



# CAMPUS CONNECTION

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## Special Accreditation Issue!

### CSUMB TOUTED AS NATIONAL MODEL

With a 15 - 0 vote, the commissioners of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)



President Peter Smith

granted CSUMB accreditation and praised the university as a new model for higher education.

The 49-page report documents the accreditation process embarked upon by the university in 1994, the same year that the campus was founded by the California State Legislature.

"Turning a former Army base into a vibrant center for student learning took the courage of a community, the confidence of the CSU and state legislature, and the wisdom of some of the best minds in higher education," said President Peter Smith. "Of course, there were naysayers along the way, but the evidence was clear that a new form of higher education was needed. The WASC report makes it clear that we are succeeding in fulfilling that need."

*(continued on back page)*

### HOW ACCREDITATION WORKS

#### WHAT IS WASC?

One of six regional associations in the U.S., the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accredits public and private schools, colleges and universities in California, Hawaii and certain areas of the Pacific Basin and East Asia.

#### WHAT IS WASC'S PURPOSE?

WASC examines an institution's infrastructure, decision-making processes, ability to deliver curriculum and resources to sustain itself.

#### WHO REVIEWS THE CAMPUSES?

WASC selects volunteers from institutions of higher education. Their number and areas of expertise are matched to the type of review. They report to the WASC Accrediting Commission, which renders a final decision regarding accreditation.

#### WHY SEEK ACCREDITATION?

Although accreditation is voluntary, most institutions choose to seek it. Accreditation certifies to other educational institutions, and the general public, that an institution meets or exceeds established standards and achieves its stated objectives.

#### HOW LONG DOES INITIAL ACCREDITATION TAKE?

Typically, the process takes six to eight years. During 1995, WASC granted CSUMB eligibility status. It granted initial accreditation to CSUMB in June 2003 for a maximum of seven years. WASC will return during 2009 and 2010 to conduct a Reaffirmation Review.

*(continued on page 2)*

## IT TOOK TWO TEAMS: WASC AND CSUMB



Cutting the cake commemorating CSUMB's accreditation are, from left, Provost Diane Cordero de Noriega, President Peter Smith and Leon Panetta.

WASC not only accredited CSUMB this summer, but identified it as an innovator in teaching and learning. The review team lauded CSUMB as "an emerging national model," one that is "... a product of scholarship at its best — rigorous, ethical, socially

responsible, and respectful of the values and strengths of a diverse group of people who have adopted a common vision and sense of purpose." (Report of the Educational Effectiveness Site Visit Team, WASC report, p. 14.)

While the news isn't surprising to most who have been committed to the work of the campus for any length of time, it is pleasing to see the talents of so many on campus recognized fully. Everyone on campus can take credit for contributing to the success; some whose efforts were specifically identifiable are listed in this special edition of *Campus Connection* (see the accompanying insert).

As the university begins its ninth year of instruction, we can be proud of all that we have accomplished. We move ahead with the



Holding a front page article from the Monterey County Herald announcing accreditation are, from left, WASC Project Team members Linda Stamps, vice provost for institutional effectiveness, and Salina Dilorio, institutional effectiveness analyst.

commitment to continue to advance CSUMB's Vision and our mission. We do so with the knowledge that we have come through a very difficult test with flying colors. ♦

How accreditation works (continued from page 1)

## HOW DOES ACCREDITATION IMPACT CSUMB?

Now that CSUMB is accredited, everyone has the assurance of outside experts that the university's academic offerings are



Provost Diane Cordero de Noriega led the campus accreditation team.

exemplary. It is proof that CSUMB is well-managed and fiscally sound. Accreditation means the university holds itself accountable to standards set by higher education for higher education. It also opens doors previously reserved for accredited institutions:

- Students transferring or applying to graduate school do not have to explain where CSUMB is in the accreditation process.
- Students may apply for certain types of financial aid restricted to students attending accredited institutions.
- Faculty members may apply for certain grants reserved for faculty from accredited institutions.
- CSUMB can be included in surveys and listings of universities used by students to select a college.

## WHAT IMPRESSED THE WASC TEAM THE MOST?

The WASC review teams were positive about the overall quality of CSUMB's academic programs and felt that the university has the appropriate infrastructure to meet the capacity needs of the campus. Here are a few excerpts from their report:

- "The vision statement is central to the CSUMB experience . . . The vision is clearly very real and in the past several years, it has been made operational in very concrete terms . . ."
- "It is our view that CSUMB is a product of scholarship at its best — rigorous, ethical, socially responsible, and respectful of the values and strengths of a diverse group of people who have adopted a common vision and sense of purpose."

(continued on page 3)

# CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!

CSUMB's successful completion of the initial accreditation process was due to the exceptional work done every day by each and every faculty member, staff member and student. The evidence presented to WASC and judged by them to have been sufficient to grant accreditation and "reflective of substantial engagement of the university community" was, by and large, taken from the work already being done on the campus. The WASC Project Team, on behalf of the entire campus community, would like to thank everyone for their dedicated contribution to this effort. Please join us in also recognizing the following people who worked on the various committees and teams that helped bring it all together:

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Thanks to the WASC Accreditation Office  
for the above information.

- "The capstone experience offers students a powerful opportunity to integrate their learning across courses and disciplines and, especially, between the classroom and the world of work and civic engagement."
- "One of the hallmarks of the CSUMB experience is service learning. Only a few institutions in the country attempt anything so ambitious or comprehensive."

*"CSUMB is poised to be a national leader in developing a culture of inquiry directed at both student learning and campus improvement."*

— Report of the Educational Effectiveness Site Visit Team, WASC report, p. 25

*What is meant by the term culture of inquiry?*

*Rather than making assumptions about what's working — are students learning and how are they learning, for example — we constantly raise the questions, collect the evidence, and then make adjustments or changes as the evidence tells us is necessary. This ensures that the education being offered is relevant to the needs of the external community and helps us be accountable.*

- "At CSUMB, everything centers on what is best for students."
- "CSUMB is poised to be a national leader in developing a culture of inquiry directed at both student learning and campus improvement. At CSUMB, continuous improvement is supported by a culture of scholarly inquiry that is deep and pervasive." ❖



Together with a standing-room-only crowd, the print and electronic media were well represented at the WASC news conference in July.

## WHAT ADVICE DID THE WASC REVIEW TEAM HAVE FOR CSUMB?

The WASC report also provided advice to CSUMB about areas the team believed needed additional attention:

- Continue to strengthen outcomes-based education: "The team notes that the implementation of outcomes in the form of ULRs (University Learning Requirements) and MLOs (Major Learning Requirements) is uneven." More faculty members are becoming involved in the course alignment project, which clarifies the expectations of each course and the relationship of each course's objectives and the ULRs and MLOs.

- Continue to strengthen the connection between the university's guiding plans, governance issues and individual learning

issues: "There appears to be a 'missing middle' that would hold together the details of the individual learning plans of students



The WASC team at the Quad during their evaluation of CSUMB.

and the requirements that they must complete, between the vision statement and the details of the lower division and upper division requirements . . ."

- Carefully implement the unique model and control our costs: "It is important to ensure that CSUMB has the institutional systems and infrastructure to support . . . a proper analysis of the unique costs of the CSUMB model . . ." ❖

*"CSUMB is designing mechanisms to solve campus issues in a just-in-time mode. This responsiveness is an institutional strength."*

— Report of the Educational Effectiveness Site Visit Team, WASC report, p. 26

*What is meant by the term just-in-time mode?*

*The capacity to be nimble and make assessments and changes as necessary in a timely manner. A term frequently used in private enterprises, WASC felt that one of CSUMB's strengths is the ability to solve campus issues in a timely, or "just-in-time" mode.*

**National model (continued from page 1)**

Throughout the report, examples are given that reflect WASC's view that CSUMB is poised to be a national leader in higher education and is prepared to contribute significantly to the national dialogue about how best to educate the workforce of the future. In the letter announcing the accreditation, Ralph Wolff, executive director of WASC, wrote, "... the University now stands, as described by the (accreditation) team, on the verge of being a national model."

According to the report, several elements distinguish CSUMB as a leader in higher education:

- CSUMB's adoption and success with an outcomes-based educational model;
- A culture of continuous improvement that encourages a willingness to revisit core issues and which commits institutional resources to improving quality (referred to as a "... culture of inquiry" and continuous renewal);
- And a core commitment to its Vision Statement.

"This accreditation decision represents for CSUMB an affirmation of our academic model, the quality of our curriculum and the quality of our faculty," said Diane Cordero de Noriega, provost and vice president for academic affairs. "I am extremely proud of what the faculty, staff and students have contributed in their blood, sweat and tears to accomplish this important milestone."

"Many institutions have high aspirations for their students. CSUMB approaches the realization of its vision

by assisting its students to become interpreters of their own learning. When they graduate, the students know what they know and what kind of learners they are,"

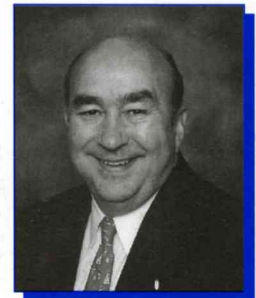
said Dr. Judith Ramaley, chair of the WASC visiting team and primary author of the final WASC report. "These habits of mind are the real gift of a CSUMB education and what distinguishes CSUMB from other institutions that wish to prepare their students for creative, productive and responsible lives."



*Judith Ramaley, chair of the WASC visiting team*

CSU Chancellor Charles Reed said, "Accreditation is one of the most important marks a university can earn. It is a measure of quality and excellence in education.

Congratulations to Peter Smith and the CSUMB team for earning such high marks from the accreditation team. CSUMB has cemented its reputation as a high-quality institution and as an emerging new model for higher education." ♦



*Chancellor Reed*

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NEWS ABOUT CSUMB'S STAFF & FACULTY

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## INSIDE...

- ♦ A TRUE MILESTONE FOR ALL OF US
- ♦ WHY ACCREDITATION IS SO IMPORTANT
- ♦ UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS

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