

Del Mar College's

# Self-Study 2000:

# 8, August 31, 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:***

Our self-study has discovered several areas in which Del Mar needs to take some corrective action in order to comply with the criteria of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Because there are so many areas, it's easy to forget that our sister colleges have already faced, and found ways to fix, the same problems.

One of the self-studies available online was completed in 1998 by The University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College. Their self-study report is linked to our Self-Study 2000 site, and so is another valuable resource: their administration's response to it.

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

When you read their self-study recommendations and the institution's plans to correct the problems, you quickly recognize the similarities between us. All of the following also appear in the reports of our principal committees:

The institution had to overhaul its student orientation program.

It had to start regularly evaluating its admissions policies.

It had to develop a procedure to ensure that students who graduated were competent in oral communication and the use of computers.

It had to evaluate its outreach courses and show that the results were used to improve programs.

It had to make corrections in their catalog.

It had to find ways to check faculty credentials more closely and could not rehire faculty whose qualifications did not meet the

*(See Next Column)*



## **Countdown:**

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

# 166 days

Are you ready?

The Visiting Team's First Day On Campus Will Be February 14, 2000.

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SACS criteria.

It had to develop a policy to allocate information technology resources fairly to all parts of the institution.

It had to develop a maintenance plan.

It's not clear from the brief responses just how they made the necessary changes. But the faculty and staff at Texas Southmost would probably not be hesitant to share their strategies with us. Some of us may already have friends that work there. We shouldn't feel that Del Mar College has to solve a unique set of problems.

# Q. & A.

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Previous issues of *Self-Study 2000* have discussed some of the kinds of questions that we can expect the SACS visiting committee to ask when they arrive on campus on February 14, 2000. Most of the questions that we've looked at are found in a SACS publication, the *Handbook for Peer Evaluators*, which all the members of the visiting committee are likely to have studied thoroughly by the time they arrive. Below are a few more of the kinds of questions that we might expect the visiting committee to ask. These questions are from the section on Organization and Administration.

As always, SACS is interested in institutional effectiveness, at the administrative and Board level, as well as in the classroom, particularly in regard to the use of data and assessment to formulate institutional policies and practices:

*Q. What evidence does the administration have to show that it gathers and uses institutional data to formulate institutional policies and plans?*

Additionally, the *Handbook for Peer Evaluators* suggests a second set of questions focussed specifically on the effectiveness of organization and administration at Del Mar, rather than on institutional effectiveness. Some examples:

*Q. How do chief administrative officers ensure adequate communication within the institution?*

*Q. To what extent does the institution make clear the policy-making role of the governing board and the responsibilities of the administration to implement policy?*

Finally, the *Handbook* provides a third group of questions that visiting committee members might ask. These have to do with the self-study itself and the success with which it deals with issues of organization and administration at Del Mar College.

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*Q. Does the self-study adequately evaluate the strengths and limitations of the organization and administration?*

*Q. Does the self-study provide recommendations for ways to strengthen the organization and administration of the institution?*

*Q. Does the self-study address the effectiveness of communication between and among the faculty, staff, and administration of the institution?*

Of course, the visiting committee members will not ask every question that appears in the *Handbook for Peer Evaluators* and, no doubt, they will ask other questions of their own. Nevertheless, from the questions in the *Handbook* emerge themes that may be useful to the members of the Del Mar community during the visit. What are some of the themes that are related to organization and administration? Communication. The use of assessment and information to make institutional decisions. The willingness to evaluate and criticize honestly what we're doing at Del Mar.

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](http://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*.