

UCSD 10 year accreditation

June 29, 1976

FOR RELEASE: Tuesday, June 29

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges announced today (June 29) the awarding of a full ten-year accreditation to the University of California, San Diego.

Until the current ten-year accreditation, the maximum allowed by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), the San Diego campus had been granted four intermediate WASC accreditations since 1964. Accreditation is required for the university's eligibility for various non-state funds and for students to receive federal financial assistance.

The entire UC San Diego campus with the exception of the School of Medicine is covered by the accreditation. The School of Medicine is accredited by the Association of American Medical Colleges and its regional accreditation is coordinated through the National Council on Postsecondary Accreditation.

A 12-member accreditation team led by Dr. Richard Gilman, president of Occidental College in Los Angeles, visited the UC San Diego campus for three days in April. During the visit, the team, consisting of eight educators from California and others from institutions in Massachusetts, Texas, Utah and Washington, scrutinized the campus and spoke with faculty, staff and students. Their evaluation centered largely on the academic programs at the university and specifically on the undergraduate program where the greatest changes have taken place since WASC's 1973 visit to the campus. Attention was also given to a number of different areas and activities within the university.

Accompanying the notification of accreditation from WASC's Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities was a 46-page report on the team's visit to UC San Diego. The report indicates the team's findings in three main areas: academic departments, the colleges and special topics.

Members of the team admitted a great deal of skepticism toward the system of four colleges within the university but after a probing discussion with the Council of Provosts (made up of the heads of the four colleges) and discussions with students and staff, the committee concluded that the system constitutes a "very viable and significant pattern of education on this campus." They found the college system a means of "personalizing" education in a large, complex institution and a vehicle for providing a wide range of options for students. Both aspects were judged "valuable factors in the student's successful adaptation to university life."

The committee found that the facilities differ somewhat between the colleges and that some are less than adequate. They attribute this to a lack of funding for capital construction due to budget cutbacks in the University of California system.

One reason cited for the success of the college system is that "the college officers and counselors are highly visible and deeply involved in student affairs." The report went on to state "our respect for the college system on this campus increased as we came to understand it better. We do feel it is significant as well as distinctive, and we have no doubt that the undergraduate program on this campus is far better educationally and far more

relevant socially for the students than it would be without it." Recreational, social and other activities were cited as important reasons for maintaining a college system.

The team commended the academic departments' selectivity in their respective programs rather than attempting to cover an entire disciplinary field. This emphasis, the committee noted, "has undoubtedly contributed significantly to their research strength and to the outstanding reputation of the university in many areas.

They also applauded the avoidance of the proliferation of academic departments so common in a university setting. During its survey, the team visited the four academic departments reviewed in 1973 and five others selected by the chairman of the team.

The team found the structuring of campus-wide departments, instead of separate departments for each of the colleges, to be strongly supportive of the college system. A curtailment of budget support from within the university system was cited by the committee as a campus-wide problem for the departments resulting in inadequate facilities in certain areas and a general lack of adequate numbers of teaching assistants.

Three departments were highly praised by the committee in the report. The biology department, with the largest number of undergraduate majors and one of the largest graduate programs on the campus, was cited as "one of the most ambitious, self-conscious and highly organized on the entire UCSD campus." The physics department, one of the first departments developed on the campus, was cited in the report as having an excellent research program, noting that in a recent year, 29 of the 37 tenured faculty were principal investigators on 46 contracts and grants totaling approximately \$4.5 million. The psychology department, one of the major centers in the country in the development of computer-based laboratories, was cited for its emphasis on experimental psychology. Areas of academic deficiencies were noted in the report also, including the need for further development of the condition of the humanities on the campus. The literature department was mentioned as one department that needs "greater prestige in the institution."

Special areas covered in the report included the Academic Senate, administration, affirmative action, computers, libraries, physical education, the Program Review Committee, student personnel services, student recruitment and enrollment, University Extension and UC San Diego and the university system.

This area of the report indicated the university had overcome administrative problems noted in the 1973 report, called for an increase in the number of key administrators and committee members from the non-science areas, applauded the "community outreach" of the campus's University Extension and stated that UC San Diego is committed to affirmative action in faculty and staff employment and student recruitment.

The committee commended the chancellor and his staff for their assistance in "all aspects of our task" and went on to state "their efforts were exemplary and indeed superior to our experience in similar visits to other institutions."

A "fifth-year" report and visit is set for the spring of 1981 with the next full visit and review set for the spring of 1986.

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