Appendix A

CSUN’s 2009 Response to Recommendations from the WASC Visiting Team of May 2000

The final recommendation of the 2000 Reaccreditation Visiting Team was, “...[I]t is time to look forward to what the CSUN of the 21st Century will be (p. 58).” As the visitors noted, “The institution is now at a crossroads, with new strategic plans, new resources, new energy and new campus leadership (p. 57).” The accuracy of this assessment can be seen in our positive response and forward movement on virtually all of the recommendations made in that 2000 report.

While the 2000 Reaccreditation Visiting Team made specific recommendations for each of the three themes individually, this response focuses on the eight overall recommendations found at the end of the reaccreditation visit report on pages 55-58. Where appropriate, responses to specific theme-based recommendations are included.

Identify criteria by which to determine progress toward University goals: A reorganized Office of Institutional Research with an expanded staff of data analysts under the leadership of a new director means that CSUN can and does track students’ progress toward degree in a variety of ways and for a variety of populations across their academic careers. Particular attention and analysis are paid to those special programs developed to support retention at the freshman level—e.g. developmental writing and mathematics, Freshman Orientation, the Freshman Seminar, Freshman Common Reading and Freshman Convocation as well as the impact of Supplemental Instruction and subject area tutoring on courses with traditionally high rates of D’s, F’s and U’s. Decisions about “where to make interventions and financial investments to increase progress to degree (p. 56)” now are based on evidence.

Coordination of academic advisement across colleges and between faculty and professional staff advisors has been a focus of activity for the last three years in order to eliminate the dissemination of conflicting information and misinformation to students. This coordination is spearheaded by a joint committee of Academic and Student Affairs personnel and includes consultation on policy and procedural changes, on-going and special meetings with advisors, increased involvement of associate deans in the process and vastly improved communications.

Institute a Moratorium on New Initiatives: While we can’t say that we have stopped developing and funding new initiatives, we can say that new programs are developed and implemented based on their centrality to identified University priorities. We believe the proliferation of discrete initiatives that the visiting team found a decade ago no longer is an issue. Presidential priorities, intra- and interdivisional planning and budgeting are closely connected in a transparent process that involves consultation among administration, staff and faculty. Just one example of such an initiative is Freshman Convocation, now in its third year. Representatives from across the University, including students, are involved in the planning and execution under the aegis of Student Affairs. For two of the three years, the keynote speaker has been the author of the book selected for the Freshman Common Reading Program, used in
numerous 100-level courses. Faculty who wish to use the book in their courses have access to a website with numerous ideas of how to do so; faculty come to Convocation and are invited to bring their students. Any staffer or administrator can get a free copy of the book provided they promise to engage one freshman in conversation about it.

**Create a More Coherent General Education Program:** Cal State Northridge has a new General Education program, developed between 2003 and 2005 and in effect since Fall 2006. Not only did the reform reduce GE requirements from 58 to 48 units, but in the redesign the GE Task Force created new and focused learning objectives for each GE section. Recertification of GE courses began in 2007, in a process that requires departments to describe how the course meets the learning objectives of the GE section. The furloughing of faculty and staff has put this process on hold for 2009-2011. However the next step, currently under consideration by a new GE Task Force and supported by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, is to create a GE Council as a standing committee of the Senate and to appoint a GE Director. This Council would design and implement GE program review, move toward assessment of GE as part of the recertification process, oversee the recertification of all GE courses and approve new GE curriculum. We believe that while we continue to offer students a “menu-driven” GE package, we also employ “gradual, firm and focused efforts (p. 56)” to address how courses and sections relate to each other, to a bachelor’s degree and to the major. These efforts make the value of General Education more evident to both students and faculty.

**Develop an Institutional Technology Plan:** In the nine years since the 2000 recommendations were made, CSUN has made enormous improvements in Institutional Technology in all areas of stated concern. At the end of this summary of responses, you will find details relevant to the bulleted technology points made on pages 41-44 of the 2000 report. Those details will show how change was made to:

- stabilize leadership;
- redesign administrative and governance structures, including processes for establishing strategic and budgetary goals and planning priorities linked to the presidential priorities;
- develop new systems for student access including a new (2003) and enhanced (2007) student portal with many web-based support services, academic and business-oriented;
- open dozens of new smart classrooms; enhance wireless connectivity throughout the campus by replacing existing older equipment and expanding coverage with additional access points to increase wireless access both indoors and outside;
- support and expand faculty use of technology to enhance their courses, in their teaching, in interacting with students and in doing effective research;
- evaluate and adopt user-friendly and consistent technology practices that integrate with each other and avoid duplication of effort in supporting multiple platforms;
- ensure greater alignment among faculty, student and staff computing resources, including a new Faculty Technology Center in addition to the IT Help Center.
Technology Staffing Requirements: Since the WASC recommendation that CSUN assess University staffing requirements and the need for development in the area of technology, the University has increased technology support and training in a number of ways that include:

- establishing an Information Technology Help Center--serving faculty, staff and students--that can be contacted via phone, in person, via email and online;
- hiring a Senior Director of Academic Technology to develop the services and technology framework necessary to support faculty as they incorporate technology into their teaching and develop online/hybrid courses;
- developing an integrated training calendar and offering hands-on training courses that cover topics such as using administrative applications, the learning management system, basic office productivity applications and accessibility;
- developing online training guides and tutorials available to users via the web.

Develop Plans and Mechanisms for Coordinating Assessment, including Roles and Responsibilities: We are so much better, more coordinated and more coherent in our assessment activities than we were a decade ago that to look back at what we used to do is to smile at our first steps. The 2000 accreditation visitors rightly noted that they saw—and the campus community felt—a need for more coordination and coherence among assessment efforts. Department/program-based assessment is truly on-going now, led by the director of Academic Assessment, a faculty member on full reassigned time. She meets regularly with department-based assessment liaisons, working with them to develop and disseminate a toolbox of appropriate methods for assessment. For the past five years, each department has assessed one Student Learning Outcome in their program(s) and has made change where the need for change is uncovered. This on-going assessment is an integral and critical part of Program Review, which occurs every five years and which was revised two years ago to become increasingly assessment-based. (Program Review also is part of the Office of Academic Assessment.)

In addition to the value for Program Review and curricular change, results of SLO assessment are compiled at the college and University levels. Two years ago, several of the eight academic colleges began to look at college-based assessment as well. Additionally, in the last two years, the need to develop a program to assess our overarching Fundamental Learning Competencies has become a campus focus.

As was noted in 2000, there was little linkage/connection between assessment of activities in and outside of the classroom (curricular and co-curricular). The connection between the two areas is evident in how they relate to the overarching themes and to each other, since both contribute to the success of our students. Recently, the vice president of Student Affairs and the Director of Academic Assessment presented together at an assessment conference, just one example of links being created and work honored.

Several other 2000 recommendations about assessment have been addressed:
• The Director of Institutional Research and the Director of Academic Assessment have clearly defined and often discrete roles and responsibilities. More importantly, they work together in a number of arenas in support of assessment. They meet together regularly.

• Although alumni surveys are no longer part of the Program Review process, we instituted a survey of graduating seniors in Spring 2009 that will provide information to departments beginning their self studies. The survey is two-pronged: The first part asks students to specify their immediate post-graduation plans for employment and graduate study while the second part asks questions about the major they just completed (e.g., different aspects of major, degree to which work in major enhanced key skills, reasons for selecting major). We plan to cumulate the data for several years and then provide summaries of respondents in particular majors to departments about to start Program Review.

**Develop a Comprehensive Communications Plan:** We have been most successful in this arena in our communication with students, from the time they apply to attend Cal State Northridge until they graduate. Communications rest primarily in the Office of Student Marketing & Communications (SMC), a function of Student Affairs. Regular meetings involve staff and administrators from SMC, Admissions and Records and Undergraduate Studies. Problems are identified and addressed rapidly. Communication is variously through snailmail, email and the student portal. It is organized, chronologic and population-targeted.

As to communications with the other two important parts of the CSUN community (faculty and staff), we believe most would say that they are made aware of activities, policy changes and the like in a timely manner. Even more importantly, many would indicate they are routinely consulted on these changes in advance of their implementation.

Communications with the University community were ramped up immeasurably beginning in July 2009 as the state and CSU budget crises demanded the rapid dissemination of information and forums for discussion. Cal State Northridge has been in crisis communications mode and is handling it well.

**Look Forward:** Which brings us to the final recommendation, “The team recommends that the University begin to look forward to the future (p. 57).” As you have seen in the three essays that constitute the essence of this CPR, we continue to invest maximum time and effort into ensuring the education of our students—currently and into the future. The 1994 Northridge earthquake was so long ago that more than 60 percent of our current faculty, 75 percent of our current staff and 100 percent (or nearly so) of our students were not here then. It’s ancient history. However, the current financial disaster is teaching us new lessons about designing for the future.
Utilizing Technology to Enhance Learning:
Detailed response to technology recommendations on pgs. 41-44
of the 2000 reaccreditation report

The preceding summary incorporates responses to the technology recommendations included in the summary of recommendations at the end of the 2000 WASC site visit report. Additionally, here is a more detailed response to those technology recommendations made in connection with discussion of Theme 3.

Recommendations with Bullets

It is therefore imperative that the University establish its strategic priorities to insure that limited resources are managed wisely to support those priorities that further student achievement.

The team noted the campus has experienced major systems and organizational changes while implementing many of its new technological advances. It is recommended that extensive consideration be given prior to implementing additional technological systems to first understand the impact of those new systems on interrelated organizational variables such as structure, people and tasks.

The team suggests the establishment of a technology plan. There are a number of issues that the plan could cover that would assist the campus in achieving its goal of becoming a learning-centered university. These could include:

1) Establishing technology priorities for the entire campus.

In 2006, an IT governance structure was established to advise the President and to ensure collaboration with the Vice President of Information Technology. Governance committees exist for each major area of technology (academic, administrative, infrastructure/services, and web) with an Executive Technology Steering Committee to provide overall guidance and direction to the other committees and link the IT governance to the President’s cabinet. The governance committees influence CSUN’s information technology strategy and they advise on priorities for technology initiatives.

In 2006, the Information Technology planning process began identifying technology priorities through the establishment of Information Technology goals, explicitly linking the IT goals to the five campus planning priorities. (Both the planning priorities and the division’s current strategic plan are available in the IT section of the CSUN website.)

2) Financial planning for ITR initiatives so that there is a clear, direct tie between the planning process of the university and the priorities set in the technology planning process.

In response to the 2000 WASC recommendations, the University established a direct link between the annual budget process and funding for campus information technology priorities. This became known as the University Technology Budget Initiatives process.
Since 2006, as part of the current annual campus budget planning cycle, the Information Technology division submits IT plans with specific funding requests for technology projects, equipment, and software based on collaboration and discussion with colleges, IT technical staff, and faculty governance.

Projects such as the server refresh project, the implementation of Exchange for staff and administrator email, and web infrastructure improvements, have resulted in increased infrastructure reliability and stability. Projects such as the Unified Technical Support system support consistent and user friendly technology practices. IT has also increased its focus on creating academic excellence by assisting in the selection of a new Learning Management System and the implementation of the faculty associate program to support faculty and the practical applications of technology in teaching.

Note: Information Technology Resources (abbreviated to ITR) was renamed to Information Technology (abbreviated to IT) in May 2007.

3) Resolution of the issues surrounding student access. The campus needs to decide how to provide remote access to students, faculty and staff.

During the last ten years the University has implemented learning management systems including WebCT and Blackboard to enhance our ability to deliver our courses remotely. We are presently converting our delivery architecture from WebCT and Blackboard to Moodle. This will offer a single user-friendly online learning environment that will be integrated with other applications and services such as Elluminate, a tool for web-based online conferencing and instruction. Currently, we have over 1,000 courses on employing these technologies, about 200 of which are offered completely online.

A web-based portal for student services was implemented in 2003 and enhanced in 2007. It continues to be enhanced. Many web-based administrative student support services are offered online through the PeopleSoft student administration system for enrollment, viewing of grades, paying of bills, and other services. Other web services include online parking permits, online technical support, and online degree progress reports, used with student advising.

CSUN has placed considerable focus to ensure that the campus is accessible to students through the CSU ATI initiative.

4) A clear definition of the responsibilities for student, faculty and staff computing needs.

The Information Technology website outlines information technology services and support for students, faculty and staff with pages for each constituent group as well as general information.

The Information Technology division supports enterprise services for the University, including network, phones, email, data center, information security, help services and
training courses. Campus divisions and departments have information technology technical staff to support local servers and applications, student computer labs, and support for faculty/staff in their unit.

The IT division staff and the technical staff in the colleges and other divisions regularly meet through information meetings and project work as well as through the IT Governance meeting structure. The IT governance (implemented in 2006), includes meetings with cross-divisional representation focused on the areas of technical infrastructure and services, academic technology, administrative technology, and web communications.

5) **A greater alignment between faculty and student computing resources.**

California State University, Northridge has seen a steady increase in the use of computer technology and the internet in the furtherance of its teaching and learning mission. One clear sign of this growth is in the use of our learning management system. The Fall to Fall percentage of students using the LMS in at least one course grew from 68.5% in Fall 2007 to 78.4% in Fall 2008. The percentage of courses employing the LMS grew from 17.2% in AY 2007-08 to 22.4% in AY 2008-09. The number of faculty using the LMS in at least one of their classes grew from 35.2% in AY 2007-08 to 41.7% in AY 2008-09.

In 2008, the Faculty Technology Center was established to provide a wide range of applications and services to support the teaching and learning mission in the classroom and online. Some of the services include assisting faculty in redesigning courses for online and hybrid learning, working with faculty and staff to create accessible websites and learning materials, and designing and developing engaging physical and virtual learning environments, using the learning management system, web conferencing, video production, video streaming, and smart classrooms.

6) **A baseline standard for workstations that can be defined and clearly articulated to the campus community.**

During the 2008-2009 academic year, the Desktop Administration and Support Committee (DASC), group of technical representatives from each division and college have developed new desktop and laptop computer vendor standards.

7) **The articulation of and a commitment to a specified refresh cycle for workstations and servers.**

Most campus divisions and departments refresh faculty, staff and lab computers on a three to five year refresh cycle. This has been largely funded from one-time discretionary funds that remain at the end of the fiscal year.
Continuation and possibly expansion of the one-stop help desk, serving the needs of faculty, students and staff.

The Information Technology Help Center provides technology support for students, faculty, and staff. Support is available by phone, in person, via email or using the online help system. Faculty also have access to the Faculty Technology Center, where faculty and staff are available to help with WebCT and Moodle learning management systems and other instructional technology questions.

Increased coordination and communications of the various technology efforts between the colleges and ITR.

The IT governance structure, described above, was established to advise the President and to ensure collaboration with the Vice President of Information Technology. Cross-division representation on these governance committees has increased consultation and communications between the colleges and the IT division.

In January 2008, Desktop Administration and Support Committee, a sub-committee of the Technology and Infrastructure Services Committee, was established to coordinate best practices for providing consistent, efficient, secure and cost-effective support for the desktop computer environment. The committee has representation from each campus division and college.

Further pursuit of new partnerships with the private sector in an attempt to leverage campus resources.

Individual colleges/departments work on making these connections.

An increase in “smart classrooms.”

Since 2000 there has been a significant increase in the number and sophistication of the “smart classrooms” at CSUN. Approximately 90% of our general use classrooms are “smart,” that is they are equipped with minimally a data projector, screen, DVD/VCR, internet connection, laptop hook-up and connection to the university video network.

Many of these classrooms have additional technology including an installed computer, monitor, document camera, smart board, motorized screen, and integrated control system.

An increase in “wireless labs.”

“Wireless labs” refers to moveable carts with portable computers that have wireless access to the internal network. The carts can be moved to classrooms or other work areas as needed. They are currently in use in several colleges, including Education, Health and Human Development, Arts, Media, and Communications, and Social and Behavioral Sciences.

The strategic placement of student technology areas such as “Cyber Cafes.”
While cyber cafés were popular for a while, we find that more students have their own wireless devices and request wireless access on the campus. The Cal State Northridge campus implemented wireless on campus (both inside buildings and in some outside/café areas) beginning in December 2001. During the fiscal year 2008-2009, the student campus quality fee has funded additional outside wireless locations including enhancements in several outside café locations.

14) The refinement of Project Looking Glass and DARS to enable Admissions and Records to provide on-line grad checks for both students and faculty advisors.

Project Looking Glass was the original name of the campus web portal and provided students with the ability to search the current Schedule of Classes to assist them in schedule planning, since the number of available seats remaining in each class was updated every two hours. Other capabilities available to students included the ability to check the address we had on file for them (view only, no updating allowed), view the campus map, request an unofficial transcript and view the status of their Financial Aid award.

Project Looking Glass was replaced by a more robust web service portal that offered students a wide range of additional capabilities, including the ability to register for classes, edit and update their demographic information, view their student account balances and make payments and view their degree progress report. This improved web portal was, in turn, replaced by a full-function web portal in 2007 when we migrated to use the PeopleSoft portal functionality. The portal now offers students and faculty the ability to conduct administrative transactions via the web that previously required them to visit the applicable administrative office on campus.

Through the portal, students and faculty advisors can request a detailed up-to-date Degree Audit Report (originally DARS and now DPR for Degree Progress Report) at any time via the web and this report can be both viewed and printed. This capability is available to all undergraduate students. It is also available to departments for graduate students and all Credential students. Student teaching eligibility is also closely tracked using DARS/DPR. In addition, electronic transcripts are automatically processed through the DARS/DPR software and the appropriate transfer course articulation is posted to the student’s academic history in PeopleSoft.

The capabilities of the software have also been greatly expanded to allow students and their academic advisors to view and interact with their degree progress report (the Interactive Audit), in order to provide added emphasis to the degree requirements that still remain unmet. Students and their advisors can also use the Interactive Audit to plan the courses they wish to take in an upcoming semester, since relevant College Catalog and Schedule of Classes information has been integrated with the Interactive Audit. Students, working with their advisors, can prepare a term-by-term plan of all courses they wish to take over their remaining college career and validate that this proposed schedule will satisfy the requirements for their degree.
15) **Integration of the degree audit/degree progress programs currently being used by the campus with the new PeopleSoft product.**

The DARS/DPR software is now integrated with the campus PeopleSoft product. As an example, when students submit requests for their degree progress reports and view the results, they do so from within the PeopleSoft system using web screens that we have incorporated into the PeopleSoft software. This seamless integration is transparent to the student.

As an additional example, incoming transfer course data, which is articulated by DARS/DPR, is automatically updated within the PeopleSoft system so it can be used for prerequisite checking and printed on student transcripts.

Student academic history resides in the PeopleSoft system and is retrieved by the DAR/DPR system whenever a degree progress report is prepared. In addition, selected Catalog and Schedule of Classes data is obtained by DARS/DPR from the PeopleSoft system to assist students in the preparation of their academic plans.

16) **A means by which to showcase the progress made in the technology arena not only to the campus community but also to the higher education community in general.**

President Jolene Koester, has served on the CSU Technology Steering Committee for the past eight years. The President currently chairs the AASCU organization. The theme for the upcoming AASCU annual meeting is “**Leading the University of Tomorrow—Today, New Forces Drive Change in Presidential Leadership**”.

The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Harry Hellenbrand, serves on the following system-wide CSU committees: Learning Management System Futures committee and Academic Technology Advisory Committee. The efforts of the committees are to launch inter campus course projects and benchmarks for Learning Management System. Additionally, the Provost, in collaboration with President, Jolene Koester and Vice President for Student Affairs, Terry Piper, wrote two articles which were published in About Campus,” *Exploring the Actions Behind the Words “Learning-Centered Institution”* in 2005 and “The Challenge of Collaboration: Organizational Structure and Professional Identity “in 2008.

The Vice President for Information Technology/CIO, Hilary Baker, serves on the system-wide CSU Academic Technology Steering Committee, along with several CSU Provosts and other CIOs. The committee provides strategic planning and management for system-wide academic technology programs. Several of the IT division Directors currently serve on other system-wide CSU committees, regularly interfacing with their peers from other CSU institutions. In addition, the CIO and other IT division Directors regularly attend and present at EDUCAUSE, the primary U.S. higher education information technology organization. The VP for IT currently serves on the EDUCAUSE Recognition Committee and the Oracle Education & Research Strategy Council.
Other Issues That Could Be Included in a Plan

1) A faculty development plan that:

   a. Describes the methods by which the campus plans to increase the number of faculty involved in technology-mediated instruction, and
   b. offers incentives for faculty involvement in technology-mediated instruction, and
   c. Delivers faculty training in the various technologies.

Cal State Northridge has supported a number of faculty in the redesign of their courses for online or hybrid delivery. In addition to locally supported redesign projects, some faculty have received support from the CSU System for course redesign. Through these efforts over the past three years we have supported over 35 faculty redesigning over 15 courses. These redesign projects have focused on large multi-section courses impacting thousands of students.

Additional funding opportunities for faculty for research or teaching interest have included the Beck grants and Learning Centered University Grants – recipients for 2005-2007.

Our Faculty Associate program supports four to six faculty through course release time or stipends each semester to partner with Academic Technology staff. One outcome of this program has been our Teaching and Learning Bytes series which showcases how faculty are using technology in their teaching.

In 2006 the CSU initiated the Accessible Technology Initiative with the goal of ensuring our technology and technology-delivered materials are fully accessible. This initiative focuses on making our websites and instructional materials, as well as all electronic technology purchased by the university are accessible. In order to ensure accessibility of websites we have developed accessible templates including faculty homepage and syllabus templates. To support the accessibility of instructional materials we have infused accessibility standards into IT our training.

2) Review of policies on retention, tenure and promotion; faculty workload; requirements for seat time, as opposed to competency-based outcomes assessment; etc. in light of the impact of technology on teaching, learning and curriculum. These policy issues could be referred to the appropriate policy-making bodies for review and consideration.

This is done on an on-going basis through the faculty governance structure of the University.