

INTRODUCTION

This *Systemwide Policy and Data Portfolio* is offered on behalf of all ten UC campuses as documentation of the University of California's core commitments to institutional capacity and educational effectiveness. The ten campuses of the University, while distinct and separate institutions, share a common set of policies and procedures with respect to certain important institutional goals, including governance of the University as whole, and the basic policies covering academic life, research, employment, and financial issues. In addition, the systemwide office - the UC Office of the President - hosts and/or coordinates a number of multi-campus research, educational, and outreach programs. This document provides an opportunity to view the University as a whole and so provides a context within which each individual campus may be viewed.

The creation of this document is a result of a series of conversations, begun in 1994-95, between the University of California and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). This was part of the broader dialogue taking place throughout the region that culminated in the creation of the revised *Handbook of Accreditation* in 2001. The purpose of the UC/WASC meetings was to develop a new model for accreditation for research universities, one that would compliment the campuses' own strategic planning efforts, and would be less costly and burdensome than the traditional approach. For the research universities, the intent was to design models would open up new options for meeting the two fundamental objectives of accreditation -- public accountability and self-improvement. It was suggested that:

- # For **public accountability/institutional effectiveness**, campuses could make use of data that are regularly collected to assess their standing and progress with respect to essential dimensions of accountability. These data could be presented in easily available forms, perhaps on the Internet.

- # For **self-improvement/educational effectiveness** campuses would be able to focus on "issues of moment" i.e. issues of immediate concern that might benefit from review by peers from outside the institution and were strategically linked to the campuses own concerns and planning processes.

It was further suggested that WASC might stipulate to the fact that UC meets certain of the institutional effectiveness standards as long as a mechanism was provided that would permit accreditors to verify the information, as needed. For the University of California, it quickly became apparent that many of the topics that must be addressed were the same for all campuses.

So this *Systemwide Policy and Data Portfolio* was created, in order to relieve each individual campus of the burden of providing this material, allowing time and resources to be used for more pressing campus-based issues.

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