

**INSTITUTIONAL PROPOSAL FOR CANDIDACY REVIEW
SUBMITTED TO WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
BY CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY CHANNEL ISLANDS**

February 18, 2002

Statement of Institutional Context

Thirty years ago regional leaders began to seek the establishment of a public university to meet the educational and cultural needs of the region's residents. In 1997, Senate Bill 623 authorized transfer of the site of the former Camarillo State Hospital and Developmental Center to the California State University (CSU) system to develop a state university for Ventura County and Southern Santa Barbara County. The site was officially conveyed by the State of California to the CSU Trustees in 1998, and the new institution was designated California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI). After 25 years in the City of Ventura, in the fall of 1999, the CSU Northridge Off-Campus Center relocated to the new site with approximately 1,800 students.

The new University is anchored in the characteristics and needs of the region. Its distinction will derive largely from its location in a region with a strong agricultural tradition, a culturally diverse community, a continuing military presence, widespread grass roots interest in the arts, and thriving industries in such burgeoning fields as genetic engineering and information/communication systems. The academic programs will be responsive to statewide and local needs, dictated by the characteristics, goals, and circumstances of the region's prospective students. We will identify program niches consistent with the characteristics and needs of the region and the overall University direction.

CSU Channel Islands opens to degree-seeking junior transfers in the fall of 2002, and to freshmen in the fall of 2003. The first Channel Islands degree programs include biology, business, computer science, English, environmental science and resource management, fine arts, liberal studies, and mathematics; we will also offer a post baccalaureate multiple subject teaching-credential. Degree programs offered by the CSU Northridge Off-Campus Center will continue in 2002 and gradually phase out over a period of not more than five years.

Already, there are strong forces bearing on the institution to be all things to all people. Especially in the beginning, we will limit the initiatives undertaken to ensure quality, and consistency with mission, while advancing the campus in the intended directions.

Although Channel Islands expects to incorporate the major strengths of regional universities and those of the CSU in particular, this new university aspires to develop its own unique identity and culture. It seeks to do so by honoring key elements of its mission, including (1) learning within and across disciplines through integrative approaches, (2) emphasizing experiential and service learning, (3) inculcating an

appreciation of different cultures, (4) creating learning communities, (5) developing community-university partnerships, and (6) supporting lifelong learning. The University will use technology to support and advance all elements of its mission.

Identifying learning outcomes, and regular systematic assessment of the extent to which students are mastering those outcomes are central organizing principles that permeate the university, all of its programs, and services. We will establish goals, identify outcomes, develop appropriate measures to assess the achievement of the goals and outcomes, and describe how assessment and evaluation are used to (a) inform strategic planning, (b) set priorities, (c) guide budgeting, and (d) improve the University's programs, services, and administrative functions.

Assessment is an integral part of the life of the institution, included from the beginning as a process, rather than an event. It is woven into the values and attitudes that relate the mission of the institution to its programs of study. Every university program, student service, and administrative unit is establishing goals, identifying outcomes, and developing appropriate measures to assess the achievement of goals and outcomes. Furthermore, each will be required to show how assessment and evaluations are used to (a) inform strategic planning, (b) set priorities, (c) guide budgeting, (d) and improve the University's programs, services and administrative functions. A set of university-wide expectations will be derived from these various program and departmental activities and processes, policies and practices adopted to permit the similar level of accountability university wide. We are in the process of specifying the learning outcomes for the first courses taught in fall 2002 – and other courses as they are brought on-line - then work to identify the characteristics expected of the graduates of each academic program. In recognition of the student attendance patterns, formative evaluation will provide periodic authentic indications of intellectual development as students proceed at the pace that fits their individual circumstances. Careful, thorough consideration of the development goals for each level, and the appropriate means of assessment are scheduled as ongoing mechanisms to monitor student learning. These assessment processes will be designed to ensure consistency and excellence.

One of the greatest challenges facing this developing University is providing all of the necessary processes and administrative structures to support students and faculty. Many CSUCI students have obligations that will interrupt their pursuit of educational goals. The University is working to orient, organize, and structure flexible programs and services to provide for the needs of students whose family and employment demands require periodic movement in and out of the University.

The University acknowledges that attracting and retaining students from the region will pose a special challenge. Students from the area have had low college participation rates, and those who have entered higher education have tended to gravitate to community colleges because there has been no California State University in the region. The University recognizes the need to make extraordinary efforts to establish and maintain active relations with high schools throughout the area, and to convey information to prospective students and their families. Intensive programs will encourage middle and

high school students to enroll in college preparatory courses, identify opportunities for a university education, and inform prospective students of the availability of financial aid. Campus faculty and staff will engage pre-school through community college educators throughout the region to ensure sound preparation for university studies. University faculty members are working closely with area community colleges as academic programs are developed to ensure effective course articulation, and smooth transfer to the CSU Channel Islands without loss of credit.

Channel Islands graduates will be comfortable working in teams, well versed in their chosen disciplines, yet grounded on a sound foundation of liberal arts education. They will be able to articulate and demonstrate the values of their education, and exhibit confidence in applying their learning in practical situations. They will have a well-developed appreciation of the environment and their place in it, and recognize the importance of lifelong service to their communities. Our graduates will be technologically literate, have deep respect for multicultural diversity, and be capable of functioning effectively in an international society and economy. As a public university, we will educate citizens for the commonweal who know how to participate in and contribute to a flourishing democratic society. We hope our graduates will have a commitment to something larger than themselves, developed through such activities as service learning, experiential learning, and participation in community activities.

Description of the Expected Outcomes of the Accreditation Process

It is fortunate that the initial accreditation process parallels the institution's planning and development process. CSU Channel Islands will open to transfer students in fall 2002, freshmen in 2003, and graduate its first students in 2004. WASC and its representatives are valuable colleagues working as partners with the University community as it conceives and plans key elements of the institution, and steps are initiated to bring them to fruition. The University looks forward to benefiting and learning from an informed "critical friend" who is sufficiently removed from the day-to-day development and operation of the campus to provide objective feedback and constructive recommendations.

California State University Channel Islands is a work-in-progress. The priorities at this time are ensuring that necessary processes and administrative structures are in place, and that the initial programs are ready to serve students. The external, unbiased assistance of WASC will be very helpful as the University addresses the following questions:

1. Are the goals of the institution and its major components appropriate and clear?
2. Are the academic programs, administrative services, and student services sufficiently responsive to the needs of the region's students?
3. Are the initial programs sufficiently aligned with the needs and characteristics and potential of the region?
4. To what degree are assessment and evaluation integral parts of each unit of the institution?
5. To what extent is learning outcomes assessment a central tenet of the University?

6. How effectively is the institution addressing the low college participation rates characteristic of the region's students?
7. To what degree are assessment and evaluation results used to inform strategic planning, set priorities, guide budgeting, and improve programs and services?

The answers to these questions and the recommendations for improving these functions will constitute the specific outcomes Channel Islands seek to achieve through the accreditation review process.

Description of How Constituencies Were Involved

A broad cross section of the University community has been included in the development and approval of this Proposal. An important element of the process was a three-day off-campus retreat held as the proposal was drafted. All campus executive officers, members of the faculty, and administrative department heads participated in the retreat. Plenary sessions were held to identify common themes, strategies, tactics, culture and values, strengths and weaknesses, and opportunities and threats. The participants also divided into subgroups to address such subjects as:

- a. Aside from the standard array of institutional data that are included in the common data set, what indicators should CSUCI develop to provide evidence of institutional performance (internal and external)? Educational effectiveness (internal and external)? How might these data be used to support institutional planning and decision-making (mechanisms, policies, processes, etc.)?
- b. Remembering that WASC expects that all CSUCI programs be mission driven, how might we identify the institutional objectives? What criteria might be used for defining those objectives? What mechanisms/policies/processes might be used to evaluate the objectives?
- c. What mechanisms/policies/practices might we develop to provide evidence of our capacity to conduct self-review initially? To institutionalize our ability/capacity to inform us regularly and systematically about the quality of our programs? To provide for institutional consideration of findings and recommendations and relate them to planning and budgeting activities?
- d. What mechanisms/policies/processes might be used to help academic programs develop a variety of ways to assess student learning? To demonstrate awareness of students' different ways of learning and knowing? To demonstrate an ongoing commitment to a deeper understanding of student learning? To provide evidence that there is regular and systematic assessment within those programs that is linked to student learning information derived from these mechanisms/policies/practices?
- e. What mechanisms/policies/practices might CSUCI use to reflect systematically on instructional practices as they relate to student learning? How will the information derived provide evidence of institutional and individual commitment to improved teaching and learning? What mechanisms/policies/processes will CSUCI provide as evidence that there is ongoing institutional support for improved learning? In what ways can

CSUCI align support and other systems to support the faculty in the ongoing support of teaching and learning?

This inclusive process continued throughout the design of the proposal, determination of the format of the review, the selection of the special themes, and the key indicators to be developed as evidence. This collegial process will continue during the accreditation review process.

Description of How the Preparatory and Educational Effectiveness Reviews Will Be Staged

We plan to complete the Institutional Presentation for the Preparatory Review by October 2002, in preparation for a February 2003 site visit. The Educational Effectiveness Report will be completed by July 2003 in anticipation of an October 2003 site visit. Although this is an accelerated timeline we believe this schedule is feasible and we are preparing to meet these deadlines.

The timeline and activities of the accreditation review process will be staged to advance and reinforce the strategic planning process as well as the overall institutional development process that is underway.

Preparatory Review

The University has concluded that using a combination of the strategic planning and special themes models to organize the Preparatory Review Report will enable the campus to realize maximum benefit from the WASC partnership during the early stages of campus planning and development. Since the University is still under development, emphasis will be on providing evidence of campus progress toward such essential elements as the definition of institutional purposes and educational objectives, agreement on key performance indicators, identification of student learning outcomes, methods of assessing the attainment of learning outcomes, and the effective use of assessment information to effect improvement. In addition to documents verifying progress toward achieving compliance with Commission Standards, we will compile meeting summaries and minutes, draft papers and policies, products of workshops and retreats, and other documents that foster understanding of how decisions are made and the rationale for them. The goal is to explain clearly how the University is arriving at key decisions and what those choices mean in terms of the evolution of the institution.

The University is in the early stages of developing its institutional research office and Institutional Portfolio. We are assigning high priority to this function in recognition that assessment is a central tenet of the University. In addition to the standard array of institutional data included in the common data set, we are identifying and clearly defining key performance indicators as a foundation for the systematic collection of pertinent information. Following are examples of the key indicators that will constitute the Institutional Portfolio:

Key Indicators

1. Proportion of the region's recent high school graduates enrolling at CSUCI
2. Proportion of the region's community college students enrolling at CSUCI
3. Number of new students returning for subsequent year
4. Information from regular surveys that indicates level of student satisfaction with academic programs, administrative services, and student academic support services, especially quality and whether they are sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of the region's students
5. Reports from community leaders, local business owners, and regional governmental representatives about the extent to which the campus is responding to regional educational needs
6. Information from regular surveys of employers, graduate and professional schools, and CSUCI graduates, including their civic participation
7. Number of programs, services, units, and departments that have established goals and objectives
8. Number of programs, services, units, and departments that have adopted ways to assess the extent to which goals and objectives are being achieved
9. Number of programs, services, units, and departments that have developed methods for using the assessment results to improve
10. Proportion of students who are meeting the learning outcomes in each course and major
11. Number of programs that have developed annual program review processes
12. Number of programs that have adopted annual program review processes
13. Number of programs that have developed methods for using the assessment and evaluation results to improve the programs
14. Number of students who have set up portfolios
15. Results of evaluations of teaching effectiveness
16. Records of student and faculty scholarship
17. Number of students, faculty, and community organizations participating in service learning
18. Media coverage documenting University impact on Ventura and Southern Santa Barbara counties

During the first step of the strategic planning process (the three-day retreat), the university community identified key elements, strategies for development, and core values that helped define its culture. The following seven major elements/characteristics illustrate the thinking and planning to this point:

Common Elements/Characteristics

Learning Centered
 Student focus
 Faculty
 Support Staff
 Interdisciplinary
 Portfolios
 Service Learning

Mentoring
Broad definition of education (beyond classroom)
Life long learning

Mission Driven
Accessible
Inclusiveness
Service commitment
User friendly
Experiential learning
Effective structures

Coordinated Planning
Stakeholder involvement
No turf

Assessment – Culture of Evidence
Multiple sources
Relevant data
Self review

Continuous Improvement

Clearly Articulated Outcomes/Expectations
Conscious strategy for student success
Incentive/reward system that promotes CSUCI values

Technical Currency

Three Special Emphases

From these seven major elements, the following three special emphases have been selected for particular attention as the Preparatory Review and Educational Effectiveness Reports are prepared:

- Institutional educational objectives and learning outcomes for academic programs
- Alignment of curricula and pedagogy with learning outcomes
- Institutional methods of assessing student learning

Educational Effectiveness Review

The University has decided to use a combination of the strategic planning and special themes models for the Educational Effectiveness Review Report.

The University proposes to use three special emphases to provide a context for the evaluation of Channel Islands as an institution whose central tenet is demonstrated learning. We plan to consider (1) the adequacy of institutional educational objectives and program learning outcomes, (2) the capacity of the curriculum and pedagogy to enable students to attain learning outcomes, and (3) the effectiveness of the methods of assessing and evaluating what students know and are able to do, in order to evaluate the alignment among institutional educational objectives, curriculum, and learning outcomes. Focusing on these central elements of the academic function should enable the institution to derive maximum benefit from the accreditation review process.

We have identified a preliminary list of areas of concern to be addressed as researchable questions. These lists are neither exhaustive nor exclusive. Their purpose is to initiate discussion and dialogue around each emphasis. A subcommittee has been established to address each of the principal areas of investigation. The subcommittees have some latitude within a defined structure of issues that must be addressed.

Adequacy of Institutional Educational Objectives and Program Learning Outcomes

The CSU Channel Islands is a “learning centered university.” Therefore, learning-outcomes, and the extent to which students master them are central functions that unite all members of the Channel Islands community. Thus, in order to assess educational effectiveness, the campus must organize its activities and resources to yield information that permits evaluation of the following questions.

1. *Institutional Educational Objectives* – To what extent are the institutional educational objectives aligned with the University mission? To what degree are program and course outcomes aligned with institutional educational objectives? What further actions would strengthen this alignment?
2. *Program Learning Outcomes* – To what extent do degree program learning outcomes accurately and completely describe what graduates of these programs are expected to know and be able to do? How consistent are course outcomes with program learning outcomes? What additional steps might be taken to increase the number of graduates who achieve the learning outcomes?
3. *General Education Outcomes* – To what degree do general education requirements provide an educational foundation for the degree program outcomes? To what extent are graduates mastering the general education learning outcomes? To what extent do general education outcomes contribute to graduation expectations such as service learning and inclination to pursue lifelong learning? What further actions might achieve greater integration of degree program, general education, and graduation learning outcomes?

4. *Graduation Expectations* – How accurately and completely do graduation expectations describe the qualities the University expects to characterize its graduates? To what extent are these expectations known and embraced throughout the University? What additional activities would increase their acceptance and active support, and embed them in the campus culture?

Capacity of Curriculum and Pedagogy To Enable Students To Attain Learning Outcomes

This component of the self-study examines the extent to which the curriculum and pedagogy enable students to attain the learning outcomes and reach their educational goals.

1. *Alignment of Curriculum and Pedagogy with Learning Outcomes* – To what extent are the curriculum and pedagogy consistent with and supportive of the learning outcomes? How effective are the processes for keeping these elements aligned? What might be done to improve this alignment?
2. *Enabling All Students to Reach Their Goals* – To what degree are the teaching and learning processes responsive to the needs, characteristics, and circumstances of individual students? To what extent are the curricula and instructional methods recognizing that there are multiple ways of knowing and learning? How might Channel Islands be more responsive to particular segments of the student population, e.g., more mature students with substantial personal obligations?
3. *Learning Support* – To what extent are student services assisting students to achieve the learning outcomes? How effectively are these services meeting the needs of students proceeding at a pace that fits their personal circumstances? What additional actions might be taken to help students reach their educational goals?

Institutional Methods of Assessing and Evaluating Student Learning

This portion of the self-study focuses on the effectiveness of the assessment measures, Assessment and evaluation processes, and the University's effectiveness in using this information to inform decision making, guide budget directions, and improve programs and services.

1. *Assessment and Evaluation Process* – To what extent are assessment and evaluation integral parts of the institution? How effective is the infrastructure for collecting data and translating it into useful information? How effective are the methods for measuring student development as they progress through the university? What more might be done to weave assessment into the values, attitudes, and life of the University?
2. *Adequacy of Assessment Measures* – To what extent are the assessments direct measures of student learning? How effectively is the assessment and evaluation process measuring the extent to which students are attaining the learning outcomes? To what degree are the measures accommodating

multiple ways of knowing and doing? How might the assessment and evaluation process be strengthened?

3. *Use of Assessment and Evaluation Results* – To what extent are assessment results used to (a) inform strategic planning, (b) set priorities, (c) guide budgeting, and (d) improve programs and services? To what degree has the use of assessment and evaluation information to improve programs become part of the University culture? What further actions might embed this process in the fabric of the institution?

The University community, including all members of the faculty, will be deeply engaged in these issues throughout the accreditation review process.

Key Evidentiary Indicators

Foremost among the evidentiary indicators are the University mission and the institutional educational objectives. The researchable questions are derived from the three emphases selected for the WASC review. Other key evidentiary indicators will include the following:

- The common data set
- Data sets generated in response to questions identified in this proposal
- Course descriptions from university catalog
- Course syllabi
- Course and program learning outcomes
- General education learning outcomes
- Graduation requirements
- Assessment results
- Formative evaluation reports

Careful records will be kept of all deliberations, position papers, and draft policies to document the evolution of the issues listed above and the reasons for decisions that were made.

A comprehensive integrative essay will conclude the Educational Effectiveness Report.

Basic Descriptive Data

Please see attached Basic Descriptive Data Profile.

Off-site Programs

None

Institutional Stipulation Statement

- a. CSU Channel Islands is using the review process to demonstrate its fulfillment of the two Core Commitments, it will engage in the process with seriousness, and data presented will be accurate and will fairly present the situation.
- b. CSU Channel Islands has published, and made publicly available policies in force as identified by the Commission for this purpose in Appendix 1 of the WASC Handbook. Such policies will be available on request through the period of accreditation.
- c. CSU Channel Islands will abide by the procedures adopted by the Commission to meet United States Department of Education procedural requirements (USDE) as outlined in Section VI of the WASC Handbook.
- d. CSU Channel Islands will submit all regularly required data, and any data specifically requested by the Commission during the period of Candidacy and Accreditation.

Richard R. Rush
President

1-28-02

Basic Descriptive Data Profile Attachments

- Chart A-1: Headcount Enrollment Projection by Level (Fall Term)
- Chart A-2: Headcount Enrollment Projection by Status and Location (Fall Term)
- Chart A-3: Degrees and Certificates Granted by Level (Academic Year) -
- Not applicable
- Chart A-4: Faculty by Employment Status
- A-5.6: Financial Ratios Chart
- Mission Statement
- Organizational Chart
- List of Academic Programs Currently Offered
- Financial Audits for the Last Two Years
- Catalog