

CONCLUDING ESSAY

Since the early 1990s, CETYS University has been in contact with WASC to learn about the accrediting process, the standards, self-studies, team visits, institutional improvement, and the establishment of a culture of evidence. As a result of such interaction, CETYS has been able to:

- Have its senior management attend WASC workshops.
- Have a senior management representative take part as an observer on a WASC visiting team.
- Invited and hosted as speakers on regional and national events former and current WASC Executive Directors.
- Organized several national panels in Mexico on U.S. regional accreditation with the participation of WASC and WASC member institutions.
- Partially integrated WASC standards into the CETYS self study of the late 1990s

With periodic and systematic self-studies serving as the basis for mid- to long-range plans, the institution has continually weighed its strengths and weaknesses, created a vision and developed strategies to achieve such a vision. The most recent effort was the basis for the Mexican Federation of Private Universities (FIMPES) re-accreditation of CETYS University with distinction.

Over what is now a 40-year period of uninterrupted and successful service, CETYS University has been an institution dedicated to the development of the whole person and the preparation of professionals in Business, Engineering, Psychology, and Law who can contribute to the economic advancement of the State of Baja California in particular and Mexico in general. Increasingly, CETYS alumni have extended their presence into California and Arizona.

Its location along the U.S.-Mexico border has presented the institution with opportunities and challenges to justify its relevance to the social and economic dynamics of a region intertwined to such an extent that we now refer to it as the trans-border region. The intricacies of this area are such that global trends create the need for quality and competitiveness, no longer viewed from a relative perspective but from an absolute and comparative standpoint. It is out of this firm belief in quality as a constant across borders that CETYS University seeks U.S. regional accreditation. Furthermore, because of its location along the border, continuous, systematic collaboration with institutions in California, and the progressive nature of WASC, CETYS is specifically pursuing accreditation with WASC only and not with any other regional accrediting agency in the United States.

In addition, we have included a brief summary of activities and partnerships which include but are not limited to California State University System campuses such as San Diego State University, Cal Poly Pomona, Sonoma State University, California State University-San Marcos, and California State University-San Bernardino, among others.

At the end of the 1990s and into the turn of the current century, regional accrediting agencies in the U.S. engaged in a discussion on the accreditation of foreign institutions. While there was no clear agreement among the agencies about this issue, the impetus for the consideration of foreign institutions by individual agencies has not only continued but intensified. Furthermore, one can also observe the emergence of similar efforts in the European Union and across other regions.

We firmly believe that the standards of quality that CETYS University has held throughout its history are not unlike those espoused by WASC and its member institutions in particular and U.S. accrediting agencies in general. As the world becomes more global and borders become more seamless, the quality of higher education institutions and the monitoring of that quality should also become more transparent.

From the moment we committed to working enthusiastically to achieve WASC accreditation, the institution has been focusing its efforts to present, formally and transparently, before the Accrediting Commission what Sistema CETYS Universidad has meant to the development of higher education in the State of Baja California from the institution's founding in Mexicali in 1961 to the present. This can briefly be summarized as follows:

Our commitment to Baja California's community in particular, and Mexican society in general, has been to present ourselves with absolute integrity, with a clear and relevant Mission, a Vision geared to the future, an educational model, academic programs and educational objectives formulated by and for the different audiences who constitute and participate in CETYS' community.

The educational model implemented at our institution is founded on and aligned with our mission, and fully committed to faculty input and development at all levels. In promoting its educational model, CETYS Universidad expects that all faculty members entering and remaining in the institution are aware of and apply this model's principles.

CETYS Universidad has demonstrated its concern of being an institution committed to continuous improvement and meaningful and measurable learning outcomes. Demands from the outside world, as well as from students who desire educational quality, have led us to develop new improvement strategies which have been expressed by and through our alumni's presence and leadership in the entrepreneurial community in the State of Baja California.

To meet its Mission and academic purpose, the institution has sought, through its Strategic Planning, to consolidate development plans that satisfy infrastructure needs on its three campuses, to consolidate its finances to achieve solid growth and development that can assure its future, and to remain up to date in degree programs, technology and new program offerings.

The first decade of the XXI century finds CETYS Universidad well into the implementation process of *Plan 2010*, which represents the path for the consolidation of

its Vision as well as the tool that combines the efforts and creativity of its personnel in concrete projects and actions to achieve the goals that gradually satisfy institutional objectives. In its quest for effectiveness in achieving its goals, the institution has relied on advanced technological tools for strategic planning such as Balanced Scorecard, allowing it to focus in greater detail, the efforts, innovation and creativity of its personnel in realizing the CETYS of the future.

Faculty contributions have been notable and essential in the development demonstrated by the institution. Throughout the University's history, academic personnel have been in charge of program design and curricular review and revision projects. This participation has been enhanced with the new organizational structure of Colleges.

At the graduate level, the academic model is one of a professional focus; the emphasis is placed on application in the professional field, and not towards basic research and the development of new knowledge. Sistema CETYS Universidad has increased its experience and academic quality in graduate programs with the presence of faculty with doctoral degrees, experts in their fields who have notably enriched graduate courses.

Our institution is not new to accreditation and its processes, since we have undergone many accreditations at the national level through various entities that have accredited us at the institutional as well as at the academic program level. We are aware of the demands of a rigorous analysis, both a self-analysis as well as an analysis by accreditation visiting teams, which is exhaustive and in-depth, and which will lead to improvement.

Although the WASC accreditation process represents a new experience for CETYS Universidad, it is also an excellent opportunity for the University to improve its academic quality and to internationalize its educational model, as a continuation of what led us to meet the eligibility phase in March 2005. This experience demonstrated to the academy, the administration, the President's Staff and the institution's Board, that it has valuable resources and the necessary experience to accomplish this important project which has received, once again, the unconditional support of IENAC's board.

We have tried to respond in a serious and forthright manner to the questions raised by the Eligibility Panel relative to our initial proposal, including information pertaining to each of the four standards.

The main focus during the Institutional Capacity Report stage was to gather a group of experts, mostly faculty, who supported us with their experience and knowledge of the institution in order to undertake an analysis of the review criteria for the four standards, supported by evidence and following the guidelines, as closely as possible, as indicated in each standard and the essay drafted for the Institutional Capacity Report. We organized ourselves into various committees with representation of over forty individuals, mostly faculty members.

Through this Institutional Capacity Report we present with integrity and transparency that which constitutes Sistema CETYS Universidad. We have tried to clearly and precisely express how we were born, how we have grown and developed, our future direction, and how we evaluate ourselves and our progress.

Additionally, the institution has considered it important to translate into English the essential documents representing the foundation of its work, so that WASC's visiting team may have a better understanding and appreciations of Sistema CETYS Universidad. Similarly, we have

established a WASC-CETYS webpage with much content, including the institutional capacity report, evidence documents in electronic form, and additional evidence support documents.

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