2.3 Services to Students

Introduction

A student’s educational experience is affected not only by the classes taken and the faculty who teach them, but also by a variety of support services provided by the University. Although students have given high ratings to some of these services, they have also expressed varying degrees of dissatisfaction with others. In recent years, the University has put a great deal of effort into identifying areas that need improvement and into remedying those deficiencies that have been identified.

This effort has come at a difficult time. When confronted by major budget cuts in the early 1990s, the University made every effort to retain as many of the classes students needed as it possibly could. To accomplish that goal, funding for support services was cut disproportionately.

Then, almost as soon as the cuts ended, enrollments began to grow substantially. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of traditional freshmen who attend full-time and live in the residence halls. Such students place increasing demands on a variety of student services. The University has not been able to provide support areas with an increase in resources concomitant with the increased demand for services.

Another fiscal challenge comes from the phasing in of the Common Management System. This new computer system will eventually provide us with new capabilities, but at this stage the time, energy, and money devoted to developing and implementing CMS are unavailable for other projects. Some proposed improvements must be deferred, either because we cannot afford them at this time or because the effort to reprogram our current system would be wasted. The Student Administration (SA) module will be the last part of CMS to be implemented, and it is the module that has been the most troublesome at other universities. CSULB had asked to be part of the first group of campuses implementing the Student Administration module, but the CSU preferred to start with smaller campuses. We were concerned that implementation decisions that prove satisfactory for a smaller university might not serve our needs well. The campus has now been approved to be among the next group of campuses to begin implementation. We expect the new system to be phased in starting in Fall 2003.

Despite these problems, there have been very substantial efforts to improve services. We believe that these changes have resulted not only in greater student satisfaction but also in higher rates of student retention and a reduction in their time to graduation. Unfortunately, at this stage the evidence is as much anecdotal as statistical. Timely advising may save a student from having to spend an extra semester or two to complete a degree, yet for the most part time-to-degree depends on the circumstances of a student’s life, and not just on the removal of obstacles inadvertently created by the University.

The University has made a number of efforts to identify ways to improve student success and to encourage students to graduate in the shortest time frame consistent with their needs.

Students who enter the University ready for baccalaureate-level work, and who want to graduate in four years, are able to do so. Other students choose to take reduced
course loads or to “stop out” because of job or family demands on their time. Many students choose to start their college careers at a community college or at other four-year college. Serving such students is an important part of the mission of the CSU. Traditional measures of graduation rates, based on the number of students entering as freshmen and then earning a degree from the same institution four, five, or six years later, correspond to the experience of only a portion of the CSULB student population. For all of our students, we are concerned that we do not impose unnecessary barriers that prevent them from making timely progress—as they define it.

We are also concerned about helping students make choices that lead to success and to avoid choices that lead to failure. This help takes a number of forms, including effective academic advising; co-curricular activities that provide satisfying interactions with other students; health services and psychological counseling services to assist students with personal problems; and assistance in choosing a career and in preparing for that career.

In 1993-1994, the Provost and the Academic Senate jointly established an ad hoc Commission on Graduation Rates. The report of this Commission, issued in May 1994, included a number of recommendations. Many of these have been implemented, including a policy that freshmen may not enroll in upper-division courses without the permission of the instructor and a requirement that all students declare a major by their junior year. Students are not prohibited from changing majors later, but they are no longer allowed to take courses indefinitely without making the effort to identify a goal. Mandatory advising of freshmen prior to each of their first two semesters helps to direct them into appropriate courses.

The campus Accountability Report shows current data on retention and graduation rates. The rates will never be close to 100 percent—and should not, given our mission and the population we serve—but we believe they should be higher than we now achieve. We are again making systematic efforts to identify factors that affect retention and graduation rates and to set goals for the graduation rate. In Spring 2001, the Academic Senate endorsed a Retention Plan, setting up an interdivisional committee to coordinate and monitor the work of various campus groups addressing these issues.

In this section we evaluate the results of efforts to improve selected support services that reinforce the learning experience. In alphabetical order, these are Academic Advising, “Beyond the Classroom,” Enrollment Services, and Instructional Facilities.
A. Advising and Academic Support

The University has been making an effort to improve advising and to see that all incoming students receive advising before enrolling in classes. Two recent changes have made this especially critical for freshmen: the new General Education policy and the requirement that remediation be completed in the first year. There are also a number of institutional initiatives designed to strengthen the first year experience for entering students. Is timely advising available to students? Are students being placed in the correct classes? Are retention rates improving? Have graduation rates improved?

In the 1992 WASC self-study and team report, academic advising was found to be extraordinarily uneven. Although advising was done in many different places on campus, students often did not know where to seek advising or they received differing advice from different sources. Students often relied upon informal networks and peer advice for help in selecting classes. They were often frustrated with the advising process and felt that no one on campus had concern for them. Several aspects of student advising were identified as needing improvement. Recommendations included the development of a comprehensive plan of advising, the establishment of a mandatory orientation program for all first-year students, placing greater emphasis on faculty advising in general education, and more training for faculty doing academic advising.

In the Fourth-Year Report to WASC, submitted in November 1995, the University identified a number of initiatives that had been launched in response to these concerns. These initiatives included new programs for first-year students, prompt evaluation of transfer credit for entering students, increased training and materials on academic advising for faculty, and the establishment of a First-Year Experience Committee to help coordinate programs for and communication with incoming students, especially freshmen.

1. Current efforts

Over the course of their academic careers students receive academic advising first from specially trained peer advisors at SOAR, the Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration Program, then from professional advisors in the Academic Advising Center or in a number of special programs, and finally from advisors in the major departments.

To coordinate the work of these different groups, in 1995 the Provost established an inter-divisional University Academic Advising Council, with membership that includes representatives of all offices that conduct academic advising, a representative from each college to provide liaison with the departmental advisors in the colleges, and key staff members from Enrollment Services. The charge to the Council is to examine current advising practices and to develop action plans to strengthen advising. The Council meets monthly to share information and to identify issues related to advising that affect the entire campus community.

The Academic Advising Council has provided an effective way to share information. Among its many practical achievements, it has addressed the need for all offices to give students consistent and accurate advice, has developed a system for assuring that students who receive advising through special programs (such as the Educational Opportunity Program) also receive appropriate major
advising, has developed and adopted uniform guidelines for academic advising, has called attention to places where the University Catalog provided insufficient or unclear information, and has instituted faculty training programs. In addition, the Council has initiated new CSULB programs, including mandatory advising for freshmen. A subcommittee of the Academic Advising Council worked with Enrollment Services to identify problems and to assist in major projects.

The Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration (SOAR) Program. When students are admitted to CSULB, they are asked to attend SOAR. Numerous sessions of SOAR are provided each summer and winter, with programs designed specifically for entering freshmen, transfer students, athletes, and President’s Scholars. Of the students entering CSULB in Fall 2001, 94 percent of the freshmen and 80 percent of the transfers participated in SOAR. Freshmen who do not attend a SOAR session have a hold placed on their registration until they seek advising from the Academic Advising Center. In addition to this primarily academic program, SOAR participants are invited to a general introduction to campus life, either in June or just before fall classes begin.

SOAR provides orientation and advising information and actively assists students in registering for classes. Initially, the primary focus was on general campus orientation, but ongoing review of the SOAR Program has resulted in strengthening the advising component. This advising is especially tailored to the level of preparation of each student to assure that they enroll in any required remedial courses, in General Education Foundation courses, and in other appropriate General Education or major courses. Faculty involvement in SOAR advising has increased, particularly in the SOAR sessions for transfer students, who meet with faculty from their intended majors.

To respond to the increasing student participation, the SOAR Program has drawn more heavily upon the graduate students enrolled in the master’s degree in Student Development in Higher Education. The SOAR advising handbook has been integrated into a day-planner that is distributed to all SOAR participants. It includes a calendar that notes registration workshops and deadlines, as well as information about student services across campus.

Mandatory advising for freshmen. Although freshmen who attended the SOAR program received academic advising before they enrolled in classes for their first semester, there were still two serious problems. First, the SOAR program could not guarantee that freshmen enrolled in the appropriate classes. Sometimes recommended classes were not available or were not available at the hours the student chose to attend. Sometimes students chose not to enroll in the recommended classes. Students often dropped classes they should have retained, sometimes because they did not want to take classes at particular hours, sometimes because they wished to avoid subjects like mathematics. To make matters worse, they then often enrolled in classes they were not prepared for—sometimes at the urging of parents who wanted them to take advanced classes—with unfortunate academic consequences. The second problem was that students really needed advising before their second semester at the university. In addition to the usual reassessment required by adjustment to the demands of college, students felt they could not retain all the information they had received in the short time available at SOAR.

To correct both of these problems, the University instituted mandatory advising for freshmen. They are not permitted to enroll
for either their first or second semester until they have received advising. For the first semester, they are not permitted to change their programs without seeing an advisor.

For the second semester, most students meet this mandatory advising requirement by attending small-group sessions conducted by the Academic Advising Center, which provides General Education advising to most undergraduate students. Other students see advisors in special programs, including Disabled Student Services, Educational Equity Services, the Intensive Learning Experience, Learning Alliance, Liberal Studies Program, Center for Student Athlete Services, Student Access to Science, and the University Honors Program. Each of these programs uses a similar approach but tailors its sessions to particular populations.

Advising for continuing students. Once students have chosen a major, they also seek advising from departmental advisors. This advising addresses the requirements and appropriate course sequencing for their specific major. Training for faculty advisors is provided in workshops conducted by the Faculty Development Center and by the Advising Council, and in meetings with college Advising Council liaisons. The Academic Advising Center provides training for its own advisors and for advisors in the Center for Student Athlete Services, Disabled Student Services, Intensive Learning Experience, Learning Alliance, Student Access to Science, the University Honors Program, directors of the SOAR Program, and some undergraduate faculty advisors. Ongoing support resources for all advisors are available through an academic advising handbook available on the Web.

Eight to twelve months before students graduate, they must meet with their departmental advisor to identify requirements that must still be met to complete their degrees. This is intended to assure that students know which courses they need before they enroll for their final semester. On-line access to complete student records has helped advisors to provide students with accurate and up-to-date information.

Academic Preparation of Entering Students. Fifty-one percent of freshmen entering California State University, Long Beach in Fall 2000 were identified as requiring remediation in English and/or mathematics. Compounding the problem of dealing with this issue is a CSU systemwide requirement that entering students complete any needed remediation in their first year of enrollment, as a condition for continued enrollment. The university thus has the double challenge of helping these students achieve the required level of proficiency as rapidly as possible, and also helping all students adjust to the demands of college classes.

A number of efforts have been initiated to respond to these needs. Both the Department of English and the Department of Mathematics have been experimenting with various teaching strategies to help students achieve the required level of proficiency. The Learning Assistance Center has increased staff and extended hours to respond to growing demand. Specialized assistance is provided for international and immigrant students with limited English proficiency, both in preparing for work at the freshman level and in preparing for the required junior-level Writing Proficiency Examination. A Supplemental Instruction program is offered for lower-division courses that have been identified as particularly difficult for students, and some academic areas, including English, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Nursing, are now offering additional tutorial services.

In addressing the need to improve the basic skills of entering students, the Depart-
ments of Mathematics and English and the Division of Student Services share responsibility for implementing the CSULB High School Outreach and Academic Preparation (HSOAP) grant. The grant is part of the CSU system’s initiative to work with high schools and those among their students who have been identified as CSU-bound. This program initiates faculty-to-faculty collaborations on curricular standards, team-teaching, tutorial support, and academic advising prior to enrollment at CSULB. It is intended to help teachers better prepare their students for university-level achievement and a successful academic experience.

2. Evaluation and challenges for the future

Every five years CSULB participates in a survey of enrolled students administered at each of the campuses of the California State University system. The most recent Student Needs and Priorities Surveys (SNAPS) were conducted in 1994 and 1999. A number of findings from these surveys provide a basis for concluding that students in 1999 were much more satisfied with their academic advising than their counterparts had been in 1994. There were increases in the level of satisfaction on eight of the nine items addressing the quality of academic advising services. The largest gains were associated with the advising provided by special program advising offices and the Academic Advising Center (a 17-percent increase in ratings of “excellent” and “good”).

In response to the survey question asking, “Overall, how challenging is the work that is required in your college courses?” 89-94 percent of the respondents indicated the challenge was “just right.” We regard this figure with some caution, since the survey, taken half-way through the students’ first semester, shows that about two-thirds of students are spending no more than 10 hours a week on studying and preparing for classes, but it indicates that students feel their placement is appropriate. Another measure is retention. In response to a question asking, “will you be attending CSULB next semester?” 94 percent said “Yes, definitely” and another 5 percent responded “Probably yes.”

Since implementing the mandatory advising program, CSULB has seen first-semester probation rates drop from 33.3 percent to 14 percent in both Fall and Spring semesters. An unexpected benefit has been an abrupt change in student attitudes toward advising. Whereas they once viewed a requirement to see an advisor as a burden, they now are much more likely to seek out advising and to follow the advice they are given.

Lower division and General Education advising appear to be going well. The coordination of general advising with major advising, however, is still in need of review.

There is considerable unevenness among academic departments in the plan for advising, the level of support provided for advising, and the training of advisors. Some departments have an undergraduate advisor or advising coordinator who is granted assigned time and support. Other departments engage all faculty in major advising, with no identified advising coordinator. Some departments require students to meet with their major advisor at specified times as they progress through their degree programs, but other departments have no advising requirements. It might not be desirable or even
possible to have a single organizational pattern, given the fact that the advising needs differ greatly among departments. One discipline might have many students majoring in the discipline, another very few. Some majors are highly sequential, so that students need to complete prerequisites in order to take more advanced courses. Other departments have a large number of available courses and students need help primarily in selecting among them to achieve a coherent program. Nonetheless, there might be more consistent and effective assistance for all students if departments were provided information on standards and expectations regarding both the level of advising and the compensation provided to faculty who provide advising.

3. Recommendations

• Help students move smoothly between General Education advising and departmental major advising.

• Provide students with directory information appropriate to their advising needs.

• Review the levels of advising provided within each major in order to develop standards and expectations for faculty advising.

• Review appropriate faculty personnel policies and practices to ensure that advising is evaluated as part of teaching effectiveness.

• Work with local high schools to encourage students who need remediation in English or mathematics to enroll in required pre-baccalaureate courses during the summer before their freshman year.

B. Beyond the Classroom

The recent increase in the number of traditional, full-time freshmen and residential students places an increased demand for a variety of student services. These include personal and social development opportunities, health and psychological services, and sports, athletics and recreational opportunities. How well are we meeting that demand? How satisfied are students with the services and opportunities available?

An important part of a student’s university experience occurs outside the classroom. We want all students to feel a sense of community, to feel connected to the university, and to gain the benefits of interaction with their fellow students. This represents a challenge at a large urban comprehensive university that is primarily a commuter campus, but to characterize CSULB simply as a commuter campus is an incomplete representation of our students. In addition to the 1800 students who live in on-campus residence halls, many more—probably thousands of students—live near the campus but not with their parents. Some students live with their parents, but others are adults with jobs and families, coming to campus only for classes. Our students represent one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse student populations in the nation.

During the past five years, many of these services have been particularly impacted by the dramatic increase in the number of freshmen of traditional college age, leading to an undergraduate population that has become
significantly younger, more often enrolled full-time, and (to the extent permitted by limited residence hall capacity) residential as well. Freshmen now make up about half our entering class, with the rest entering as transfer students, mostly from California community colleges. Although many of the support services are important to transfer students as well as to freshmen, we probably do not focus as much attention as we might, in helping them become part of the campus community.

In addition to activities directed toward student life and development, the university provides assistance in coping with the variety of personal challenges facing young people.

The previous WASC self-study and team report contained no specific recommendations for change in these areas. We selected for review at this time student support areas where we have especially been working to cope with the effects of the changes in student numbers and demographics.

1. Current efforts

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). This center provides educational, psychological, career, and life-skill development services to students. As the primary psychological services unit on campus, it also coordinates and provides campus crisis intervention services. The center operates an extensive consultation program for other campus units, focusing especially on program development and student retention. Organizational consultation and conflict resolution services are provided upon request.

In response to growing student demand, CAPS has introduced a number of initiatives to extend services to a larger number of students despite the limited number of professional staff available. These include reintroduction of an APA accredited internship program that enables qualified doctoral interns to provide supervised counseling services to students; designation of a staff member to respond to emergency walk-in traffic and initiate a prompt intake process; expansion of outreach efforts and programs co-sponsored with other campus units; and increase in participation of students in group counseling sessions and workshops. The center collaborates with faculty to provide resources and support for handling challenging situations with students.

Student Health Center. The Health Center provides full-time physicians, a part-time psychiatrist, a part-time gynecologist, nurse practitioners, nursing staff, health educators, and a fully-staffed laboratory, x-ray facility, and pharmacy. Current services provided to students include: direct treatment of sudden or moderate illness or injury; specialty treatments indicated by staff assessment of dermatological, orthopedic, or psychiatric needs; immunizations for a variety of illnesses; laboratory testing and prescriptions; and referrals and resource information for special needs. The remodeled Health Center facility provides improved access to students with disabilities, and includes a new Health Resource Center.

Student Residential Housing. With an increasing freshman class, Housing and Residential Life has experienced a steady increase in demand for on-campus housing. In 1999-2000, campus residential space was fully occupied with a waiting list. In Fall 2000, additional steps were taken to provide timely information and to assist with off-campus housing options, but it was not possible to accommodate all applicants who applied for housing.

Support for Students with Disabilities. Concomitant with the increased enrollment of all students has been the continued growth in the enrollment of students with disabilities.
The Disabled Student Services program has worked to provide educational access for all students with disabilities to a range of services and accommodation support. The number of students identified as having disabilities has grown from approximately 750 in 1990-1991 to over 1,200 in 2000-2001. It has been a challenge to find the resources to meet the needs of this increasing number of students.

In responding to the needs of students with disabilities, the University has provided budget support to insure that mandated services are provided. In addition, the program has engaged in a successful fund-raising campaign to establish an operating endowment to complement state funds, and a number of cost-saving measures have been undertaken to reduce costs. These efforts have helped the program to respond to growing student demand.

Sports, Athletics, and Recreation. As with other student services, the increase in student demand and limited budget resources have required changes in the Department of Sports, Athletics, and Recreation, the administrative unit that supervises intercollegiate athletic programs, the intramural program, sports clubs, recreation clubs, and recreational fitness for students, faculty, and staff.

Since the last WASC accreditation visit, the university has dropped football as a sport and has added two women’s sports. The university has implemented procedures to comply with the provisions of a legal settlement between the California State University and California National Organization of Women regarding gender equity in intercollegiate sports. Additionally, in 1996, the university received full certification of its athletics program by the NCAA.

The Center for Student Athlete Services, which reports to the Provost’s office, has expanded its activities. In addition to advising designed to assure that student-athlete academic programs conform to NCAA regulations, the Center schedules workshops designed to improve students’ academic success and to assist them with career planning. Student-athlete academic success has also improved dramatically with student-athlete graduation rates increasing from 17 percent in 1991 to 45 percent in 2000.

CSULB offers 19 sports and recreation clubs, open to all students, staff, and faculty. Over 1200 students participate in these programs. Although this is only a small fraction of the total student body, the Intramural program has reached maximum capacity due to limited facility space.

In 1999, students approved the “Beach Pride” referendum that increased student fees to provide support for the full funding of scholarships to every sport offered by the University; operational funds for the sports and band, cheer, and dance teams; and increased funding for Club Sports and Intramurals.

Student Life and Development. The University encourages students to become involved in campus clubs and activities. We believe these interactions with other students and with faculty provide an important part of the life of the campus and complement the academic curriculum. Most departments and colleges have student associations. There are fraternities and sororities, interest groups, religious groups, and cultural groups. The Office of Student Life and Development provides advice and programming assistance to these groups and promotes leadership education for students, in conjunction with the faculty and community. The recently established Swanson Leadership center will become more active in reaching out to all students in the development of their leadership potential.
The University Student Union provides attractive spaces for relaxation and a variety of food and service vendors. It has room for Associated Students, Inc. offices but was seriously short of space for use by the many other student organizations. A major remodel has added substantial office space as well as making other spaces far more usable.

2. Evaluation and Challenges for the Future

We are pleased that the Student Needs and Priorities Survey (SNAPS) shows a good level of student satisfaction with nearly all support services and that this level has increased since the previous survey. For example, the number rating counseling services as “excellent” or “good” increased from 45 percent in 1994 to 59 percent in 1999. The proportion rating health services as “excellent” or “good” increased from 66 percent in 1994 to 74 percent in 1999. Only 4 percent rated health services as “poor” in the most recent survey. Those rating campus housing as “excellent” or “good” rose from 39.4 percent in 1994 to 46.8 percent, an improvement but well below what we would like to see. “Excellent” or “Good” ratings for student clubs and organizations went up from 50.9 percent to 65.4 percent; for Student Union activities from 53.2 percent to 62.3 percent; for recreational programs from 44.8 percent to 61.6 percent.

These ratings do not tell us what led other students to give the services lower ratings. For some services, we do not know whether those students were dissatisfied with services or simply did not know about them. For example, despite efforts at SOAR and in the University 100 classes to inform students about services and activities, the survey of freshmen participating in mandatory advising showed that only 42 percent had heard of Counseling and Psychological Services, only 34 percent had heard of Sports, Athletics, and Recreation, and only 36 percent of Student Life and Development.

Three issues particularly need further attention.

Alcohol and Other Drug Education and Prevention. Alcohol and other drug use by students has been identified as a priority concern on college campuses throughout the nation. Recently, several high-profile incidents on college campuses have further highlighted the importance of this issue. With a growing and significantly younger student population, the issue of under-age drinking, binge drinking, and use of other drugs is a major student concern at CSULB.

Based upon data obtained from campus participation in national surveys of alcohol and drug use, students at CSULB have reported drinking and other drug use below the average for similar institutions. Despite this, the campus considered it important to implement programs for alcohol and other drug education and prevention. These efforts are intended to develop and maintain a campus environment where sobriety and responsible drinking are accepted social norms for students.

Targeted educational programs regarding alcohol and other drugs have been implemented with fraternities and sororities, residence hall students, and athletes. In addition, a curricular program entitled “Alcohol 101” has been developed for introduction as part of the curriculum of University orientation classes. Finally, personal counseling and intervention support for students experiencing problems with alcohol and other drugs is provided by Counseling and Psychological Services and the Student Health Center.

Support for Students with Disabilities. A continuing concern is that the CSU system
Educational Effectiveness

has not provided any augmented funding or support to assist the University in providing the specialized assistance required by students with disabilities. Funding is based on the experience of many years ago and not on the number of students with disabilities or on the types of assistance needed. As the population of students with disabilities has increased, so has the need to redirect budgetary resources from other areas of the University to respond to the requirement of mandated services and to insure a just and reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities.

Student Residential Housing. Currently, there is only space for 1,800 students to live on the campus. The demand for housing far exceeds this capacity. A major priority of the University is to explore options to build additional housing on or near the campus. Land values in the communities surrounding the University make the building of additional housing in most locations off-campus cost-prohibitive. Negotiations are currently underway with the adjoining Veterans Administration Medical Center to try to develop a long-term lease agreement, under which the University would be able to build student housing on vacant land currently owned by the VA. If these negotiations are not successful, the only alternative would be to build additional housing on campus land currently being used for student parking. Because there is already a severe shortage of student parking spaces, any consideration of this option would likely require the building of another parking structure to offset the lost parking capacity. This option would increase the costs associated with building additional student housing.

3. Recommendations

- Establish a University-wide committee to develop a comprehensive approach to alcohol and other drug education, prevention, and recovery programs.

- Work with the CSU Chancellor’s Office to develop a funding formula that recognizes the need to provide support for students with disabilities, with the funding based both on the number of students and on the types of disabilities that are accommodated.

- Develop an analysis of options, timelines, costs, and funding alternatives so that an early decision can be made on how the University will respond to the unmet demand for student residential housing.

- Hone the institution’s relationship with fraternity and sorority students, with special emphasis on leadership, responsibility and service.

- Expand leadership development programs for all students.
C. Enrollment Services

For many years, dissatisfaction with Enrollment Services appeared high on the lists of student complaints. The University has made substantial effort to improve all administrative services to students. The implementation of the new Common Management System will require both a large amount of money and a large amount of staff time, but should provide further improvements in services. Are students now receiving information and assistance on a timely basis? How well satisfied are students with the services now?

The Office of Enrollment Services at CSULB includes several essential services: admissions, registration, records, and financial aid. Organizationally, it is housed in the Division of Administration and Finance, but it works closely with the Divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Services. At the time of the last WASC report, there was a general state of student dissatisfaction with many of its services, including cashiering, financial aid and disbursement, admissions, transfer evaluations, and degree audit (known to students as the “graduation check”). These services were identified as needing improvement in the 1994 Student Needs and Priorities Survey (SNAPS), an ACT Student Opinion Survey, and in interviews with faculty and staff. In response, in Fall 1994 the President established a Blue Ribbon Task Force on University Services to Students. The task force was charged with addressing the apparent shortcomings in the University’s responsiveness to the needs of its students.

The task force employed an outside consultant to provide an objective assessment and analysis. The consultant’s report included two overarching recommendations. First, she emphasized the need to reduce the number of separate steps required for a student to obtain key services; better integration of functions should produce more seamless processing and service that is more student-centered. Second, she suggested that the University should commit additional resources to hire more staff and to increase hours of service. To instill customer-centered attitudes and practices, better initial training and more staff development were also needed.

The University then participated in a CSU benchmarking project, which identified best practices in a variety of administrative functions. A number of changes have been made as a result of this project.

1. Current efforts

The University has made a number of changes to better integrate the delivery of services and thereby improve service quality.

Fee payments. The University has implemented new methods for fee payment, including an installment program that allows students to make fee or tuition payments over a six-month period. Credit cards are now accepted in person and via the telephone and kiosk. University College and Extension Services transactions were added to the student billing and receivables system to allow students to make a single payment for all services, regardless of the provider.

Students may now pay for enrollment-related service fees, such as ordering transcripts or filing for graduation, at the Enrollment Services windows; they no longer need pay at one window and then go to another window to receive the service.

Extended office hours. Resources have been committed to increase the number of student service windows at both the Business
Office and Office of Enrollment Services during peak periods and to extend the hours of operation in both areas until 7:00 p.m. (rather than 5:00), Monday through Thursday. Access to Voice Response Registration (VRR) and the University Automated Service Kiosks (U-ASK) has recently been extended to 10:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Staff Development and Training. A campus-wide staff development program initiated in 1995 focuses on customer service. The program, “Connections,” was developed for higher education institutions by the firm of Noel-Levitz, nationally recognized for their work in enrollment management. The program is designed to build a more responsive and service-oriented environment on the campus.

Referral Center. Students are seen by “general services” student relations staff at the windows where most questions can be answered, forms provided, and transactions conducted. Those students who require more detailed or “expert” consultation are referred to staff with expertise in a specific area, such as a financial aid counselor or a transfer credit evaluator.

2. Use of Technology to Improve Services

Imaging Financial Aid and Admissions Documents and Transcripts. The Office of Enrollment Services implemented a state-of-the-art document imaging system in 1994–1995 to make financial aid processing paperless. With all data on-line in the student information system, financial aid documents are easily accessible to staff, rarely lost, and never need to be alphabetized or filed. This technology was extended to college transcripts beginning with Spring 1999 and to admissions applications beginning with Fall 2000. In both of these projects, data are extracted from the documents using optical character recognition (OCR) software and uploaded directly to the student information system. It is especially valuable to have all student transcripts available on-line, since most students transfer some credit from other colleges, not only before entering but also for summer classes or for classes taken concurrently while they are enrolled at CSULB.

Two additional projects use imaging to archive student records that previously were kept on paper or on microfilm or microfiche. One stores permanent record cards for all CSULB students for the years prior to 1988, and the other stores the academic records, such as change of grade forms, waiver letters, and other written information, for currently or recently enrolled students.

Self-Service and One-Stop Service for Students. Voice-response, touch-tone telephone service provides students with access to their own record information from both on-campus and remote locations. Voice Response Registration is used by over 30,000 students a semester for initial registration in courses and to adjust their schedules by adding and dropping classes. As part of the registration process, students may use the touch-tone payment system, which accepts credit card payment for fees. Students may also verify the current status of an admissions or financial aid application or receive information on their financial aid awards via voice response. The same system provides access to grades from the most recent two semesters of attendance.

Students can also use a self-service electronic kiosk (U-ASK) for general information, course registration, fee payment, and a printout of their own schedules. Twelve kiosks are located throughout the CSULB campus and another one is located at Long Beach City College.

Transfer Credit Articulation On-Line. The course-by-course list of articulated
community college courses is available to
campus faculty and advisors on-line. It is also
available to students from the information
kiosks (U-ASK) so that they can easily
determine which courses will transfer to
CSULB.

Letters to Students. Utilization of a
high-speed laser printer and a folder-sealer
machine has made it possible to provide more
frequent and complete communication to
students through specially tailored letters.
These range from acknowledgments of
admission applications to tentative financial
aid award letters and specialized notices
regarding registration or graduation. For
example, the admission letter sent to each
new freshman specifies which placement tests
that particular student must take prior to
enrollment.

Distribution of Financial Aid Awards.
Financial aid processing has been streamlined
through a combination of increased campus
automation and a reduction in federal re­
quirements for documents, so that financial
aid awards are now made in April and May to
new students and in June and July to continu­
ing students. Increases in federal grant awards
and significant increases in state-fed awards
have assisted more students in meeting the
direct costs of fees and books. The Stafford
loan program has grown to the point where
CSULB now distributes $46 million to 12,000
students each year.

Through electronic transfer of funds,
CSULB is able to apply the loans directly to
the students’ accounts payable and then
distribute any excess funds to the students
either by mail or in person. This arrange­
ment has greatly improved service to students
who previously had to come to campus to receive
their loan funds. Over 80 percent of all
financial aid checks are mailed, allowing the
staff to concentrate on those students who
need personalized services.

Financial Aid Entry and Exit Work­
shops. Required for all student borrowers, the
entry and exit loan counseling afforded to
students also makes available information on
the financial aid and disbursement processes.
The entry program is made available to
CSULB borrowers at the time of their first
loan. Exit information is provided to all
graduating students and to students who drop
out or stop out.

Downloads of Student Data. University
administrative offices needing student
data for particular groups of students (cur­
rently enrolled students or students admitted
for a particular term, for example) can down­
load information from the Student Informa­
tion System. These data can then be used to
create student identification cards for the One-Card system or to verify eligibility for
services such as those provided by the Stu­
dent Health Service, the University Library,
or the Career Planning and Placement Center.
Electronic data exchanges with external
agencies also streamline the task of providing
student record information. For example,
student enrollment information is provided
three times each semester to the National
Student Clearinghouse, which in turn for­
wards the data to student loan agencies for
updating loan deferments.

3. Service Improvements Related to Attri­
tion and Time-to-Degree

Projects to Make Information More
Accessible to Students. Working with faculty
and staff members who do undergraduate
advising, the Office of Enrollment Services
made major revisions in the format of the
Schedule of Classes and of the degree audit
report to make both of them more informa­
tive and easier to understand.

The revision of the Schedule of Classes
was designed to make information easier to
find, to provide information in “student-friendly” language, and to be visually more attractive. In response to suggestions from many people around the campus, an index was added and there was extensive reorganization of information.

A long-standing student complaint was that they could not find out exactly what requirements they needed to fulfill in order to earn their degrees. They would think that they had graduated, only to find out belatedly that they had not taken one or more required courses. After students apply to graduate, they are sent a degree audit report, showing academic standing (e.g., units completed and grade-point averages), which degree requirements had been met, and which requirements remained to be completed. The format of the reports was hard to understand, even with a lengthy explanatory brochure.

Revising the programming within the very real limitations imposed by our present student information system, Enrollment Services staff redesigned the degree audit format to provide a clearer, better-organized presentation of the information. At the same time, the office responded to a long-standing problem, that of students receiving the report too late to be useful as advance guidance. Under a new schedule of review, students who have filed timely applications for graduation receive a copy of the degree audit printout before they register for their final semester.

Advisors reported that student response was extremely positive, both to the new degree audit format and to the revised Schedule of Classes. Whereas there used to be large numbers of students confused by the information they were given, now students need assistance only for solving identified problems.

Transfer Credit Evaluation. The new degree audit format is now used to provide new transfer students with information on their standing at the time they enter the University. Most students now receive transfer credit evaluation information in time for the SOAR workshops they attend prior to enrollment. Students who do not participate in SOAR receive their evaluation of transfer credit during their first term of enrollment.

Department Access to the Student Information System (SIS+). With offices now connected to the campus high-speed back-bone, academic departments and individual faculty members, especially academic advisors, can now make effective use of the Student Information System (SIS+). The system can be used to check enrollments and class lists and to verify whether a student has met course prerequisites. Access to the transfer credit articulation database and to the degree audit function allows an advisor to see the record of a student’s transfer courses and to see which requirements a student may still need to fulfill to graduate. Along with access, training for those using the system has made it easier for less experienced users to utilize the most powerful features of the system.

E. Evaluation and challenges for the future

The changes that were made in response to the 1992 WASC self-study and team report, the 1994 SNAPS survey, and the report of the Blue Ribbon Task Force have resulted in improved student satisfaction with services the University provides. Another SNAPS survey was conducted in 1999. Most services received higher ratings than in 1994, while some showed dramatic improvement. For example, admissions services were rated “good” or better by only 36 percent of the respondents in 1994 but by 59 percent in 1999. Financial aid services went from a “good” or better rating by 39 percent of the respondents in 1994 to 63 percent in 1999.
Most services were rated at least “good” by a larger percentage of the respondents in 1999. The latter survey also showed a change in the perception that “this university welcomes and uses feedback from students to improve the university”; 56 percent indicated that they “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with that statement in 1999, compared to only 34 percent in 1994.

In two of the areas of concern, there have been substantial changes in the short time since the last SNAPS survey.

Students are now receiving much earlier admission decisions and information on financial aid awards, despite the fact that the number of applications has increased substantially. There were over 30,000 undergraduate applications for Fall 2001. Admission letters started going out soon after the closing date for applications, and all freshman who completed application files by March 1 received admission decisions by April 1. Admission decisions for transfer students who completed application files by March 1 were all sent by April 4. Financial aid offer letters to newly admitted students were sent out early in April.

Students can now obtain the information they need to assure themselves that they are registered for the courses required for a degree. Many students voluntarily take more than the minimum number of units for a degree, because they change majors or choose to enhance their academic programs with additional electives. Excess units of this type are appropriate. The important thing is preventing the involuntary delays of graduation that arise from a lack of essential information. With the substantial decrease in student complaints, we believe we are doing a better job of this.

Transition to the Common Management System. The University is in the midst of converting its administrative computing from a set of obsolete applications run on a large IBM mainframe to the client-server software developed by PeopleSoft. The conversion is part of a systemwide undertaking known as the Common Management System. The Human Relations and Finance components went on-line in the summer 2001. This campus has asked to be one of the early group of campuses implementing the much larger and more complex Student Administration component. We now expect to phase in the system in Fall 2003. The University will face a formidable challenge to maintaining high levels of customer service while at the same time implementing the new Student Administration software and its crucial Student Financial Information System.

There are a number of things we hope to be able to do for the first time, once the new system is in operation. Some of these are matters of simplifying activities that are now cumbersome. For example, the SIS+ system can, at a department’s request, prevent students from enrolling in courses for which they have not met prerequisites. It can prevent freshmen from enrolling in upper division courses. In both situations a department can enter an override to allow a student to register for a class if the student is prepared. This “authorization” or “permit” can only be issued for one particular section of the course. If that section is full or the student needs to change sections, the student is unable to register for an alternate section until the department enters an authorization for the new section.

Other limitations of the SIS+ system limit our ability to enforce possible academic policies. For example, although students must achieve a 2.0 grade-point average in courses for the major, we cannot institute a policy of placing students on probation if they fall below this standard because the computer cannot generate lists of such students. The
A degree audit module can read the student’s transcript and compute the GPA for the major but does not store this information. Because the information is not stored, it is not printed on the student’s end-of-semester grade report. Many students are unaware of the requirement or are not aware that their GPA falls below the required level until they file an application to graduate. By then, it may be too late to improve the record to the level needed to earn a degree. In a different kind of situation, although we have a policy that students must complete the General Education Foundation courses in their first 36 units, there is no way to enforce the requirement, even if we should wish to do so.

The university is not yet able to give students access to their own records via the Web, an approach that is becoming an important aspect of the service provided to students on most other campuses. CSULB was a pioneer in the implementation of self-service information kiosks (U-ASK) and Voice Response Registration by touch-tone telephone. This early implementation had the disadvantage that those systems cannot be used to provide Web-based access to records.

The PeopleSoft Student Administration component will allow us to give students Web-based access to their records. It will provide us with student information that is not now available, and will allow us to enforce policies in ways that are not possible now. Knowing that these changes are coming, we are not spending the time or money to try to adapt the old system to new tasks.

**New Admission Procedures.** The University has been approved to limit the size of the freshman class starting with the class entering in 2002. Under the approved plan this will require, first, a decision about what size of freshman class to aim for, then new admission procedures to try to achieve that class size. Applications will have to be handled differently, depending on whether the applicant’s high school is in the local area, the extended area, or outside the local area. All CSU-eligible students from local area high schools will be admitted, but a higher eligibility index can be applied to those in the extended area and a still higher index to other in-state applicants. Once the numbers of applicants in each category have been determined, we will have to set the eligibility index to be used in each category. A limited number of students will be admitted via an alternate procedure, depending on institutional interests and student hardship if redirected to another CSU. The number of students to be admitted by this procedure, and the details of handling admissions, must be worked out. It will be a challenge to put the new procedure into place and to do so without undue delays in issuing admission letters.

**F. Recommendations**

- Examine systematically the capabilities of the new Student Administration System to monitor and enforce existing academic policies.

- Assess the campus’ ability to provide appropriate and comparable services to non-traditional, distance-learning, and YRO students.
E. INSTRUCTIONAL AND SUPPORT FACILITIES

Heavy usage of our aging physical plant presents a challenge in maintaining classrooms and providing safe, orderly, and attractive campus grounds and facilities. We are finding ourselves with insufficient residential space to meet the current demand. How well satisfied are students with our facilities? How well are we planning for future maintenance and improvements? How will we meet the increasing demand for on-campus housing?

CSULB has an exceptionally attractive, well-landscaped physical environment but many of its physical facilities are no longer new. The University is actively working to remedy the problems that result from the age of its physical plant and to upgrade its buildings to meet current needs. It is a challenge to keep the facilities operating, to set priorities for renovation, and to provide the classrooms and offices needed to maintain essential functions while maintenance or renovation work is under way.

The University’s facilities present a number of challenges resulting not only from the age of the buildings but also from the conditions under which they were built. The original permanent buildings were constructed in the 1950s and early 1960s, at a time when what were then called state colleges were under the jurisdiction of the State Board of Education. The first buildings were essentially an adaptation of the design for a 5000-student high school, and in some ways were already out of date at the time of their construction. Moreover, before those buildings were finished, enrollment at the campus had already exceeded the originally planned capacity. The ventilating systems had been designed for far lower occupancy levels, while air conditioning was not even allowed in state buildings so close to the ocean. For a number of years, funding formulas created a strong disincentive to building large classrooms.

Later buildings were constructed under less restrictive rules. Nevertheless, the University faces several serious problems with its physical plant. These can be summarized under three categories: the need for new heating and cooling systems to replace worn-out or non-existent systems; the need to bring modern technology to classrooms, offices, and computer laboratories; and the need to repair and renovate aging buildings and to provide larger classrooms.

1. Present efforts

Over the past ten years, the University has embarked on an active building program to provide specialized facilities and to renovate or replace existing facilities. A new Central Plant provides heating and cooling to most campus buildings, replacing worn-out heating systems in the individual buildings and providing cooling for the first time. A High Voltage Electrical Infrastructure update replaced inadequate and worn-out electrical systems.

State capital improvement funding has made possible many new buildings, including the North Campus Center, University Art Museum (housed in the North Campus Center), the Martha Knoebel Recital Hall and Dance Center, the Richard and Karen Carpenter Performing Arts Center, the Pyramid (Athletic Events Center), a new College of Business Administration Building, and a new Engineering and Computer Science Building. Private funding supplemented state funding for many of these facilities, making an important contribution to the quality and usefulness of the buildings. A much-needed parking structure was
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built with parking fees, and an expansion of the University Student Union was supported by student fees. Together, these facilities added a combined total of 324,559 assignable square feet and a total of 1,436,907 gross square feet.1

With the campus essentially built out, the University’s attention has turned to an ambitious program of renovation of existing buildings. Over the years, there have been a number of smaller projects aimed at modernizing individual classrooms or sections of buildings. Sometimes, projects were hampered by serious faults in the existing structures. For example, Peterson Hall 3 was found to be lacking the fire dampers specified in the original plans, and much of the money intended for renovation went instead to bringing the building up to the fire code. Now the University is in the midst of much broader projects to provide current, energy-efficient facilities to support the academic mission and to accommodate rising enrollments.

A seven-building renovation project for the College of Health and Human Services has been completed and the student Health Center has also been renovated. Construction is currently under way on two major capital outlay projects, the Fine Arts Renovation and the Fire and Life Safety Infrastructure Improvement. The Fine Arts project renovates the existing 143,332 gross square feet in Fine Arts Buildings 1, 2, 3, and 4 over four phases. The project includes seismic corrections and interior renovation in Fine Arts 1 and 2 to meet current codes and to provide spaces that meet new programmatic needs. Construction of a new 93,000 gross square foot science building started in early 2001. This building will provide new instructional facilities for biology, chemistry, and biochemistry, as well as 46 faculty offices.

In another project in Spring 2001, the Fire and Life Safety Infrastructure Project provides replacement of corridor and stairway exit lighting, fire alarm control and annunciation panels, pull stations, smoke detectors, evacuation signals (horns and strobes), a building voice evacuation system, and smoke detectors in supply air ducts in forty-eight buildings across the campus.

The student residence halls have benefitted from the installation of a new smoke and fire warning system. Computer connections have been installed in the residence halls to provide students high-speed access to campus systems and to the Internet.

The next project in line following the new science building will be the Telecommunications Infrastructure Project. This $19.3 million undertaking includes intra- and inter-building pathways, spaces, and media as well as three new main distribution frames. The scope is intended to upgrade the campus communication infrastructure, both voice and data, to support the general master plan of additional buildings and advances in technology. It is anticipated that these improvements will assist the University in responding to changes in the instructional program.

Within the Division of Academic Affairs, a facilities committee is working to develop long-range planning of academic facilities. This planning effort involves developing a recommended schedule for classroom and office maintenance cycles as well as recommendations for priorities in funding. Each college has a coordinator who meets with the Office of Physical Planning to provide input into college-specific facility construction projects and who also serves as

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1Assignable square feet (ASF) essentially describes the usable parts of buildings. It omits public areas and utility areas, such as corridors, stairways, restrooms, utility systems, and custodial closets.
a point of contact with campus-wide construction projects.

At the time many of our buildings were erected, the system standard was for two-person faculty offices. That standard has since been revised to provide for single-faculty offices, the prevailing rule throughout most of the rest of American higher education. The decline in enrollment that accompanied the fiscal cuts of the early 1990s permitted the University to move toward this more generous standard, but the increasing enrollments of the last few years have meant once more an increase in the number of faculty members and increasing demand for faculty offices. Some departments have had to house four or more part-time faculty per office, while a few make no commitment of office space at all for part-time faculty teaching a single evening class.

The Division of Academic Affairs has made the renovation and improvement of faculty offices a priority. These upgrades are intended to assure faculty of an appropriate space to work with students, as well as offering a professional environment for scholarly and creative activity and for developing instructional materials. Planned upgrades include a scheduled painting cycle, better use of space for full-time and part-time faculty, and better access to technology, especially for faculty using the Web-based BeachBoard software and other Web materials.

Equipment for Use of Instructional Technology. Incorporation of computer technology into the instructional program has become a necessary methodology for many programs, and especially in the training of future teachers. The University has made a major effort in the past few years to equip classrooms and laboratories to take advantage of modern technology. The improved overall budget of the campus during the late 1990s and several system-wide technology initiatives have allowed expansion of general-access and discipline-specific computer labs. In addition, there have been one-time allocations to upgrade the largest campus lecture halls to incorporate technology. Although these installations have assisted the instructional program, there is still a dearth of technology-based classrooms.

Over the years, state purchasing procedures have made the procurement of equipment slow and often resulted in substantial cost increases. It is very helpful that the procurement process was substantially improved in the late 1990s. New levels of authority delegated to the campus raised the limits on the bidding process. At the same time, several system-wide contracts were developed, especially in the area of computers, technology equipment, and software. These improvements have allowed the campus to purchase equipment at a reasonable cost and in a timely manner, while still meeting purchasing guidelines. Campus departments now have more control over the acquisition and inventory of equipment. Departments are working together to maintain reasonable standards for equipment acquisition and to improve cost effectiveness and the maintenance of like equipment.

Deferred Maintenance. Along with the need for major remodeling, there remains a serious backlog of deferred maintenance projects campus-wide. Funding shortfalls due to the downturn in the State’s economy in the early 1990s cut severely into an already inadequate budget for this work. Since 1997, however, the baseline funding has steadily increased. Although the State’s control agencies heard the cries of the campuses for increased baseline funding to reduce the backlog, the University was unable to establish the magnitude of the problem until recently.
In fiscal year 1996–1997, the University engaged the services of an independent consultant, ISES, to evaluate each building's condition in terms of basic systems (e.g., mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and roof conditions). The firm’s expertise is capital renewal and replacement analysis. Their study enabled the campus to take an objective look at its existing conditions in order to define the real magnitude of the problem. The outcome of the ISES study was a database of deferred maintenance projects totaling more than $58,815,000. This database is prioritized by category and used annually by the University to determine the priority list to be accomplished within a given fiscal year.

Classroom Maintenance. One of the primary complaints from faculty and students in surveys conducted by the campus itself and in the SNAPS survey concerns the condition of classrooms. Over the years, there has occasionally been limited funding to refurbish a few classrooms. Since 1998, the University has annually committed general funds to support classroom maintenance projects, including such items as painting, replacement of furniture, installation of chair rails, replacement of chalkboards, installation of whiteboards, replacement of vinyl asbestos floor tile with new tile or carpeting, and replacement of window blinds. Specific buildings with high-use classrooms are annually targeted for these improvements.

Removal of Architectural Barriers. Because of the age of the campus and the design of the buildings, people with disabilities had no access to many parts of the original campus. Many of the most serious problems have been corrected. Upper floors of buildings without elevators have been connected to nearby buildings that have elevators. Renovation of the University Student Union and the new Central Plant facility provided convenient routes to elevators from the East and West Campus turnarounds.

In the past five years the University has made a concerted effort to develop the organization as well as the infrastructure to insure that architectural barrier removal projects receive a high priority on the campus. The campus has instituted a process of allocating 20 percent of all minor capital outlay funds (over a million dollars in this period) for removing architectural barriers.

To help insure that new construction is accessible and built with individuals with disabilities in mind, the Office of Disabled Student Services has final blueprint signoff on any major capital outlay project or major reconstruction. A representative of Disabled Student Services is a voting member of the Campus Planning Committee, which makes key decisions relating to the university’s Master Plan. Staff from Physical Planning and Development, as well as from Facilities Management, serve on the advisory board for Disabled Student Services, so they can help to identify and remedy immediate architectural barrier problems that may arise throughout the year.

2. Evaluation and Challenges for the future

Both the quantity and the quality of much of the faculty office space and staff work space are inadequate to present needs. The move to year-round operation will create additional pressure in this area, for an increasing number of students will eventually require increases in the number of faculty and support staff.

There is an urgent need to replace or renovate the oldest campus buildings. Many of the classrooms are seriously inadequate to their tasks. Installing new equipment helps but is not always possible in the oldest
rooms. It cannot make up for the defects of poorly-designed and worn-out rooms that suffer from lack of ventilation and cannot be air-conditioned, that are often noisy or badly-shaped, making it difficult for students to hear or see, sometimes with chalkboards or whiteboards that are too small for the size of the room, and with other problems that interfere with effective teaching and learning. A recent change in state policy should make it possible to tear down and replace non-functional buildings rather than attempt less effective—and often more expensive—renovations.

The university is limited in its ability to build the additional classrooms that are so desperately needed for the growing number of students. Although state formulas show the university as having excess classroom capacity, the formulas are based on high-density filling of rooms and do not take into account the different needs of different instructional programs. For example, the floor of the Pyramid represents a large instructional area, an area that is superbly suited for the classes in basketball or volleyball. Those classes cannot be taught in “traditional” classrooms, nor can Public Speaking and Composition classes be taught on a basketball court.

The challenge of renovating or replacing the oldest buildings is only partly one of determining the most effective way to provide the needed space, then obtaining approval and funding for the projects. The Capital Improvement Plan, although providing a sequence for building construction and/or modification, is subject to modifications caused by changing state policies or by delays in previously-scheduled work. Classes and offices housed in the old buildings must be relocated while construction is under way. A delay in completing one phase, as with the currently-stalled work on renovation of the Arts complex, can consequently lead to delays in beginning another phase, such as the renovations of the Liberal Arts buildings.

The University now has in place the planning structures needed to identify and prioritize its needs for maintenance and upgrade of facilities to support educational effectiveness. Financial support for the necessary work is always a challenge, but it is encouraging that the campus has now been able to undertake many long-needed projects. Changes in state regulations and procedures have made it possible to do more cost-effective planning than was sometimes possible in the past. Private funding has allowed us to build more attractive and usable space than was possible with state funding alone. There is, as a result, considerable optimism about the University’s future ability to serve its students effectively, even while recognizing that it may never be possible to get “ahead of the game.”

Each university in the CSU system has a physical master plan, approved by the CSU Board of Trustees. The current CSULB master plan has been updated on a project-by-project basis since last WASC study. The campus is now at the point where it must take a fresh look at the long-term physical needs of the entire institution. Previously master-planned facilities are now in place, and the campus has nearly reached its academic-year enrollment ceiling of 25,000 full-time equivalent students (FTES.) Although enrollments are expected to continue to rise, the University is attempting to avoid exceeding this limit (aside from the increased numbers resulting from off-campus instruction or summer enrollment).

In fiscal year 2000–2001, the campus allocated $100,000 to begin a two-year assessment of the physical master plan. The study will eventually involve consultation with the campus master plan architect, the hiring of a master plan architectural consul-
tant, and extensive consultation on a campus-wide basis.

3. Recommendations

- Develop a plan to carry out required maintenance, taking into account the increased utilization resulting from year-round operations.
- Develop plans to meet increased needs for office space for faculty and staff.
- Consult with users in planning for renovations and improvements in facilities.