UC SANTA BARBARA

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Campus Accreditation Renewed for a Full 10 Years

Following a comprehensive three-stage assessment process, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) has renewed UC Santa Barbara's academic accreditation for a full 10 years.

WASC accreditation is essential for students to have access to federal funding for education loans, grants and scholarships.

"But it has far bigger implications than that," said Mary Nisbet, dean of undergraduate education at UCSB and the campus's accreditation liaison officer (ALO). "It's something a university of our stature and standing should have, and it's appropriate that it be for 10 years."

According to Nisbet, the 10-year accreditation span and a call to report back to WASC in five years means UCSB got the best rating possible. "This rating is a huge feather in our cap," she said. "It's a vote of confidence from WASC."

WASC is an independent nonprofit membership organization that for more than 50 years has promoted the development of higher education in the Western region. Recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, WASC is responsible through peer review for ensuring and improving the quality and effectiveness of more than 170 colleges and universities in California, Hawaii, Guam, the Pacific Basin and several international locations that offer Bachelor degrees and above.

The reaffirmation of accreditation process is an arduous one that involves campus visits by the WASC commission and detailed reports on all aspects of undergraduate and graduate education. Nisbet credits UCSB's overwhelming success to the core team, which included, in addition to herself, Margaret Weeks, director of academic program review in the Office of Budget & Planning and associate accreditation liaison officer; Linda Adler-Kassner, professor of writing studies and director of UCSB's Writing Program; Kelly Bedard, professor of economics; and Deborah Karoff, executive director of the Academic Senate.

"The exciting 10-year reaffirmation of our accreditation is a testament to our campus's sincere commitment to student learning and, as the visiting team noted, 'the collaborative culture that pervades the UC Santa Barbara campus,' " said UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang.

Among other accomplishments, the WASC peer review team, led by David Skorton, president of Cornell University, noted the completion of learning outcomes for all undergraduate and graduate degree programs at UCSB as well as the quality of the general education program. The report also cited the campus's commitment to undergraduate learning, as demonstrated by experiences professors teaching undergraduate courses and by academic and co-curricular programs supporting student learning.

"The deep engagement of our faculty was recognized by both the visiting team and the WASC Commission members," Yang said.

The campus also received high marks for its service to low-income, first-generation and Hispanic students, and the remarkable success of these students as illustrated by retention and graduation rates.

The senior commission was impressed as well by UCSB's success in graduate education and the effectiveness of the campus's program review process.

The visiting team's report can be viewed here: https://accreditation.ucsb.edu/

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community

of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.