except that African Americans are much closer to other groups and men perform closer to the rates exhibited by women at the graduate level.

#### 4. Accuracy of Data and Establishment of Benchmarks

The data that were presented appear to be complete and accurate.

There is no evidence that goals have been established, although benchmark data on comparable institutions is available.

#### 5. Are retention and graduation rates “good enough?”

Both institutional retention and graduation rates at CSU Stanislaus were recognized by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) for the high levels of success among similar types of schools.

### **SECTION III – FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

As noted throughout the report, the team commends CSU Stanislaus for many noteworthy achievements in its development of its Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) and in its preparation for the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER). Among those commendations that the team wishes to note explicitly are the following:

1. The extent of preparation for the CPR is noteworthy in the seriousness with which the entire institution has approached the review, leading to an exemplary report document and to a thoughtfully scheduled and ultimately productive visit. The University has been creative, resourceful, and intentional in using the necessity of accreditation visits to help the institution improve. The team observes that the faculty, staff, students and community advisors with whom we met all share a deep appreciation for CSU Stanislaus. (CFRs 1.3 and 4.6)
2. Accordingly, the University has undertaken its consideration of assessment seriously, and it has developed an elegant, thoughtful infrastructure to support a University-wide commitment to both assessment and the emergence of a culture of evidence. The infrastructure is complex and may in time be simplified, but it contains all of the necessary components to ensure that assessment can be undertaken in a robust and comprehensive way. (CFRs 2.5, 2.7, and 4.6)
3. One important and highly commendable manifestation of this commitment is the decision to provide assigned time to program level assessment coordinators, even during a time of resource constraints. While still relatively new in their roles, these faculty colleagues are quickly forming the core of a sustainable comprehensive system of faculty engagement in assessment and continuously improved learning practices. Among many noteworthy investments in the infrastructure of assessment, this one decision may prove to be highly valuable for the future and the value of this commitment should be assessed by the time of the EER campus visit. (CFRs 1.3 and 4.4)
4. The University's thematic approach to accreditation has been supported by the innovative and apparently highly successful use of an inquiry methodology and of learning communities identified as Inquiry Circles. The team notes with appreciation and commendation the broad and effective involvement of most constituencies University-

wide, the interweaving of the Inquiry Circles with faculty governance, the emergence of a scholarly conversation that achieved necessary goals in an orderly and timely fashion without becoming bureaucratic, and the development of a methodology—i.e., inquiry—that may well inform future approaches to academic administration and governance independent of accreditation or external demands. Most notably, the team observed a genuine camaraderie among Inquiry Circles members and the accreditation leadership team. (CFRs 1.3 and 4.6)

5. Overall, the team found a uniform appreciation for a highly developed sense of community among students, faculty and staff. Most representatives whom the team met spoke eloquently of their sense of pride in CSU Stanislaus as a distinctive place because of its community. Simply put, people feel good about being a part of this University.
6. Similarly, there is nearly as uniform appreciation for the historic commitment to teaching and learning that has characterized CSU Stanislaus since its beginnings and, as with the sense of community, persisted even as the campus has grown in size and complexity. From the President to students encountered by chance in the hallways, there is a sense that teaching and learning are highly valued as underlying the very character of the University.
7. The University has made progress in its consideration of faculty workload issues despite the fact that many aspects of understanding the nature of faculty work and recognizing it in all its dimensions are not yet complete. It is evident that this issue, and specifically the role of research, scholarship and creative activity, is under active discussion. (CFR 2.9)
8. At the risk of singling out one group of faculty colleagues for special commendation, the team cannot help but note the uniform regard all faculty and administrators have for the role of librarians in helping address the growth and maturation of CSU Stanislaus by their

creativity and resourcefulness in providing access to necessary information resources despite sometimes severe budgetary limitations.

9. Indeed, many academic and service units have displayed an amazing optimism about the future despite resource constraints, and some are even viewing the fiscal challenges as opportunities to focus on truly important issues and to identify alternative revenue sources or ways to achieve goals through entrepreneurial and innovative activity.

(CFR1.3)

10. In this regard, the decision to establish the Ed.D. is seemingly supported by the entire campus community and is regarded as a source of pride as well as the opportunity to extend the culture for graduate education to a higher plane across the campus. The team commends the whole campus as well as the College of Education for its achievement in implementing this program.

11. And finally, yet without exhausting the many possibilities for praise, the team notes especially the way in which the administrative leaders, faculty and staff have won very strong community support for the vision of the University's future and for the effectiveness of its programs as reflected in the quality of its graduates. There is strong evidence that the many cities and towns in the service region now view CSU Stanislaus as their key to a secure and prosperous future. (CFRs 1.3 and 4.8)

Based on the solid foundation the University has created for the full scope of its re-accreditation review, the team nonetheless has several recommendations to make for the EER. These observations are made less as criticisms than as intended helpful indicators of useful steps that can and should be taken before completing the EER report and arranging for the next team visit. They are intended to add strength and credibility to the impressive work already completed.

1. Through its highly engaged and thoughtful approach to CPR, CSU Stanislaus has positioned itself well to clarify the centrality of General Education to the mission and to the distinctiveness of this University at a time of important change, prominently including the creation of six colleges, the program review of General Education, and the attention being given to reaffirming historic values and shared purposes as an engaged community of learners. As the common, shared intellectual work of all six colleges and of all faculty, General Education provides the means to define the identity and character of CSU Stanislaus through the learning of all undergraduates across all programs. In preparation for the EER, therefore, the team recommends that CSU Stanislaus continue its review of General Education with the goal of addressing these following issues by the time of the next campus visitation:
  - a. Document that there is substantial progress in its direct assessment of authentic student work, which ensures that each graduate has met the objectives of both the departmental program and the General Education program;
  - b. Communicate systematically and comprehensively to all students (and to faculty, advisors, and other key staff) the expectations for General Education for both transfer and first-year students; and
  - c. Ensure that General Education is a vital and central part of CSU Stanislaus' mission.  
(CFRs 1.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, and 2.12)
2. As already noted, the team commends CSU Stanislaus for its commitment to the assessment of learning and for its development of a comprehensive infrastructure to support this commitment at all levels, from programs to the University. The team recommends that:
  - a. CSU Stanislaus ensure that there is direct assessment of student learning at the course, program, and general education levels;

- b. The University has in place mechanisms to connect learning at the course and program levels with General Education and overall University learning goals—including co-curricular activities—through cumulative and integrated assessments; and
- c. There are clear, simple benchmarks and measures of progress in meeting these priorities.

The team also recommends that these measures be incorporated in academic and support unit program reviews. (CFRs 1.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, and 2.11)

- 3. As noted, the team commends CSU Stanislaus for its sustained discussion of the nature, scope, focus, and support of faculty work—including workload issues—over the past decade—especially its efforts to define the nature of research, scholarship and creative activity in the context of a strong commitment to teaching and learning. However, the team has observed that the University has not yet developed a clear definition of scholarship or reached convincing consensus about expectations for research as recommended in the last accreditation review. The team therefore recommends that CSU Stanislaus move this discussion toward resolution through the explicit, written departmental, college, and University policies stipulating the *criteria* by which faculty will be assessed with regard to retention, promotion, and tenure for all aspects of faculty work—teaching and service as well as research, scholarship and creative activity. This may best be accomplished through an open, shared discussion of research, teaching and service within the mission of CSU Stanislaus, drawing on the existing mechanisms for shared governance at the program, college, and University levels. (CFRs 2.8 and 2.9)
- 4. Despite considerable satisfaction with current library resources and high praise for librarians, CSU Stanislaus has unresolved issues with the extent to which the library can support a significant expansion of research, scholarship and creative activity. While there

are many other issues about levels of support for this area of faculty work yet to be resolved, the team recommends that concerns raised in the last accreditation review regarding library resources be addressed in the EER report with attention to the issues of sustainable high quality research and scholarship (and graduate education now inclusive of the Ed.D.). (CFRs 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7)

5. The University has made significant progress in its use of analyzed information and data to support decision-making, planning, and resources allocations. The team recommends that CSU Stanislaus become more systematic in its overall production of standardized reports, in its tracking of their use, in its disaggregation of data at the program and college levels, and in its focusing these reports on key issues so as to continue institutional improvement. Specifically, we recommend greater clarity and specificity in the statement of goals and in the metrics to evaluate attainment. (CFRs 1.2, 2.6, 2.10, and 4.3)
6. The University has indicated that advising and related student services are within the scope of its current review of the infrastructure to support engagement at both the Turlock and Stockton locations. The team recommends that the University renew its consideration of advising and related services as they help achieve the goals for General Education and for student success. Appropriate consideration should be given to training of advisors and other student services staff, to performance indicators, and to staffing levels. (CFRs 2.10, 2.12, 2.13, 3.1, and 3.4)
7. Even as CSU Stanislaus celebrates and enjoys its long history of and strong commitment to program-level decision-making, the University is developing and maturing at a time of probable resource constraints and the certainty of having to make choices about its future. Like most public universities, CSU Stanislaus cannot develop all of the opportunities it will have. The team recommends that CSU Stanislaus consider thoughtfully centralizing

some of its decision-making to support the continued development of common, or shared, programs (e.g., General Education or First Year Experiences), values (e.g., engagement or diversity), and goals (e.g., supporting the development of its service region) by building on the current strategic planning and resource allocation processes. (CFRs 1.3, 3.5, 3.8, 4.1, and 4.2)

8. With the continued growth of CSU Stanislaus' capacity to use technology for teaching, research, and administrative functions, the team recommends that equal consideration be given to faculty and staff development and to planning so as to ensure that these capabilities are deployed effectively and purposefully to enhance the quality of learning and of support services. Technology applications should offer relief and increased capacity to already strained faculty and staff and not add to their workloads. (CFRs 2.13, 3.1, 3.6, and 3.7)

## **SECTION IV – PREPARATIONS FOR THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW**

The institution is already at work on the EER and has the deadline clearly in view. It has a clear thematic framework to guide its actions, and the entire community appears to have accepted the framework and found it useful. At the time of the current review, the themes had effectively framed conversations and interactions around the issues central to the accreditation review.

The work toward the EER is proceeding briskly and deliberately, although a recent reorganization has perhaps delayed some aspects of the work. The Team expects that most aspects of the EER will be completed on time.

The Team noted some refinements to the current plan for the EER that might be useful. First, some attention might usefully be given to the alignment of the eventual report with the strategic plan of the institution, a plan that might usefully be updated to incorporate elements that

have arisen since its publication (e.g., online education, outreach to some service areas). Second, as with any thematic approach developed from such a broad spectrum of the CSU Stanislaus community and from a newly developed organizational structure that has six separate academic units, some important elements may deserve more attention. Most of these elements are in the nature of “boundary spanning” activities. Such activities include the general education program, and may include elements of the institution-wide approach to the use of new instructional technology, outreach to the community, and diversity.

The institution clearly has the overall capacity to complete the EER successfully. However, the Team has some concerns and wishes to draw attention to three general areas. First, we note that there are some delays in the development of assessments and measures for the goals associated with the general education program. The process by which such assessments are created, reviewed, and approved by the faculty may delay progress in this area, an area in which the team expects to see substantial progress by the time of the EER. Second, the team is concerned that the development of methods and processes for assessing student learning at the institutional (rather than course or program) level may not progress quickly enough by the time of the EER. Third, we hope that at the time of the EER the institution will be able to demonstrate that data and evidence have actually been used to improve programs. We feel that the institution has the capacity to produce such data but will need to see that the data is being effectively used by the time of the EER.

## APPENDIX A: OFF-CAMPUS SITE SUMMARY

*[Summary form for off-campus site reviewers. A completed copy of this form for each off-campus site visited should be appended to the team report. Evidence based on the information collected may be integrated into the body of the team report as appropriate.]*

1. INSTITUTION:

California State University Stanislaus

2. SITE LOCATION (include physical address):

612 E. Magnolia Street  
Stockton, CA. 95202

3. TEAM MEMBER(S)/REVIEWER(S):

Gary W. Matkin

4. CONTEXT (for example, number of programs offered at site, degree levels offered at site, FTE enrollment, faculty numbers and composition)

The following programs can be completed entirely at the Stockton Center:

Bachelor of Arts

Communication Studies

Criminal Justice

History

Liberal Studies

Psychology

Social Science

Bachelor of Science

Business Administration

Nursing (RN to BSN)

Masters Degrees

Education

Public Administration

Social Work

Executive MBA

Credentials

Elementary

Secondary

Reading

Teacher Internships

Other information:

Head count students 2007: 1,110

FTE Students 2007: 433 (12% of total enrollment)

Approximate number of full time Stockton dedicated faculty: 13

Total courses taught in spring 2008 term: 112 (100%)

Taught by part time faculty: 37 (33%)

Taught by full time Stockton-based faculty: 32 (30%)

Other full-time faculty: 43 (37%)

Number of courses taught in Fall 2008: 109

Number Fall 2008 courses taught via distance: 35 (33%)

Fall 2008 courses by School:

Arts	3	2%
Business	11	9%
Education	22	21%
Human Health	22	21%
Humanities, SS	45	43%
Natural Sciences	6	4%

Note that pursuant to an agreement with the Community Colleges, the Stockton Center concentrates on upper division courses and degree completion at the bachelor level.

5. DATE VISITED and LENGTH OF VISIT:

SEPTEMBER 29, 2008, 11:00 – 3:30PM

6. VISITED IN CONJUNCTION WITH (check all that apply):

- ☒ CPR
- ☐ EER
- ☐ Special Visit
- ☐ Substantive Change review
- ☐ Other (please explain)

7. DESCRIPTION OF ON SITE INTERACTIONS (with whom did reviewers speak, in what contexts?):

ALO , Vice Provost Diana Demetrulias (Introduction, lunch, wrap-up)

Provost William Covino (Lunch, tour)

Executive Director, Stockton Center Dave Hamlett (all meetings, tour)

Staff (half hour group meeting)

Steven Hamer

Manuel Beltran

Jean deGrassi

Rosalinda Torres

Betty Nunoz

Michael Tablett

Faculty (half hour group meeting)

Mary Salisbury (Teacher Education)

Nancy Jean smith (Teacher Education)

S. Garfield (Teacher Education)

Chau-Pu Chiang (Criminal Justice)

Robin Ringstad (Social Work)

Ashour Badal (Business Administration)

Students (half hour group meeting)

Adriana Ocegueda (Liberal Studies, Teacher Credential)

Eduardo Ortiz (Communication Studies)

Katherine Kiley (Psychology)

Zona Zaragoza (Psychology)

Christine Vidak (Business)

Arnetta Scott (Criminal Justice)

## 8. OTHER MATERIALS REVIEWED (prior to visit, on-site, or after the visit):

Strategic Plan: Framing the Future: (2008) Selected Exhibit E, article 2.7  
 Administrative and Academic Support Unit Review 2005 Self Study Report: Phase I  
 Survey of Students, Faculty and Staff/Administrators Spring 2004  
 Stockton student Survey 10/14/2003  
 Stockton Student Needs assessment survey Results Fall 1999  
 Various program information sheets  
 Fall 2008 Schedule of Classes

<i>Suggested Lines of Inquiry: Please address each of the following. Representative CFRs are noted in each cell below.</i>	<b>Observations and Findings</b>	<b>Check (X) here if follow-up is needed.</b>
<p><i>Quality of the Learning Site.</i> Is the physical environment and academic infrastructure of the site conducive to the fostering of learning and dialogue between faculty and students? (CFRs 2.1, 2.5, 3.5)</p>	<p>The physical plant is fully adequate for the number of students served. It consists of a two story building with each floor containing about 34,000 usable square feet. Only the first floor is used. At full capacity (both floors) the capacity of the site is probably around 5000 students, so the 1,100 served there now have plenty of space. The site contains about 13 classrooms, three of which are equipped to be used as teleconference classrooms. The facility contains at least three computer labs of many stations, a large library access center, a fitness room with showers available, a student lounge and several well appointed study rooms, and faculty offices for all Stockton based faculty and also office space for faculty from Turlock and part time faculty. The facility is attractively appointed with adequate free parking. External landscaping is well done and there are plans to improve the landscape. There are numerous courtyards and spaces for students and faculty to interact outside of classrooms. The only current lack is food service; only vending machines are available for students. There are plans for the development of several food vendors on the site perhaps within a year or so. Conclusion: excellent space, well suited to interactions, more than adequate to serve current students and capable of serving many more.</p>	

*Student Support Services.* What is the site's capacity for providing advisement, counseling, library, computing services and other appropriate student services? (CFRs 2.13, 3.6)

One of the major strengths of the Stockton Center is the strong sense of community among the faculty and staff of the Center. This sense of community is manifested in a service oriented culture that extends to students in a very visible and appreciated way. The small size of the staff promotes high levels of communication among staff and a problem-solving attitude. Stockton-based faculty extend themselves to Stockton students in "beyond-the-call" ways and students express their high level of satisfaction with the instruction, the facility, and especially the staff. The library access center, while staffed with a reference librarian only once a week, appears to be adequate for the facility—reference librarians from the main campus are available by phone and email and respond quickly to requests from faculty and staff. There is a registered nurse available on site for 20 hours per week and other health services are available on request or at the Turlock campus.

However, there are several areas where improvements can be made, although the current budget situation makes these improvements difficult. First, everyone at the Center recognizes the need for more on-site student (and prospective student) advising. Such advising was cut two years ago and the impact is felt on a daily basis. Faculty have filled in where they can but still the need is not being met. Second, there may be a lack of tutoring at the Stockton Center. Institutional statistics indicate that 33% of CSU Stanislaus students receive tutoring help. While no statistics on this were available to the reviewer, anecdotal evidence suggests that Stockton based students accounted for very little of the tutoring usage. It may be that Stockton students do not require as much tutoring as Turlock students, but this is an issue deserving of some attention since it goes to the heart of student success. Third, the older Stockton-based student seems to require more personal counseling than campus based students, including counseling regarding family and emotional issues that get in the way of their studies. While the resident nurse can make referrals, there may be a need in this area.

Finally, although in theory, students can receive the majority of what they need at the Stockton Center, there are instances in which they have to go to Turlock to take care of things. More attention might be paid to those cases where student trips are necessary in order to decrease the number of times students have to spend gas money and time to go to Turlock.

<p><i>Connection of Students and Faculty to the Institution.</i> How visible and deep is the presence of the home campus (or broader institution) at the off-campus site? (CFR 2.10)</p>	<p>Based on my interviews with the faculty, Stockton based faculty appear very much integrated with the home campus. They take appropriate roles in the shared governance, professional development opportunities, and collegial process. They are loyal and highly supportive of the Stockton program and sometimes disagree with their schools or departments about the level of resources devoted to the Stockton program. While the distance from the main campus presents some inevitable inconvenience, it hasn't interfered materially in any important respect.</p> <p>Based on my interview with students, the Stockton students very much appreciate having courses close to them and favor Stockton courses over Turlock courses. They have no issues with the teleconference based courses. They very much appreciate the attention they receive from Stockton faculty and staff and prefer doing business at Stockton versus the home campus. Most students interviewed did have occasion to go to the Turlock campus to take advantage of some services and clearly they are not able to take advantage of the richness of activities on the main campus as easily as Turlock based students but the convenience trumps this disadvantage. While it is possible to achieve a set of full degrees entirely at Stockton, often conflicts with personal schedules means that students have to take one or more courses per term at Turlock. They would like a better food service at the Stockton campus.</p>	
<p><i>Relationship of institution's goals for CPR/EER Reviews to off-campus activities.</i> In what ways, if any, do the institution's efforts to build capacity and enhance educational effectiveness through the reaffirmation process on the home campus carry over to activities at this site? (CFRs 4.1, 4.8)</p>	<p>The Stockton area, about 45 minutes by car away from the main campus, has a number of unmet needs for higher education. The institution has recognized those needs and has mentioned filling those needs in its planning and goal setting process. It clearly has the physical capacity to meet most of those needs—its physical plant presently has a capacity well exceeding its actual use by students. However, in times of no-growth and budgetary cutbacks, resource contention issues between Stockton and the main campus come into play. The administration leaves the decision about location of programs up to schools and departments—there is no centralized programmatic planning for the Stockton campus. Thus, there are some obvious and substantial gaps between what the institution is capable of providing and the actual needs of the Stockton area (an area that exceeds in population the Turlock area by a significant multiple). Thus while the physical capacity to grow and the service demand to grow the Stockton program exists, the institutional financial capacity and will to serve the Stockton area are only episodically expressed through individual schools and departments.</p> <p>One goal expressed in the strategic plan of the institution (2.7) is the need to serve the Stockton community. This is expressed in two groups. One</p>	

	group deals with the physical plant and its development. It deals with issues such as security, maintenance, and future developments of the site. The other is convened by the President and consists of community leaders. Its main goal is to position CSU Stanislaus as an important resource for the Stockton area and engage significant members of the Stockton community in generating resources to support the growth of the Stockton program. The potential and aspirations of this group may not be fully reflected in the strategic plan of the University.	
<i>Context of this site in the broader institution.</i> How does the institution conceive of this site relative to its mission, other current and potential remote sites, and administrative structure? How is this operationalized? (CFRs 1.2, 3.1, 3.8)	The Stockton Center is seen primarily as a classroom location ready to serve the programmatic impulses and goals of individual schools and departments. There is no central programmatic planning for the site. Located in a more populous area than the main campus, it is clear that the Center represents an important presence for the institution, both symbolically and in terms of some specific programs. It does suffer from some of the usual aspects of isolation, but these are mostly transparent to students because of the service oriented nature of the staff and the Stockton faculty. The students at Stockton tend to be older and different in other ways than Turlock students and this difference is generally seen as positive. Again, the lack of an overall programmatic goal, while clearly an institutional decision, inhibits the realization of the great potential of the Center.	
<i>Educational Effectiveness Preparedness.</i> How has the institution organized itself to address student learning and educational effectiveness at this site? What are the quality and nature of institutional data analysis systems, quality improvement systems and systems to evaluate student learning at this site? (CFRs 4.6, 4.7)	Because the programs are administered entirely by the departments and schools, the whole educational effectiveness program extends without difference to the programs at the Stockton Center. It is unclear what measures the Institutional Research Office makes of Stockton based students, but even the definition of a Stockton based student is difficult since many students take courses both in Stockton and in Turlock. This is an area for further investigation.	

***Additional Findings, Observations or Comments.*** Please provide any other information that you believe it is pertinent to note. Also, if any of the boxes above are checked, elaborate here. Finally, please include any recommendations you might have for subsequent team members/reviewers concerning this site.

The Stockton Center represents in some sense an unexploited resource, lacking first budget resources and then institutional will to realize its potential. Within the existing resource bases some attention should be provided to the addition of counseling and advising services at the Center. The offering of more extensive tutoring services at the Center should also be seriously considered and put at the top of the priority list if a further study shows that students will benefit. Also, the work flow processes involving all kinds of transactions between the Center and the main campus might be reviewed to reduce the student inconvenience sometimes experienced by students. The current physical plans for the Center will address some of the needs of students and there may be some rather significant additions to the site that will bring into greater focus the attention and support of the surrounding community.

**APPENDIX B:**  
**Report on Ed.D. in Educational Leadership**

The Team was impressed by the enthusiasm and care with which the new doctoral program in educational leadership--CSU Stanislaus's first doctoral program--has been planned and implemented. Recruitment has been very successful, and the program has just enrolled its first cohort of 29 students, of whom approximately 50% are members of minority groups and 60% are women (CFR 1.5). The Team suggests that doctoral student/core faculty ratios not be allowed to become excessively high. Given the level of mentoring and advising needed to educate and train doctoral students, anything over three or four doctoral students per core faculty member would negatively affect program quality particularly on a campus with high teaching loads. In order to enhance creativity, as well as productivity, the program might want to experiment with dissertation teams--along the lines of the German *graduieretenkollegs*--and encourage its students and faculty to work together on broad research topics.

The level of detail of the various rubrics that describe programmatic requirements and expectations is impressive (CFR 2.2). As the program evolves, it will be important to refine the rubrics to reflect new developments. Program members should not be afraid to make changes as they test and try new ideas and respond to the changing needs of their constituencies. The team has faith in this program's ability to make an important contribution to doctoral education.

In terms of graduate student funding, the financial commitments for this program seem adequate, although they could be more generous (CFR 3.5). The team encourages the program to look for extramural funding for graduate students. In addition to foundations, private donors could be approached. This is a task for the dean of the college and the President of the campus, who should put graduate fellowships among their fund-raising priorities.

With respect to faculty support, it is not entirely clear that it is sufficient or sustainable (CFR 3.4). Do faculty members participating in this program get reduced teaching loads or more funds for their research programs? If so, what would happen in the event of a budget crisis?

Would faculty members be asked to teach more undergraduates at the expense of the labor-intensive doctoral program? The team recommends that this new doctoral program, as well as other graduate programs, be closely monitored by the Graduate Council (and ideally by a graduate dean who, among other things, could represent the campus at the Council of Graduate Schools and learn about best practices there) to make sure that they meet appropriately high-quality standards and that they are well-funded. Any problem should be reported promptly to the senate and the administration, because doctoral programs, which require constant and attentive care, are often among the first victims of budget cuts during difficult financial times.

All in all, the team was impressed by the seriousness with which CSU Stanislaus has undertaken the task of establishing its first doctoral program and enhancing its RSCA agenda at all levels. The team applauds the on-going campus's conversation about the role of RSCA as "integral to the mission" of each CSU campus, and of the Stanislaus campus in particular, and encourages the administration and the faculty to jointly explore and address the ramifications of this vision.

## Appendix C: DISTANCE EDUCATION SUMMARY

### 1. INSTITUTION

California State University, Stanislaus

### 2. TEAM MEMBER(S)/REVIEWER(S):

Gary W. Matkin

### 3. DATES THAT DISTANCE EDUCATION MATERIALS WERE VIEWED:

October 1 – 3, 2008

VIEWED IN CONJUNCTION WITH (check all that apply):

- ☒ CPR
- ☐ EER
- ☐ Special Visit
- ☐ Substantive Change review
- ☐ Other (please explain)

### 4. CONTEXT *(for example, number of programs offered via distance education, degree levels offered via distance education, FTE enrollment, faculty numbers and composition; average class size)*

Sample of teleconference courses:

Fall 2007 FTE	Subject		
	Other	13.9	2%
	Crim J	33.4	5
	Bus	92.2	15
	Comm	29.9	5
	Educ	254.1	42
	Psych	78.1	13
	History	9.9	2
	Nursing	27.9	4
	Lib Stud	53.7	9
	Pub Ad	19.5	3
	Total	612.0	100

Location		
Merced	75.4	12%
Modesto	77.6	12
Stockton	424.2	70
Tracy	32.5	6
Total	612	100

## On-line courses

Fall 2008 (enrollments)	Educ	278
	HSS	283
	Other	170
	Total	731

Enrollments	2006/07	690	(4 terms)
	2007/08	1252	(3 terms)
	2008/09	1082	(2 terms)

## Courses offered SU 06 – SP 08

Arts	4
Bus Ad	24
Educ	27
HHS	3
HSS	10
Nat Sci	6
Total	74

5. DESCRIPTION OF DISTANCE EDUCATION INTERACTIONS (*what was viewed, description of formats, other details to help describe nature and context of the review*):

WASC Annual Report 2007-08: Off Campus and Distance Education Programs  
 Growth of Online Enrollments, Summer 2006 – Fall 2008  
 CSU Stanislaus Online Course report 4/23/08  
 CSU Stanislaus Online Enrollments Fall 2008  
 CSU Stanislaus televised Course Enrollments for Year Summary Summer 2005-Fall 2008  
 Suggested Guidelines for Online Courses, off-Campus, Mediated and Distance Learning Subcommittee of the University Educational Policies Committee  
 December 2005  
 CSU On-Line Degree Programs 2008-09  
 FAQ on eLearning Primer at CSU Stanislaus

6. OTHER MATERIALS REVIEWED OR PERSONS INTERVIEWED  
 CONCERNING DISTANCE EDUCATION (*prior to visit, on-site, or after the visit*):

Carl Whitman, Associate Vice President/ CIO, Information  
 Brian Duggan, Director Learning Services

<p><i>Suggested Lines of Inquiry:</i> Please address each of the following. <i>Representative CFRs</i> <i>are noted in each cell below.</i></p>	<p><b>Observations and Findings</b></p>	<p><b>Check (X) here if follow-up is needed.</b></p>
<p><i>Quality of the Learning Infrastructure.</i> Is the learning platform and academic infrastructure of the site conducive to the fostering of learning and dialogue between faculty and students? (CFRs 2.1, 2.5, 3.5)</p>	<p>The distance learning offered at CSUS employs two primary delivery methods, teleconferenced courses and on-line courses. The teleconference offering has two modes—two way video and audio, and one way video, two way audio. The facilities for this offering are state of the art and relatively standard in their configuration. This is by now a delivery system well accepted by both students and faculty and appears very adequate in its configuration and support structure. In Fall 2007 such instruction was delivered to 612 student FTE at four main sites (a bit under 10% of total instruction). In most fall and Spring terms about 1900 students (headcount) take these televised courses (fewer take them in Winter and Summer terms).</p> <p>On-line delivery is newer to the institution but it is growing quickly, from 690 enrollments in 2006/7 to 1252 in 2007/08, to about 1100 in the first two terms of 2008/09. While listed as online courses in institutional statistics it may be that at least some of these courses are actually hybrid or blended courses mixing online instruction with face to face instruction. No online class was available for review during the visit so the degree of interaction was not verified, but standard platforms were used for the delivery (Moodle, eCollege, and Blackboard) and all these have the facility to admit adequate faculty-student and student-student interactions.</p>	
<p><i>Student Support Services.</i> What is the institution's capacity for providing advisement, counseling, library, computing services and other student services appropriate to the modalities of delivery? (CFRs 2.13, 3.6)</p>	<p>Because at present online courses are blended or are single courses imbedded in degree programs containing face-to-face or teleconferenced courses, the issues of advisement, counseling, etc do not arise. However, as noted below, with the introduction of the first fully online program, these issues will become of high importance.</p>	
<p><i>Connection of Faculty to the Institution.</i> In what ways does the institution ensure that distance learning faculty are oriented, supported, and integrated appropriately into the academic life of the institution? How are faculty involved in curriculum development and assessment of student learning? (CFRs 3.1, 3.2)</p>	<p>With regard to the teleconferenced courses, the institution has integrated this delivery system into all of the processes of the institution and provides very complete technical and pedagogical support for students. Because each teleconference site is located in a facility supported by the main campus, face-to-face services are by and large available to students. However, with regard to the start-up efforts in</p>	

	<p>online education, the institution has not yet established an infrastructure adequate to fully support the effort. For instance, while faculty are provided with help in using the course management software and are provided with information on how to be effective in teaching online, no formal training program or instructional design programs have been established. While there are faculty who fully embrace the new delivery technology, there are some who actively oppose it. This impedes the development of standards and practices to assure quality delivery. The full exploitation of student assessment and the assessment of teaching that is available through the new technology is not happening.</p>	
<p><i>Relationship of institution's goals for CPR/EER Reviews to distance learning activities.</i> In what ways, if any, do the institution's efforts to build capacity and enhance educational effectiveness through the reaffirmation process on the home campus carry over to distance learning activities? (CFRs 4.1, 4.8)</p>	<p>While the strategic plan and the CPR review is largely silent on the use of distance learning in fulfilling the mission of the university, such use is very consistent with the mission of the university. It serves a geographical area the size of Vermont (10,000 square miles) and many of its potential students would have to drive long distances to take advantage of classes (including teleconferenced classes). Reflecting this fact, the President has asked each of the six schools to produce at least on online degree program.</p>	
<p><i>Context of distance learning to the broader institution.</i> How does the institution conceive of distance learning relative to its mission, other current and potential remote sites, and administrative structure? How is this operationalized? (CFRs 1.2, 3.1, 3.8)</p>	<p>While teleconferenced distance education has been fully integrated into the life of the campus, online education is not well integrated and is still in what might be called the experimental or start-up phase. The University's strategic plan contains limited references to e-learning initiatives as part of its mission for increased student access and thus the President's goal for developing programs through non-traditional delivery models needs further elaboration in order to implement them in a manner consistent with the vision.</p>	
<p><i>Educational Effectiveness Preparedness.</i> How has the institution organized itself to address student learning and educational effectiveness for distance learners? What are the quality and nature of institutional data analysis systems, quality improvement systems and systems to evaluate student learning in distance learning courses and programs? (CFRs 4.6, 4.7)</p>	<p>In order to offer online degrees entirely at a distance, the institution must create a comprehensive plan that assures a high quality offering and the institution and maintenance of learning assessment techniques. It also must plan for the offering of student services and student support to distance students who may never or very rarely come to the campus or a satellite location. At present it does not appear to have such a plan or even have the intention of creating such a plan.</p>	

***Additional Findings, Observations or Comments.*** Please provide any other information that you believe it is pertinent to note. Also, if any of the boxes above are checked, elaborate here. Finally, please include any recommendations you might have for subsequent team members/reviewers concerning distance education courses and programs.

While the teleconference-based distance learning offerings of the institution appear to be well supported and well integrated into the life of the institution, online education is still in a start-up or experimental stage. Teleconference programs have stabilized in their growth, but online courses are increasing. The institution has not yet prepared itself for the institution of fully online degrees. Such an initiation would trigger a review from the WASC Substantive Change Committee. The institution should familiarize itself with distance education standards, particularly those addressing online education, and create a plan for systematically meeting and maintaining those standards.