

Del Mar College's

Self-Study 2000:

4, April 30, 1999

A newsletter devoted to the successful reaffirmation of Del Mar's accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in December of 2000.

From the Self-Study Director:

Most Del Mar employees and students don't know what the self-study committees have been doing for the last year. As a result, some of us may think, either, that the current self-study process doesn't really affect us individually, or that there isn't any way for people not on a committee to speak their minds. To make this process clearer, let's look at how one committee has tackled just one part of its assignment.

The Physical Resources Committee concentrated on the quality of buildings and grounds, safety procedures, and physical facilities planning. They knew from the beginning that they had a hot topic--everybody has an opinion about parking or maintenance or security lighting!

One of the standards that they had to use to evaluate the College was this: *The physical environment of the institution should contribute to an atmosphere for effective learning.* Committee members, led by West Campus electronics teacher Pilar Flores, looked at the results of the survey that hundreds of College employees and students filled out last September. They talked about their own experiences, interviewed deans and other supervisors, and wrote a detailed response that covers temperature control, air quality, sidewalks, age of buildings, temporary buildings, maintenance, housekeeping, and grounds.

In their conclusion, they made suggestions for improvements that will come from better planning and organization and closer attention to the comments that employees and students have been making, in some cases, for years.

The Committee presented their report for public comment at the open forum this past

***--James A. Pierce,
English***

Countdown:

The Reaffirmation Visiting Committee from SACS will arrive on Del Mar's campus in:

290 days

Are you ready?

The Visiting Team's First Day On Campus Will Be

February 14, 2000.

Happy Valentine's Day!

Thursday. But they recognize that their work isn't finished. The Steering Committee has asked them, in their final report, to include a list of specific problems with the physical plant that were brought up in their interviews and meetings. And this is where the rest of the College community still has an opportunity to help. Anyone with a concern about buildings and grounds, safety, or maintenance can call Mr. Flores (698-1757) or send him a note. Dr. Richard Armenta, Vice-President of Instruction and Student Development, has said that the College will respond to all findings of the self-study committees. Everyone's opinion will be considered, because the process affects us all.



Accreditation *in the news*

Visiting teams from accrediting bodies like SACS have become accustomed to evaluating the distance learning programs of institutions of higher education, including, in recent years, their online offerings. Now, for the first time, a regional accrediting body has accredited a university that delivers its courses entirely over the internet.

In its March 19 issue, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reported that the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools had fully accredited Jones International University of Englewood, Colorado. Jones, a subsidiary of a company owned by Glenn R. Jones, a cable-television power, "opened its doors" in 1995 and now offers two degree programs in business communications, with all courses available only online. *The Chronicle* reports that the institution has no exact count of its student body but current registrations exceed 950, and Jones officials suspect that accreditation will help boost the enrollment.

The action by NCACS was not without controversy. In its April 2 issue, the *Chronicle* reported that the American Association of University Professors had objected strongly in a letter to Steven Crow, executive director of NCACS, saying that "...this virtual institution [Jones] presents a very weak case for accreditation. Indeed it embodies most of our major worries about the denigration of quality that could follow this apparently inexorable march toward on-line education."

The objection was written by James Perley, head of the A.A.U.P.'s committee on accrediting, who said that the A.A.U.P. was not objecting to virtual education, as such, but to the lack of quality at Jones, citing the fact that of its 56 faculty members, only two are full-time; the rest hold full-time jobs elsewhere. While Perley admits the possibility of a legitimate virtual university, he objects that he wants to see its creation "based on something other than a profit motive."

Crow, on the other hand, says that he believes that accrediting bodies are "going to get used to doing virtual visits."



Open Forums

The Open Forums will resume in June, when the Del Mar community will have an opportunity to review and respond to the last six sections of the *Self-Study Report*. Copies of the drafts of these sections will be available at the Circulation Desks of the East and West Campus libraries, in the S.G.A. Office, and on the self-study webpages. The Forums are scheduled as follows:

Thursday, June 10:

- 3:30 Organization and Administration
- 4:15 Institutional Effectiveness

Thursday, June 17:

- 3:30 Computer Resources and Services
- 4:15 Faculty

Thursday, June 24:

- 3:30 Educational Support Services
- 4:15 Educational Program

To review the self-study calendar, meeting minutes, and drafts of the principal committee reports, please see the self-study webpages. Link through Del Mar's homepage, www.delmar.edu; then look under Instructional Programs or Administrative Resources.

If you are accessing the self-study webpages from off campus, call Jim Pierce, John M. Crisp, or any Steering Committee member for the *username* and *password*.