Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)
Summary of Institutional Proposal

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation is a requirement for the campus to receive federal and state funding. As part of the accreditation process, UCSF must submit an institutional proposal to WASC by May 15, 2007.

The WASC accreditation process has changed significantly since previous evaluations; a substantial amount of attention is now paid to outcomes, assessment and evaluation. UCSF’s proposal addresses three themes: learning environment; student learning outcomes; and diversity. These themes are aligned with the campus’ current strategic planning process, and represent important areas where the campus can strengthen its efforts over the next five to ten years. The proposal also responds to WASC’s recommendations from the last accreditation cycle. A draft of the proposal will be presented in April to key individuals and groups across the campus, including the School of Nursing’s Faculty Council, to ensure broad support.

Once WASC approves the proposal, the campus will immediately begin implementing work plans for each theme. WASC will make two site visits: the Capacity and Preparatory Review in spring 2009, and the Educational Effectiveness Review in fall 2010. UCSF’s efforts will focus on meeting WASC’s standards and criteria for review to ensure a positive outcome.

Below is a brief description of the three themes and related work plans that are included in the institutional proposal:

Learning Environment
Guiding Question: “What are the optimal organizational structures to sustain and promote excellence in teaching and learning in our academic health sciences environment?” Proposed actions include (1) developing a space action plan that addresses several campus sites; (2) creating a clinical skills/simulation center that serves all schools and supports experiential/inter-professional training; (3) developing campus-wide systems for continuous data acquisition and dissemination; (4) within the education mission, exploring the relationship with and implications for the evolving innovations in programmatic and academic organizational structures; (5) identifying methodologies to collect information on alignment with our mission of teaching and learning, as well as on structural and organizational barriers; and (6) critically examining strategies to create a positive culture of recruitment and retention.

Student Learning Outcomes
Guiding Question: “What are the optimal curricular structures to effectively prepare students for contemporary challenges in the health professions?” Proposed actions include establishing a task force to focus on (1) development and support of inter-professional educational experiences; (2) a systematic
assessment of current efforts that foster interaction with other health care providers and faculty, as well as the learning outcomes achieved by students in inter-professional programs; and (3) recommending strategies to increase such interactions in the future. To encourage students to choose academic careers in the health professions, the curricular offerings of each school and the Graduate Division will be assessed so that interests in and barriers to pursuing academic careers can be identified. This may lead to enhancing existing educational activities and implementing new initiatives.

Diversity
Guiding Question: “What are the optimal strategies/initiatives to enhance the campus-wide diversity of faculty, trainees and staff and promote inclusiveness of all backgrounds and perspectives?” Proposed actions include creating a self-study team to identify, implement and evaluate initiatives that seek to maximize diversity at all levels of the campus, including staff and faculty recruitment and retention. The self-study team will focus on examining diversity initiatives that lend themselves to campus-wide coordination and establishing mechanisms for their implementation. In addition, the team will establish a comprehensive communications program with timely web additions and use of other media to promote diversity and cultural sensitivity, and construct methods to share successful initiatives with other institutions. The team will measure the above activities to test the effectiveness of these initiatives and assess their impact.

Questions about the WASC Accreditation process may be directed to Joseph I. Castro, Associate Vice Chancellor, Student Academic Affairs (joseph.castro@ucsf.edu) or Sally Marshall, Vice Provost, Academic Affairs (sally.marshall@ucsf.edu).