

WASC San Diego State University (SDSU)

SUMMARY OF LINES OF INQUIRY AND GUIDELINES: OFFSITE REVIEW

Directions: This form is to be completed by the team at the conclusion of its daylong Offsite Review of the institutional report and supporting materials. The form will be sent to the institution within one week by the WSCUC liaison, and a response to section IV will be sent back from the institution eight weeks in advance of the Accreditation Visit. This form can be in a bulleted list, outline or narrative format. Please do not delete this first page, i.e., this cover page. Instead complete information as requested and submit it with the Lines of Inquiry.

OFFSITE REVIEW (OSR)

Institution under Review: San Diego State University (SDSU)

Date of Review: Offsite Review: November 18-19, 2015

Team Chair: Kumble R. Subbaswamy

The Offsite Review team recommends the following actions be taken:

XX Proceed with the Accreditation Visit scheduled in: March 21-24, 2016

Reschedule the Accreditation Visit to: _____

The reason(s) the Team recommends rescheduling the visit is/are:

Due date for institutional response to Section IV (specify exact date):

Tuesday, January 26, 2016

I. Overview of the lines of inquiry.

This document identifies four primary lines of inquiry for the Accreditation Visit (AV) that are derived from the institution's report. In addition, this document includes questions or issues the team discussed during the Offsite Review (OSR) that may be pursued during the visit. The team does not expect or invite a written response to these questions before the Accreditation Visit. The only written materials that the team expects from the institution before the visit are those listed in Section IV: "The team requests that the institution supply the following additional documents and information before the Accreditation Visit."

II. Commendations. The team commends SDSU for the following accomplishments and practices:

- a. For not resting on the laurels of achievements from the previous reaffirmation cycle and continuing the positive momentum.
- b. For improvements in retention and graduation rates while increasing the diversity of the student body and closing achievement gaps.
- c. For progress in internationalization, in particular in expanding study abroad participation rates.
- d. For development of a comprehensive strategic plan with broad participation from university stakeholders.
- e. For remarkable success in fundraising.
- f. For capital improvements designed to strengthen student success, particularly the facilities for addressing the needs of commuter students.
- g. For maintaining a high volume of research grants and contracts in a very competitive national environment.
- h. For astute financial management to maintain the quality of the university while mitigating the deep cuts in state appropriations.
- i. For implementation of an integrated program of high impact practices and adopting policies that require these experiences for undergraduates.
- j. For the tremendous efforts to build the infrastructure to create transparency and a data- and evidence-based decision-making culture.
- k. For support of the faculty as they expand undergraduate research opportunities.
- l. For outreach to underserved local communities.

III. Lines of inquiry. The team has identified four lines of inquiry for the accreditation visit: Educational Effectiveness and Assessment; Undergraduate Student Experience, Climate and Post-Graduation Success; Graduate Education; and the Evolution and Future of the SDSU Identity. Under each heading we have listed questions that the team discussed during the Offsite Review. The team does not expect a response to these questions.

- a. **Educational Effectiveness and Assessment:** SDSU has made significant strides in the development of a culture of assessment and has put in place a structure and

apparatus for supporting assessment activities. The University has identified institutional and departmental learning outcomes, many departments have completed curricular maps and assessment plans, and several departments have collected evidence of student learning and reflected on the findings. Almost all programs have submitted formal reports on their assessment efforts and the Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Committee is providing helpful oversight and guidance to programs. However, the team notes there is still much work to be done to ensure that all programs are fully participating in the assessment process, including closing the loop and documenting improvements to student learning. In addition, the team is interested in learning more about how co-curricular programs that contribute to learning and success are assessed and how data about the quality of programs and evidence of student learning are used to inform educational improvements. The first line of inquiry is related to the extent to which investments in strengthening assessment has resulted in a culture of improvement, including using data in decision-making.

- i. The team would like to know more about what you have learned from your recent efforts to assess general education and how you concluded that a different strategy was needed. What does this mean for evaluating general education and determining the path for general education assessment going forward?
- ii. How will you ensure greater faculty engagement in the assessment process, specifically the use of WEAVE in documenting and guiding the work? The team will want to discuss with faculty their thoughts and reflections on assessment, their views of WEAVE, and what they have learned from assessment results for instructional improvement.
- iii. SDSU has committed to an array of high-impact practices and enriching co-curricular experiences to enhance student learning. Yet, the assessment plans for these experiences are in various stages of development and completion. The team is particularly interested in learning more about plans for assessing and evaluating programs created to enrich learning and support student success, and the how the evidence will be used to determine effectiveness and identify programs worthy of greater investment.

b. Undergraduate Student Experience, Climate and Post-Graduation Success.

The institution has significantly increased the graduation and retention rates for all students with a special emphasis on the success rates of underrepresented minority students. The institution has significantly increased the number of programs and efforts that contribute to a successful undergraduate student experience. While the institution report provided rich data on graduation and success rates, the team is interested in learning more about the overall student experience. The team is also curious about student's perceptions of and satisfaction with their undergraduate experience and beyond.

- i. What survey data, if any, are collected to assess the quality of the student experience in areas such as advising, academic support and student

services, and campus climate? In what ways, if any, does the student experience differ for subpopulations including racial-ethnic minorities, low-income first-generation students, commuter students, and transfer students?

- ii. How does the university assess the quality of the student experience at the branch campuses? What have you learned about the branch campus student experience?
 - iii. What data, if any, are collected from recent graduates and alumni regarding job placement and career success?
 - iv. The team would also like to know more about the extent to which the assessment of student experiences is used in evaluating advising and different co-curricular programs.
 - v. The university has done much to improve the overall campus climate. Does the university assess campus climate for selected groups of students, including those from underrepresented minority populations? How is campus climate impacting overall student satisfaction?
- c. **Graduate Education.** As the institutional report states in its very first paragraph, “SDSU offers 106 master's programs, and 22 doctoral degree programs at its main campus” and an additional master’s program at the IVC (p. 1). Data about individual programs are accessible in multiple university webpages, but we note the institutional report elsewhere says surprisingly little more about the place and role of graduate education at SDSU. (One exception: “With 21 doctoral programs, SDSU is classified as a “high research activity” institution by Carnegie Foundation” [pp. 18-19; a minor point, but is it 21 or 22?]). The team will be seeking a more holistic understanding of SDSU’s involvement in graduate education.
- i. Is the current set of degree programs, at both the master’s and doctoral levels, likely to change, and if so, how? What are the criteria that the institution uses to determine what programs should be created or grown?
 - ii. What are the completion rates and time-to-degree for master’s and doctoral programs, collectively and individually, and do any of these give cause for concern?
 - iii. Does the university track the employment of those who have completed master’s and doctoral degrees?
 - iv. Are all faculty involved in graduate education, and if not, has this lead to challenges in faculty morale?
 - v. What if any interaction is there between graduate students and undergraduate students? What role do graduate students play in undergraduate education?
 - vi. Has the university put in place any specific programs intended to grow diversity of the graduate student body?
 - vii. How does SDSU’s robust program of graduate education help define the university’s profile?
 - viii. Does the university assess the student experience and campus climate for graduate students?

- d. **Evolution and Future of the SDSU Identity.** The team commends the work on SDSU's strategic plan notes that the plan is focused on the near-term. We will be interested in hearing more about your longer-term vision for the university and how it relates to the university's current identity. What is the essence of a San Diego State University education and how do you see that evolving in the face of a shifting educational landscape and in response to the opportunities created by technology, SDSU's designation as an HIS, and the geographic location of SDSU?
- i. SDSU recently started a satellite campus in Tblisi. Are there plans for other international campuses that will offer a SDSU degree? When Tblisi was created, did you identify critical attributes of the SDSU experience that needed to be replicated in a different geographical location?
 - ii. How do you see the evolution of the relationship between the IVC and the main campus?
 - iii. How do you plan to allocate the newly funded 300 faculty positions? In what ways will the university leverage these positions to increase faculty diversity?
 - iv. Does the university's geographic location figure prominently in SDSU's identity today? In what ways, if any, will SDSU's geographic location play a role in its future?
 - v. Going forward, how does the university see the role of online only and hybrid courses in an SDSU education?

IV. Request for additional documents and information. The team requests that the institution supply the following additional documents and information before the Accreditation Visit, if available. The team does not expect the university to create new reports or analyses.

a. Educational Effectiveness and Assessment

- i. List of workshops or faculty development activities related to assessment and the use of WEAVE, if available.
- ii. List of co-curricular, HIP, or academic support programs that have been evaluated or are scheduled to be evaluated (with the projected date for the review), if available.

b. Undergraduate Student Experience, Climate and Post-Graduation Success

- i. The most recent four-year and six-year graduation rates, disaggregated by IVC students, student athletes, and commuter students.
- ii. Results of student surveys, if available, regarding student satisfaction with their experiences and/or with academic support and student services at SDSU.
- iii. Any Student Affairs Annual Reports more recent than 2010-11, if available.
- iv. Updates, if available, on the activities identified in the Division of Student Affairs 2015-2017 Strategic Plan.

c. Graduate Education

- i. Graduate student retention and graduation rates and time to degree by program.
- ii. Survey results, if available, of post-graduation placement.

d. Evolution and Future of SDSU Identity

- i. Update on IVC strategic plan, if available.
- ii. Descriptive information about the faculty (total number; disaggregated by gender; race and ethnicity; tenure/tenure track; adjunct or lecturer).
- iii. Plans or timetable, if available, for hiring 300 new faculty members.

V. Areas of concern (not covered elsewhere) – NONE

VI. General comments about this institution (not covered elsewhere) – NONE

VII. Individuals and groups to meet during the visit. The team requests that the following groups and individuals holding the specified positions be available on the schedule for the Accreditation Visit. This list is tentative and will be modified closer to the visit.

- a. Senior leadership – President, Provost and Senior Vice President, Vice President for Student Affairs, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs, Vice President for University Relations and Development, Vice President for Research and Dean of Graduate Affairs, Chief Diversity Officer, and others as appropriate
- b. Open sessions with undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff
- c. Student leadership (undergraduate and graduate)
- d. College and division deans (including dean of undergraduate studies)
- e. Senate committees related to undergraduate education, graduate education, and educational effectiveness such as: General Education Curriculum Committee, Graduate Council, Graduation and Retention Subcommittee, Instructional and Information Technology Committee, Student Learning Outcome Committee, Undergraduate Council
- f. Faculty Senate leadership
- g. Directors and staff from the division of Student Affairs
- h. Directors of Compact Scholars, Aztec Mentor, Honors and Arts Alive (if not included in directors of Student Affairs)
- i. Directors of advising
- j. Director and staff from Analytical Studies and Institutional Research
- k. Assessment leadership and including directors of assessment in colleges, the library, and Student Affairs
- l. Director and staff of Center for Teaching and Learning and those responsible for faculty development
- m. Faculty in departments that have gone through program review (including representatives that have used WEAVE)

- n. Faculty and leaders involved in high-impact practices (if not included in groups and individuals listed above)
- o. Imperial Valley Campus (dean, faculty, students, staff---- will be a separate visit before the Accreditation Visit to the SDSU campus in March)
- p. WSCUC Steering Committee
- q. Strategic Planning Committee (steering committee and/or subcommittees)