

Del Mar College's

# Self-Study 2000:

# 5, May 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:***

One of the useful parts of the self-study project so far is the survey. Last September, a lengthy questionnaire was sent to students, classified and APT employees, faculty, administrators, and Regents. Like many surveys, it was probably too long and the answer choices were often too simple for people's opinions about important areas of campus life. The final section, however, a set of open-ended questions, gave everyone a chance to make comments in a very personal way. (You can find these results on the [www.delmar.edu/sacs/](http://www.delmar.edu/sacs/))

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

You might expect nothing but gripes. Last fall, for example, campus construction projects left lots of us unhappy about muddy streets and blowing dust, but we really resented the effect on parking problems at peak class times. Still, there were many comments that showed people's great satisfaction. There were complaints about the long lines at registration, but compliments about the extra time that the Registrar's staff took with requests for help. Financial Aid personnel took their share of hits--and praises. Many people complained about slippery floors and classrooms that were too cold, but others, many others, saw no major problems.

The point is that these hundreds of comments, written often hastily but nearly always seriously, give College employees an idea of how good we are at what we do. If you work in the Business Office, Student Activities, Placement, the Libraries, the cafeteria, Financial Aid, the Registrar's Office, or Maintenance, you ought to read these responses. Office managers and department chairs should talk about the survey results in meetings of their staffs. Even with all

## **Countdown:**

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

**259** days

Are you ready?

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

the usual warnings about the use of surveys, this information is more valuable than most of us realize. Corporations spend heavily on this kind of research on their consumers' attitudes.

Most of the self-study process requires reading through dry stuff, long sentences in legal jargon with little spark of intensity. We should not overlook the real voices that we can hear in

For More Information  
about SACS:

[www.sacs.org](http://www.sacs.org)



# Q. & A.

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When the SACS team of Peer Evaluators arrives in February of 2000, we hope to have already answered many of their questions in the *Self-Study Report*. But the team will be asking many other questions as well, in both formal and informal situations. For example, the *Handbook for Peer Evaluators*, a document that SACS distributes to all visiting team members, advises the visitors who are concerned with "Institutional Purpose" to interview and question at least eight different people or groups of people, ranging from the chief executive officer and board members to faculty members and members of advisory committees and foundation boards. And "Institutional Purpose" is a relatively small part of the self-study.

Additionally, the *Handbook* provides to the visitors lists of at least thirteen examples of the kinds of questions they might ask during their interviews.

Some are easy:

Q. *Does the institution have a written statement of purpose/mission?* A. Sure we do...it's printed at the front of the *Policy Manual*, in the *Strategic Plan*, as well as in various other College documents.

But then it gets a little harder:

Q. *To what extent is the statement of purpose/mission understood throughout the institution?*

Q. *What is the relationship between the statement of purpose/mission and the planning and evaluation procedures of the institution?*

Q. *Can measurable operational goals or objectives be derived from the statement of purpose?*

Of course, SACS doesn't expect every member of the Del Mar community to have an immediate answer to all of their questions on the tip of his or her tongue. Nevertheless, one of the purposes of the self-study is educational: SACS hopes that the self-study will help remind the institution that it does have an articulated mission that should be closely connected to what it does on a daily basis and to its plans for the

# 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](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*.