TO ALL FACULTY:

REMINDER

The Academic Senate is holding an open meeting for all faculty to participate in a discussion of the Cal Poly self study for WASC reaccreditation. The meeting will be held tomorrow, November 9, from 3-5pm in UU220.

The theme of the WASC self-study is Cal Poly as a Center for Learning. It is intended to provide a perspective on the University that speaks to the heart of its mission as a teaching and learning community. It is important to know, and to incorporate in later versions, faculty responses to the opinions, questions, and issues raised by the several reports.

The reports can be viewed prior to the meeting at http://wasc.calpoly.edu/intro.html.

If you have any questions regarding tomorrow's meeting, please contact the Academic Senate office at 756-1258 or mcamuso@calpoly.edu. Thank you.
Dear Colleagues,

The theme of the WASC self-study is "Cal Poly as a Center of Learning." This provides a lens through which we focus on the benefits of continuous learning for all members of the Cal Poly community including students, faculty, staff and management. The study utilizes the intellectual, physical and social environments as a framework for additional questions.

You are invited and encouraged to participate in the campus forums and in creating the final report. Please send your suggestions and responses to the WASC Coordinating Office, cjoubert@calpoly.edu.

The preliminary drafts are available on the web at:

http://wasc.calpoly.edu/reports/

OPEN FORUM with President Baker & Provost Zingg
Wednesday, October 27, 1999
11:00am - Noon
UU 220

Academic Senate Special Session
Tuesday, November 9, 1999
3:00 - 5:00pm
UU 220

All Cal Poly Faculty, Staff and Students are invited to attend!

Thank you for your attention.

Cal Poly's WASC Self-Study Steering Committee

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"Life is an even numbered word problem."
INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW TO DRAFT REPORTS

The purpose of this "Introduction and Overview" is to provide the Cal Poly community with a set of brief summaries of the work of the various subcommittees involved in the self-study and to aid interested readers in navigating among the separate draft reports posted here.

The theme of the WASC self-study for reaccreditation is Cal Poly as a Center of Learning. It is intended to provide a perspective on the University through a focus on several issues that speak to the heart of our mission as a teaching and learning community. It is important that we engage as fully as possible the members of the University to reflect on this study. To that end, the WASC Steering Committee asks for your feedback to this first draft. We need to know, and to incorporate in later versions, your responses to the opinions, questions, and issues raised by the several reports.

To that end all members of the campus community are invited to participate in a forum to be held from 11am-12pm., Wednesday, October 27, 1999, in UU 220, and to attend an open discussion at a Faculty Senate meeting, 3-5 pm., Tuesday, November 9, in UU 220. We also encourage your specific responses by email to the Steering Committee, WASC Coordinating Office.

Please read the attached reports attentively, keeping in mind that some members of the WASC Visiting Team will be coming to our campus for the first time in early November. In other words, we need your responses as soon as possible.

Background to the Innovative Component of
What We've Learned So Far

We learned that doing research on yourself is difficult and messy, that there are numerous perspectives on singular issues, and that sincere efforts to cope with an increasing emphasis on the priority of, as well as the simple definition of, assessment are problematic. A bitter contract dispute for the faculty unit and a multi-year curriculum revision served as a backdrop for the work and certainly influenced some of the perspectives explored in the reports. We found that much of what we thought we knew already was verified, but that some of what we thought we knew was not supported. Perhaps, most clearly of all, we found that the subject does not stand still. That, perhaps, argues most strongly for the perception that the self-study is a constant work-in-progress. Even in its finished form it will be essentially a starting point for a long-term discussion and not just a one-time study.

Summary of Subcommittee Findings and Brief Discussion:

Main results are discussed in the eight reports from our subcommittees, but a few of the salient points are these:

Intellectual Environment

The intellectual environment was one of the three main areas studied, with the tasks assigned to four subcommittees, focused on student learning; faculty scholarship of discovery, integration, and development; faculty scholarship on teaching; and staff professional development.

Student Learning

One of the most important of our charges was to seek to improve learning at Cal Poly, especially student learning. To this end, the first WASC subcommittee founded on the Intellectual theme was Student Learning.

The researchable questions were:

- To what extent is Cal Poly focused on student learning, accountable for it, and committed to its improvement?

- What additional actions are appropriate to advancing these goals?

Using numerous existing program review and accreditation materials gathered on an on-going basis on campus, the committee studied a large number of documents and followed up with interviews. Confidentiality was requested and granted, so specific details about individual departments
the Self-Study

The WASC staff encouraged Cal Poly to undertake an innovative, research-based study that would explore both the achievements and the shortfalls of the Cal Poly community's efforts to enhance undergraduate and graduate education and to promote the goal of life-long learning. The Steering Committee adopted these principles to serve as guidelines for the self-study:

1. To study some real issues of importance to Cal Poly.
2. To use as wide a representative group as possible for the members of the subcommittees.
3. To use materials and research already available.
4. To learn something new which we would not have known before.
5. To make recommendations without regard to expected resource constraints.
6. To recommend infrastructure changes, where appropriate, to further the progress recommended from the committees.
7. To enjoy this study.

We modeled the University as a Center of Learning, with three overlapping and integrating components or environments:

- Intellectual (content of what we do)
- Physical (context of what we do); and
- Campus Climate (social and psychological environment for what we do).

Discussions in the Steering Committee led to the development of potential researchable questions which were assigned to the appropriate subcommittee(s) for in-depth exploration. The researchable questions and the model of a Center of Learning formed the framework for the studies undertaken by the subcommittees.

The subcommittees formulated measurable questions and specific issues for each topic, and they were empowered, with loose guidance from the Steering Committee, to investigate their topics widely. Technical, methodological, statistical, and administrative support was provided. Reporting of conclusions and recommendations was completed in Spring and Summer; drafts of the subcommittee reports were made available to the Steering Committee members in Summer, and now to the wider campus community.