

Del Mar College's

Self-Study 2000:

2, February 28, 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:

When the self-study process works well, an institution measures itself against the standards in the *Criteria for Accreditation*, and then moves to correct the problems that it uncovers. In an important sense, Del Mar does this all the time. The College re-examines itself every time that a department conducts a program review, every time an office looks at the results of its latest audit, every time the Curriculum Committee or the Faculty Council or the Board of Regents meets. This kind of self-analysis is part of our normal responsibilities; but its results depend on our willingness to recognize areas needing improvement, and changes are sometimes glacially-slow in coming.

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

Our current self-study process is different in two ways: perspective and urgency. First, we give someone else (the visiting peer evaluation team) the right to pass judgment on the way that we've been doing things for years. Second, we find ourselves following a rigid schedule and facing potentially serious consequences.

At this point, however, the process is gathering momentum. All but two of the self-study committees have turned in their draft reports--almost 500 pages of analysis and findings. This week, John Crisp and I briefed Regent Chris Adler on our progress. As chair of the Academic Issues Subcommittee of the Board, she will help to guide the Regents' review of the *Self-Study Report* and the administration's response to it. Last week, John and I talked to President Dicianna and Vice-President Armenta about some of the College's weaknesses described in six of the draft reports. The President and Vice-President agreed with the committee's tentative conclusions. Dr. Armenta added that

Countdown:

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

370 days

Are you ready?

it's time to start finding solutions and assigning responsibility to make sure that changes are made.

What all this means is that in the next several months you may feel a new sense of urgency in your work area. Unit managers and their staff will have to revise old policies and find new ways to improve how each office functions. All of us will have to help; everyone's perspective is necessary.



For More Information
about SACS:

www.sacs.org

i.e. Institutional Effectiveness

When Del Mar College conducted its self-study ten years ago, the concept of "institutional effectiveness," as a part of the Southern Association's criteria for accreditation, was relatively new. At its annual conference in December 1984, SACS approved what its Executive Director James T. Rogers calls a "standard on assessment" and gave it the name "institutional effectiveness." Accordingly, Section III of Del Mar's *1988-1989 Self-Study Report* was devoted to "Institutional Effectiveness."

What's changed in the last ten years, however, is the level of emphasis placed by SACS on the concepts of assessment and institutional effectiveness, not only as ways to gauge the degree to which institutions like ours already achieve their goals, but also as methods of planning for the future, determining new goals, and reaching them.

In the past, SACS visiting teams have been interested in "what" institutions of higher learning have on their campuses; now they're interested in how institutions assess how well they're using what they have and in how they use the results of that assessment to improve the

SACS FACTS

- 1 The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accredits more than 12,000 public and private educational institutions.
- 2 SACS accredits prekindergarten through university level in eleven southeastern states and Latin America.
- 3 SACS's Commission on Colleges accredits more than 800 institutions of higher education.

March's Self-Study 2000 Quiz

It's March 7, 2000. A member of the SACS visiting committee approaches you in the Harvin Center and asks how your department or unit uses the results of assessment to plan for the future. You...

- A. ...reply, "SACS? Never heard of it."
- B. ...produce a joke that capitalizes on the similarities in pronunciation between "SACS" and "sex."
- C. ...address the visitor confidently as a colleague and peer and talk about your department's or unit's goals and unit plans, which you happened to have reviewed just the previous week.

See next month's Newsletter for the correct answer.

The Self-Study Secretary leaves for New Braunfels

Mari Garcia, who has been working in the Self-Study Office, is moving on to a new job;

Good luck, Mari.

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.
