

**REPORT OF THE WASC SPECIAL VISIT TEAM**

**Saint Mary's College, California**

**October 29-31, 2007**

**Team Roster  
Ronald Troyer, Chair  
Shirley Lal  
Marion Reid  
Richard Winn, Associate Director (WASC)**

**The evaluation team in conducting its review was able to evaluate the institution according to Commission Standards and therefore submits this Report to the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges for action and to the institution for consideration.**

**Special Visit Team Report for  
College of Saint Mary's, California  
October 29-31, 2007**

**Table of Contents**

<b>SECTION I</b>	<b>OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>IA</b>	<b>Description of the Institution and Visit</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>IB</b>	<b>Quality of the Special Report and Supporting Evidence</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>IC</b>	<b>Description of the Team Review Process</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SECTION II</b>	<b>TEAM FINDINGS, ANALYSIS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EACH ISSUE</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>Issue #1: Library Resources</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>Issue #2: Diversity</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>Issue #3: Adult &amp; Graduate Education</b>	<b>19</b>
	<b>Issue #4: Update on Ed.D.</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>SECTION III</b>	<b>MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS</b>	<b>27</b>

Special Visit Team Report for  
Saint Mary's College, California  
October 29-31, 2007

SECTION I - OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

Section IA – Description of Institution and Visit

Saint Mary's College of California is a Catholic institution of higher education, sponsored by the De La Salle Christian Brothers. The College was founded in 1863 by the Catholic archbishop of San Francisco, moved to Oakland in 1889 and to its current location in Moraga in 1928. The College has approximately 4200 students, offers a comprehensive liberal arts curriculum, with professional schools of Business and Education and offers graduate degrees at the masters and doctoral (Ed. D.) levels.

Saint Mary's was initially accredited by WASC in 1949. This narrative begins with the 1985 regularly scheduled visit that led to reaffirmation of accreditation with the stipulation that an interim visit would occur in 1989 to address the visiting team's concerns about governance. In 1990 the Commission scheduled Saint Mary's next comprehensive visit for 1992-1993, with notation of several serious issues that remained to be addressed. As a result of the 1993 visit, the Commission reaffirmed accreditation for 8 years, with an interim visit in 1997 to address the issues raised in the 1993 action letter. The Commission approved the proposal to offer a doctorate in Education in July of 2000. After the Preparatory Review in 2003 and the Educational Effectiveness visit in 2004, the Commission reaffirmed accreditation, scheduled special visits for the fall of 2005 and 2007, and suspended admissions to the Ed. D. program. The focus of the 2005 special visit was the Ed. D. in regards to capacity, student enrollment, program vision, and educational effectiveness. After the visit, the Commission granted Saint Mary's

permission to resume recruitment for the Ed. D program. The March 6, 2006 letter to Saint Mary's reaffirmed the special visit scheduled for the fall of 2007 noting that the focus should be on "adult and graduate education, library resources, diversity, and an update on the Ed. D. program."

#### Section IB – Quality of the Special Report and Supporting Evidence

The Special Visit Report (SVR) prepared by the institution addressed the issues raised by previous WASC teams and the Commission. The team met with the President, Provost, Vice Provosts, Deans, faculty leaders, Director of Institutional Research, the Staff Council, Program Review Committee, the faculty of Diversity and/or Multicultural courses, the Diversity Committee and visited both the Rheem Center and the off-campus library storage facility. Additional documents requested during the visit were quickly provided.

The SVR accurately described how the institution had attempted to address each of the issues identified for the visit. It outlined both significant accomplishments and challenges that remained to be addressed. In addition, the next action steps were identified with respect to several issues.

During the meetings with the various groups, the responses to the team's questions were direct and genuine. In a number of meetings, the dialogue resulted in the exchange of ideas and suggestions. The team members' comments were greeted with openness.

It would have been helpful to the special visit team if more of the supporting evidence for the adult and graduate programs as well as the continued progress on the Ed. D. program had been available before arrival on campus. Clearly it was not feasible to

mail all the documents but sending a portion of the materials would have greatly assisted the team in its task. It should be noted the documents were delivered to the hotel to assist the team and that was greatly appreciated.

In summary, the SVR submitted by Saint Mary's was an accurate summary of the institution's attempt to address the issues raised in the Commission letter. It was candid in assessing successes and acknowledging that some activities had not borne the expected fruit. In addition, the SVR identified some of the key next steps.

#### Section IC – Description of the Team Review Process

The Special Visit Team began its task by reviewing the written report. After several email exchanges, individual team members completed the "Team Worksheet for the Special Visit Review Conference Call." The conference call to discuss the worksheets and visit schedule requests was held September 17. Team members arrived at the hotel on October 29 and held a team meeting at 1:30 that afternoon. The team visited the evidence room in the library late that afternoon and began a review of the documents located there. October 30 was devoted to meeting with various individuals and groups. An exit report was presented to Saint Mary's College President Brother Ronald Gallagher and Provost Sally Stampf the morning of October 31. The team then presented the exit report to a larger group and concluded the visit.

## SECTION II - TEAM FINDINGS, ANALYSIS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Issue #1: Library Resources**

Since 1980, five WASC reviews have expressed concern about Saint Mary's support for library resources, particularly for collections, staffing, and building space. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data indicate that the Saint Mary's library lags behind its West Coast Conference (WCC) peer institutions in collections, staffing, budget, and student services [SVR, p. 10]. This situation directly hampers the extent to which library staff can provide SMC students with sufficient library materials, open hours, and reference service hours. In addition, Saint Mary's students find in their library only half the average space per student as do students in similar institutions [SVR p. 15 and AI 2.10].

#### Collections

According to 2004 NCES data, library book holdings per student were 44% below the mean level of peer WCC institutions [SVR, p. 11]. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data show that Saint Mary's students report a higher level of academic challenge than do students at similar institutions [SVR, p. 10]. With fewer library materials available on site than students at peer institutions have, and faced with the requirements of a strong curriculum, Saint Mary's students are at a disadvantage.

Since the 2004 WASC visit, SMC has developed a multi-year strategy for phasing in resources to enhance library resources. The first three years of this plan have been funded, so that a total ongoing increment of \$212,404 is being added to the library collections budget. During 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, the first two years of increases,

the library's offerings of online databases have jumped by 51% from 65 to 98 [data provided on site] and new book purchases have increased by 19% [SVR, pp. 11-12].

Saint Mary's is to be commended for developing a multi-year plan to infuse additional monies into the library collections budget ... and for funding its first three years. In order to support SMC students' needs for sufficient library materials to support the curricula, it is essential that the College ensure implementation of the additional ongoing library collections funding increments projected through 2011-2012 as reflected on the 10/30/2007 SMC "Budget Assumptions Worksheet" [AI 2.5 as updated during the WASC team visit]. It is strongly recommended that, in addition, Saint Mary's increase library collections funding well beyond the projected end date, determining appropriate increments by monitoring both current library collections investments at WCC peer institutions and library literature data reporting annual percentage inflation increases for library materials.

### Staffing

2004 NCES data underscore a disparity between the number of library staff per student at Saint Mary's (7.29 FTE) as compared with library staff per student in libraries at other WCC institutions (9.8 FTE). With less staffing available than its peers, the SMC library offered 58 hours of reference service weekly, in contrast to the mean average of 86 hours per week offered by peers. In addition, the SMC library was open 94 hours per week as opposed to 108 hours its peers were open. This situation put Saint Mary's students at a further disadvantage in comparison with their peers at other WCC institutions.

Commendably, the College's multi-year funding plan set forth in 2005-2006 provides for four additional library staff. In 2006-2007 the library added a librarian position; this year, they have added a staff position. With the help of these additional staff, the library has been able to expand library hours, increase reference service hours, provide additional instruction and reference support for the School of Education, and have sufficient support for its new electronic reserves system. In order to provide a sufficient level of library service for its students, it is critical that SMC hire the two additional staff reflected in SMC budget projects for 2008-2009 and 2009-2010. In addition, it is strongly recommended that, beginning in 2010-2011, Saint Mary's monitor the number of library staff at WCC peer institutions and provide additional library staff concomitant with WCC averages.

### Facilities

The 2006 Saint Mary's Study found that 73% of SMC students use the library to study. Additionally, the College Senior Survey found that students use the library for research or homework more often (61%) than do students at other Catholic (51%) or liberal arts (54%) institutions [SVR, p. 15]. Clearly, the existing facility is sought out by students.

Saint Albert Hall Library, built in the 1960's, was sized for a student body of 1,100 and a collection of 105,000. With a student body of 4,200 and a growing physical collection that now numbers 220,000 volumes, the Saint Mary's library is in great need of significant additional square footage. Further, with the new world of library technologies requiring robust connectivity and 21<sup>st</sup> century library features such as an information commons and open, flexible spaces that can support collaborative study with a variety of

seating, it is important that the SMC library be significantly expanded so that it can equal or surpass library spaces found at peer institutions.

The library physical collection has long outgrown the Saint Albert Hall Library. By the end of 2007-2008, almost one-third of the library's books (65,000) will be stored in an off-site storage and retrieval facility, DataSafe. This family-owned business provides information management and storage solutions at three locations in the Bay Area: Palo Alto, Newark, and their headquarters in South San Francisco. These warehouses have no temperature or humidity controls. When a Saint Mary's student needs a book that is in remote storage, library staff initiates a request and one of DataSafe's drivers delivers it within 4 workdays. Forty thousand volumes have been housed with DataSafe since 2000; this fiscal year an additional 25,000 volumes will join them. Even though these 25,000 books have not circulated in the past 7 years, many enrich the social sciences and humanities disciplines. Unfortunately, SMC students will no longer have the opportunity to find them in the library stacks.

Over the years, the Saint Mary's community has sought ways to increase library space. The campus has conducted three library-planning projects (in the '80's, in the '90's and from 2000 until 2004). Although funds for a library expansion or new building are not now available, the campus has recently improved the current facility by installing new carpeting, study carrels and chairs, and new modular staff work spaces; remodeling a bathroom to meet ADA specifications; and, most recently, adding a new reference desk.

SMC *Building on Strengths* planning includes provision for library facilities enhancement. As the team learned in interviews during the visit, the campus has engaged an architect to provide a proposal outlining the steps and costs necessary to initiate a new

library-building plan. During 2007-2008, SMC plans to provide the seed money necessary to underwrite a preliminary building design. If the architect's assessment of the Albert Library finds it to be structurally sound and worthy of renovation, the campus will consider investing in building modifications to improve existing square footage. Enhancements most useful for the library are (a) enclosing the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor balconies in order to create six group study rooms; (b) enclosing the south arcade on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor in order to create three additional group studies; and (c) installing air-conditioning and creating a foyer at the main entrance in order to create an air lock for the building.

Within academia, the library as a place is very important – especially on a residential campus. Saint Mary's library services and study spaces should be properly sized to the current student population. The collection should have sufficient space for expansion. Library volumes stored off site should be reunited with the on-campus collection as soon as possible so Saint Mary's students can have equal access to all parts of the library's physical collection. We commend Saint Mary's on planning anew for library expansion. We strongly urge the College to find ways to provide library collaborative study space immediately and to aggressively pursue library square footage expansion in keeping with current best practices for academic library spaces and technologies, and commensurate with the size of the student body and the projected growth of the collection.

## **Issue #2: Diversity**

A brief review of the WASC accreditation history reveals an on-going concern regarding issues of diversity at Saint Mary's College prior to 1990. These concerns were re-examined during the October 2004 Educational Effectiveness Review as one of three

themes identified by the college for review. The WASC team findings noted the College's efforts to move from merely reporting diversity statistics to establishing organizational structures that would allow the College to develop a multi-cultural environment in which to build cultural competency of faculty, staff, and students. Notwithstanding these efforts, the team addressed a serious disconnect between the stated desire to sustain a strong commitment to diversity issues and the actual practice of adhering to the College's mission and Lasallian core principles of "Respect for all persons" and building an "Inclusive Community" [SVR, p. 18].

These diversity concerns were grave enough to necessitate further review through a Special Visit in fall 2007. The College community acknowledged the WASC Team and Commission reports by noting that they "have taken to heart the feedback from the WASC Visiting Team in the area of diversity" and by clearly delineating their efforts to address the diversity concerns [SVR, p. 18]. Major changes/efforts for diversity mentioned in the report were: (a) strong support from Brother President Gallagher for addressing the diversity concerns through the Lasallian Core Principles; (b) creating a position (Vice President for Mission) to oversee diversity initiatives; (c) including the enhancement of diversity and cultural competency in the Building on Strengths Strategic Plan; (d) creating the Diversity Continuous Action Plan (DCAP); (e) re-establishment of the Celebrating Diversity Committee (CDC); (f) pro-active review of policies and practices to attract and retain a diverse faculty, staff, and administration; (g) campus-wide sharing of a Campus Climate Survey; and (h) investigating the application of Multicultural Organizational Development (MCO) as an organizational framework and analysis tool [p. 20 and AI 3.1]. It should be noted that the College also recognized the

“long-term nature of this issue” [SVR, p. 19] and acknowledged that although “important steps” have been accomplished, “... there is much work to be done ...” [SVR, p. 21].

A review of the efforts since the WASC fall 2004 visit [SVR, p. 19 and AI 3.1] prompted the campus to recommend the following actions: (a) a series of faculty, staff, student, and administrator workshops; (b) development of a long-term strategic plan that would sustain diversity initiatives; (c) on-going dissemination and discussion of the campus climate survey results (including those from a follow-up qualitative study); (d) development and implementation of diversity education; and (e) development of an assessment system to document diversity initiatives and the impact of these initiatives to the campus [SVR, pp. 19-20]. The College also provided a status report of these initiatives and their response to the recommendations from the WASC Educational Effectiveness team. “... that the College raise its level of commitment to diversity to the level that social justice is given” [SVR, pp. 20-21].

The status report acknowledged the appointment of the Vice-President for Mission who bears responsibility for overseeing diversity initiatives. The Vice-President for Mission and the CDC are developing a strategic plan for diversity (by May 2008) to be included in the College’s *Building on Strengths* strategic plan (BOSS) [SVR, p. 22]. One of the actions of the CDC was the creation of the DCAP that contains short- and long-term goals and is updated annually. One goal was the administration and analysis of a campus climate survey of students, staff, and faculty conducted in spring 2006; results were shared with the campus in fall 2006 [SVR, p. 22].

Although survey return rates were low (students-24%, faculty-25%, and staff-45%), it was possible to glean some meaningful analysis of positive and negative

responses. Staff reported a positive working relationship with other staff (66%), yet 75% indicated that the College should develop a “sense of community among students, staff, and faculty.” The analysis also included statistics that support early comments about marginalization of groups (48% of staff, mostly female, reported “hearing or seeing disparaging remarks about women”); subtle discrimination tolerated (52%), and the need to “promote a campus climate where differences of opinion are regularly aired openly (82%). From the interpretation of the analysis, the College acknowledges that “The range of responses truly challenges Saint Mary’s to reconsider how well it is living out core principles of its Lasallian mission” [SVR, p. 24].

Strong corroborating evidence for the need to follow the core principles from over 100 students, faculty, and staff who were interviewed by an outside consultant (fall 2006) in preparation for the BOSS, are indicated in the following statements: (a) “...the need for inclusiveness and community...” (b) “a strong desire for bringing all together in harmony, civility, and respect” (c) “The Lasallian identity needs to be fostered, nurtured, and promoted on a continual basis at all levels” and (d) “...a strong desire to both increase cultural competency and expand diversity for faculty and staff” [SVR Appendix 1.1 pp. 4-5]. From this analysis, some preliminary objectives were developed; one is worth special notation in regard to an underlying theme that has emerged from the Special Visit: *Promote civil, effective, and cooperative communication.*

In response to developing a cultural competency education by “raising the level of diversity to that of sexual harassment” the college offered, “the College has not yet determined the best means to implement these workshops, whether mandatory or voluntary” [SVR, pp. 24]. It was noted that “for the last two years, Brother Gallagher

[indicated] that the annual Staff Appreciation days be focused on our Lasallian mission and core principles... and that "...the Vice President for Mission helped coordinate a number of events about Lasallian Heritage and education..." But it appears that most efforts were made just prior to the 2007 WASC Special Visit giving the impression that those substantial efforts in building an environment of cultural competency at Saint Mary's since 2004 have not been accomplished. To their credit, the College community did acknowledge their need to "articulate a comprehensive, overarching plan for creating an integrated and coherent approach..." and to hire an outside consultant to work with the CDC to create the plan [SVR, p. 25]. However, it has been more than two years since the WASC recommendations and little action for improving the cultural competency of the College has been taken. As previously stated, this is a grave concern given the nature and expanded history of concern in this area.

#### The Special Visit Findings

A review of Saint Mary's Special Visit report, archival material provided in the evidence room, additional material provided upon request during the visit, Saint Mary's website, and interview comments obtained during the visit reveal that the College has developed a plan of action (and has taken some steps) to address the diversity concerns outlined in the WASC team report (supported by the WASC Commission). Some actions have been accomplished, yet most are at the development, planning, or "discussion" stages, and only a few are designed to build a multi-cultural environment that will sustain cultural competency of students, faculty, staff, and administrators. It is quite evident that the College community is well aware of the serious nature of this WASC identified

concern but there is little evidence that actions to date have gone beyond “awareness” on a large-scale basis.

Additionally, the passionate dedication of a few administrators and faculty (especially the Vice President for Mission and members of the CDC) was demonstrated by their honest and open approach in accepting the challenge to address the more sensitive issues raised by staff and faculty in the campus climate survey and the WASC email account (that invited the campus community to share their thoughts about the WASC Special Visit). However, there was little to no evidence that these efforts are shared by the larger campus community. Attendance at the non-mandatory workshops and CDC meetings bears witness to the small number of staff and faculty who are involved in these efforts.

Given the nature and history of the concerns centering around diversity (and to a larger extent, the Lasallian principles) it is not unrealistic to have expected the College to have “moved more quickly” to take the necessary steps to respond to the WASC recommendations, if for no other reason than to adhere to its Mission and Lasallian Core Principles. At the very least, the outside consultant should have been hired and the diversity strategic plan moved forward to a stage of preliminary implementation.

Members of the WASC Special Visit team were quite troubled by the comments made by faculty and administration during interviews and from email messages that addressed a deeper discomfort with the campus climate and the apparent lack of concern from administration. In these venues, the team heard how students were disrespectful to other students, staff, and/or faculty; how faculty and administration were disrespectful to faculty and staff; how “faculty of color” were “tapped” more than “faculty of the

dominant culture” for committee work, etc.; how many faculty of color felt marginalized and excluded in the decision making processes; and how the lack of attention to these concerns from the administration strengthened these feelings. The team was told that the lack of procedures and policies to address the unacceptable and uncivil conduct of students and others perpetuates their perceptions that they are being treated unfairly.

Unfortunately, these tolerated “acts” of incivility seemed to be directed toward “faculty of color” and/or female faculty, thereby giving the appearance of racism and discrimination. When asked “Help us understand how the adherence to the Mission and Lasallian principles coexist with the unacceptable practices reported in the campus climate survey,” interviewees were at a loss to provide a sound response and some echoed “Yes, how do they exist?” In their responses, however, the team heard many references to certain terms such as “the dominant culture” and “faculty of color.” The very use of these terms, especially in an academic setting such as Saint Mary’s that is supported by the Lasallian Principles, indicates that building cultural competence is of the utmost importance for the College.

Equally worrisome were the references to the negative impact of admitting under prepared students—most of whom were “students of color”—on student retention. On the one hand, the College was proudful that they have a diverse student body, but on the other hand, they were perplexed about how to deal with the lack of academic progress of these students. The team was encouraged by Item 1.3 of the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan, wherein it is stated that “Special attention will be given to students identified as potentially needing additional support services, based on incoming preparedness indicators...” The

comprehensive plan was due in October 2007 with an expected allocation of funds to implement the plan by July 2008 [SVR, Appendix Item 1.1 p. 9].

It was mentioned above that the emerging theme of promoting civility among all campus constituents surfaced during the visit. The team recognized that several factors have contributed to the increasing and sustained lack of civility on Saint Mary's campus: (a) apparent lack of understanding and practice of the Lasallian Principles of having respect for all persons; (b) apparent lack of procedures and policies used to govern acts of incivility in classrooms and on campus for students, staff, and faculty; (c) if such procedures exist, then there is an apparent lack of enforcement when acts of incivility occur; and (d) apparent lack of concern and/or actual tolerance of incivility by administration. These factors are not occurring in a vacuum; they exist and continue within a culture that is "slow" to move to action on many fronts. Also, it appears that Saint Mary's is hesitant to tackle the sensitive issues of intolerance, discrimination, sexism, and racism with more than just planning and discussion (albeit some discussions occur in focused workshops). Although the CDC is moving toward action on diversity concerns, most of these actions will not be realized in the immediate future.

A difficult but critical question that must be asked is, "Does the College meet the Criterion for Review 1.5?" Does the institution demonstrate commitment to the principles enunciated in the WASC Statement on Diversity? As found in the *WASC Handbook of Accreditation* [2001], the section "Community on Campus" [p. 72] notes the following expectations:

An effective academic community calls for respect and cooperation among the various groups represented at the institution". ... Whatever an institution's prohibitions may be regarding the behavior of its members, these must not be

accompanied by institutional actions that express animosity or disrespect for persons for reasons of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, gender, age, religious belief, sexual orientation, or disability.

There is evidence that a significant proportion of the Saint Mary's community does not feel respected and has been subjected to behaviors that are unacceptable. The team heard, within the context of interviewing faculty and staff, comments of concern regarding the lack of a specific plan of action to address previous incidents of racist, sexist, and uncivil behaviors on campus.

In conclusion, it is clear that the Saint Mary's community is grappling with issues of civility and difference. To address the situation we offer the following recommendations. First, we recommend enhanced publicity for the many efforts to address campus climate issues that are underway. Second, we urge the College to develop and implement measures to aggressively address instances of incivility and other inappropriate behavior.<sup>1</sup> Third, we urge the completion of a comprehensive plan with decisive action steps to foster community practices consistent with the ideal of an inclusive community. The plan should include specific actions to reduce racist, sexist, and uncivil comments and behavior. Finally, while there are some committed and competent individuals working hard to address the campus climate challenges, it is not clear that progress has been widespread and substantial. We see the situation as urgent. We recommend the retention of an outside consultant to work with Saint Mary's on an ongoing basis.

---

<sup>1</sup>In an email after the exit report, the team was informed that procedures for dealing with instances of incivility are in place. The puzzling thing for the Special Visit team is the perception reported by a number of individuals that such procedures do not exist.

### **Issue #3: Adult and Graduate Education**

After the Educational Effectiveness Review team visit on October 18-20, 2004, the March 1, 2005 Commission letter to Saint Mary's noted the following:

(T)he College has yet to incorporate its adult and graduate education programs fully into its operations, thereby according them that a status tantamount to that of being a "stepchild." Fledgling steps have been taken but they do not go far enough. ...the team continued to find disconnections between the College at large and the off-campus programs.

(The) Commission strongly endorsed the team's several recommendations on the adult and graduate education programs, particularly those related to the need for an organizational structure to give oversight, the full participation of graduate and adult education faculty in the academic governance process, and the development of a program review and assessment system for the graduate and adult learning programs.

The March 6, 2006 Commission letter to Saint Mary's reaffirmed a special visit the fall of 2007 with an area of focus on "adult and graduate education." The letter noted, in particular that "The role of graduate studies generally, and the doctoral program in particular, needs to be developed further, and the desired impact of these programs on the mission and culture of the institution needs to be articulated more clearly."

Saint Mary's has responded to these concerns with several concrete actions. Perhaps the most significant is the closure of SEED (School of Extended Education). SEED or adult education operations were largely off campus and not well connected to the other units at the College. Although painful, the evidence provided in the institution's report indicates that the closure occurred after careful deliberation and a process that offered all affected constituencies opportunities to voice their concerns [SVR, p. 27-29].

Just as important were the accompanying program decisions. The Human and Community Services, the Law Studies, and B.A. degree completion program in Management were all eliminated. The LEAP (Liberal Education for Arts Professionals)

and Master of Arts in Leadership were moved to the School of Liberal Arts (SOLA). In addition, a decision was made to seek AACSB accreditation for the SEBA (School of Economics and Business Administration). Each of these decisions had consequences for the concerns expressed by the Commission and deserve further discussion.

The relocation of LEAP and the Master of Arts in Leadership to the SOLA was accompanied by another development that appears to be beneficial. An Associate Dean of Liberal Arts for Graduate and Professional Programs position was created and filled in the fall of 2007. The Associate Dean oversees the M.A. in Graduate Liberal Studies, the Master of Kinesiology, the Master of Fine Arts in creative writing, LEAP, and M.A. in Leadership. While the team visited only a few months after the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies position had been filled, comments offered by the graduate faculty at several meetings praised the new administrative arrangement and indicated that graduate programs “were at the table”, to quote one faculty member, in the daily affairs of SOLA. The Special Visit team’s assessment is that the creation of the Associate Dean position has been a success to this point.

It should be noted that enrollment in the Graduate Liberal Studies program was suspended in May of 2007. No new students will be admitted until a decision is made about its continuation. The challenge is financial viability. The new Associate Dean is responsible for working with all the constituencies involved to arrive at a final decision [SVR, p. 41].

The decision to seek AACSB accreditation for the SEBA (School of Economics and Business Administration) programs, both graduate and undergraduate, led to a structural change. A new Director of Graduate Business was appointed. To meet

AACSCB standards for academically qualified faculty, additional faculty development funds were committed and there has been an increase in the number of tenure-track faculty. In addition, preparation for AACSB accreditation that requires evidence based and mission driven planning reinforces WASC guidelines emphasizing assessment of learning. In other words, establishing learning goals and assessment practices is an integral part of SEBA's preparation for AACSB accreditation.

As of July 1, 2007, SEBA graduate programs were moved to the Rheem Campus, 1.5 miles away from the main campus. The College concluded that the move was necessitated by severe space limitations on the main campus. The Saint Mary's Advancement Office is also located at the Rheem Campus. While not a great physical distance, the challenge is to keep faculty and staff that are located at the Rheem Campus integrated into College activities.

With respect to graduate programs in the School of Education (SOE), the construction of a new building, the Frank J. and Olivia C. Filippi Academic Hall that will house the Kalmanovitz School of Education, is the most observable change. With respect to assessment and program review, state issues drive much of the planning and evaluation processes. Saint Mary's SOE has joined a consortium of colleges and universities who have decided to use PACT (Performance Assessment of California Teachers) developed by Stanford and the University of California, Berkeley [SVR, p. 35]. Implementation of this system will result in ample evidence of educational effectiveness. In addition, SOE programs also participate in the College's Program Review process.

One of the concerns mentioned in the March 1, 2005 Commission letter to Saint Mary's was the lack of "full participation of graduate and adult education faculty in the

academic governance process.” The institution’s report [SVR, p. 41-43] asserts that the statement is incorrect. The evidence presented to the Special Visit team, both in the written report and responses to questions during meetings with administrators and faculty members during the October 29-31 visit, support the conclusion that graduate faculty are an integral part of and substantially participate in the faculty governance process.

The March 1, 2005 Commission letter also expressed concern about “the development of a program review and assessment system for the graduate and adult learning programs”. The College’s report claims that “it should be clear from the evidence that SMC already has a College-wide assessment program, with written guidelines, that includes adult and graduate programs and has been in operation long before the 2004 Educational Effectiveness visit” [SVR, pp. 43]. Evidence provided to the Special Visit team through materials in the evidence room and especially discussions with the Program Review Committee supports the College’s assertion. The Special Visit team was especially impressed with the work of the Program Review Committee. The assessment materials developed by this committee are not only impressive but can be seen as a model for effective program review processes. Further, it is clear that the Program Review Committee examines graduate programs.

The March 2005 Commission letter also referenced a “need for an organizational structure to give oversight” to graduate programs. Saint Mary’s has addressed this concern in four actions. First, creation of the Associate Dean of Liberal Arts for Graduate and Professional Programs to coordinate graduate programs in SOLA has had initial positive consequences. Second, the establishment of the Provost’s Council of Graduate Deans provides a forum for the discussion and resolution of graduate program

matters. Third, the Provost has assumed responsibility for “some central record-keeping and review of policies” [SVR, p. 45], a responsibility that has now been formally incorporated into the Provost’s job description. Fourth, a Graduate Chairs and Directors group has been created and “is intended to meet twice a semester to hear and make reports on issues of direct concern to graduate and professional programs at the College” [SVR, p. 46].

The lack of services for graduate students is a concern raised by previous visit teams and the March 2005 Commission Letter. The institution’s report notes that the “changeover to electronic processes for admissions, registrar function, bill paying, etc., has reduced the ‘disparities of availability’ for adult and graduate students” [SVR, p. 46]. Financial aid, food services, and classroom cleaning issues have not been addressed although there is the suggestion that they will deal with these matters in the long range planning process.

The Special Visit team’s assessment with respect to graduate and adult education programs is that there has been a concerted effort to address the issues raised by the Commission. Many of these changes, however, are very recent and it is too early to offer a definitive judgment. The College will need to assess the effectiveness of these actions as it moves forward.

Has Saint Mary’s addressed the larger issue delineated by the March 2006 Commission letter? That is, “The role of graduate studies generally, and the doctoral program in particular, needs to be developed further, and the desired impact of these programs on the mission and culture of the institution needs to be articulated more clearly.” There have been conversations among the faculty and administration and some

of the decisions have grown out of those discussions. It seems just as clear that consensus has not been achieved and that the discussion will continue. This Special Visit team's conclusion is that this continuing conversation is healthy for the College and should be encouraged.

**Issue #4: Update on Ed. D.**

After the Educational Effectiveness Review team visit on October 18-20, 2004, the Commission scheduled a special visit for the fall of 2005. "The focus of the 2005 Special Visit is the Ed.D in regards to capacity, student enrollment, program vision, and educational effectiveness" [WASC Commission letter, March 1, 2005]. That special visit occurred October 17-19, 2005 and resulted in a commission letter that identified the following issues the College should address:

The College needs to continue its work in developing clear student-learning outcomes that integrate the distinctive mission of Saint Mary's with the expectations of the professions for which the EdD students are preparing. Such work should be matched with structures for monitoring student achievement of these outcomes at key intervals in students' course of study.

The College will need to pursue strategies to recruit a qualified and diverse faculty for the EdD program and to retain such faculty over time to provide strength and continuity to the program [WASC Commission letter, March 6, 2006].

The letter noted that the fall 2007 visit would cover "an update on the EdD program, which should include a report on progress made in addressing the recommendations stated in this letter."

The SVR [pp.37-38] has five paragraphs noting the accomplishments acknowledged by the fall 2005 special visit team. That report commended Saint Mary's leadership for the changes brought about, addressing faculty workload issues, making

progress in developing a culture of scholarship, and completing an assessment plan [Report of Special Visit to Saint Mary's College of California, October 17-19, 2005]. It should also be noted that the same report offered the following recommendations supported by the March 2006 WASC letter:

- Further develop student learning outcomes to reflect the school's mission as well as professional core competencies that students will be expected to master.
  - Establish a structure for monitoring student progress on learning outcomes in the first two years, which might be aligned to established assessment benchmarks.
  - Faculty initiatives:
    - \* Integrate qualified St. Mary's faculty from interdisciplinary academic programs to teach in the EdD. Program and/or serve as dissertation chairs.
    - \* Recruit qualified faculty to the institution with consideration given to diversity and student need.
    - \* Enhance faculty retention by providing support structures for new and existing faculty to stimulate research and further curriculum development.
- [Report of Special Visit Team, October 2005, pp. 17-18]

The 2007 SVR noted that the core faculty expanded the curriculum review committee in the fall of 2006, and consulted with campus constituents regarding mission and vision statements the spring of 2007. Feedback was sought from external educational leaders in the fall of 2007 and that course review and revision will occur during 2007-2008 for implementation in June 2008.

After reviewing the documents in the team room, meeting with the Ed. D. faculty, and a conversation with the Dean of the School of Education, it appears progress has been slow on most of the recommendations. One area of improvement is in the number of faculty members involved in the Ed. D. program. Through reassignments from other areas and movement from SEED to the Ed. D., the number of faculty has increased. There were also hopes for hiring one or two new faculty members.

Conversations about mission and curriculum are underway but have not resulted in agreement. These discussions appear to be robust and promising but they have not yet

produced concrete results. A preliminary document has been drafted but it is still under discussion and review by the Ed. D. faculty.

One development that has been productive is the formation of a dissertation chairs committee. As described during the meeting with faculty members, this group meets to discuss common issues, concerns, and other matters that arise with respect to supervising dissertations. Every faculty member spoke glowingly about how productive and useful these conversations were.

With respect to establishing a structure for monitoring student progress on learning outcomes in the first two years, it was reported that this would follow the curriculum review. Further inspection of Appendix EI 4.11 [Ed. D. Special Visit Report] and the program review process guidelines demonstrated that the Ed. D. program adheres to the institutional Program Review process. However, during the interview with the Ed. D. faculty, it was revealed that there are currently no course-by-course student learning outcomes. Assessment of the Ed. D. program relies heavily on summative assessment of the dissertation. The faculty acknowledged that, to date, there are no formal processes in place for formative assessments, but they are aware that these should be developed and are very willing to do so.

After reviewing the evidence and meeting with the faculty and the Dean of the School of Education, it is the team's judgment that sincere efforts are underway to effectively engage the critical issues. It is our assessment, however, that more progress should have been achieved since the fall 2005 special visit. The team senses that to make effective progress in the future, the Ed. D. program would benefit from a director. The Dean of the SOE has diligently tried to provide leadership but the challenge of running

SOE is a full-time endeavor. We wonder if appointing a director of the Ed. D. program would not lead to more timely achievements. Whatever is done administratively, the curriculum review and other deadlines must be met.

In conclusion, while there was much progress in addressing the concerns about the Ed. D. program in preparation for the 2005 special visit, momentum was lost shortly thereafter. It appears that the current faculty members have undertaken a number of the tasks that need to be accomplished. We strongly recommend the firm adherence to deadlines for accomplishing needed tasks. It also appears that the faculty members truly want to have a successful Ed. D. program but have not moved collaboratively toward this goal. Perhaps with a director, the faculty can coalesce and establish a plan of action delineating specific steps to accomplish the number of tasks they have identified for completion.

### SECTION III – MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY FINDINGS

The March 6, 2006 letter to Saint Mary's Commission reaffirmed the special visit scheduled for the fall of 2007 noting that the focus should be on "adult and graduate education, library resources, diversity, and an update on the EdD program". While the tasks have not been fully accomplished, the Special Visit Team thinks that it is appropriate to offer commendations to acknowledge the good work that has been done as well as present recommendations.

#### Commendations:

After reviewing the written materials and visiting the campus, the team has the following commendations, suggestions and recommendations.

1. The team takes this opportunity to thank the President, Provost, deans, other administrators, faculty, and staff for their exceptional hospitality.
2. The team greatly appreciates the thoughtfulness and forthrightness of responses to our questions. We thank members of the Saint Mary's community for providing the many additional documents and statistics we requested.
3. The team commends the institution for the courage to undertake the challenging conversations regarding diversity that are underway among a significant proportion of the community.
4. The establishment of the Vice President for Mission position and reestablishment of the Celebrating Diversity Committee are positive moves forward in addressing the challenges Saint Mary's faces.
5. The team commends the institution for the impressive program review process that is in place, especially the work of the Program Review Committee the past few years in developing the emphasis on student learning goals.
6. There has been much progress in the development of a culture of evidence. The desire to seek reliable data appears to be emerging as a key feature of the Saint Mary's campus culture.
7. The implementation of a plan to enhance the library collections and number of staff members is notable.
8. We also want to acknowledge the recent attention to the physical space needs of the library.
9. We commend the Saint Mary's community for the development of *Building On Strengths*, the initial step in developing a more comprehensive strategic plan.

10. The elimination of SEED and moving several graduate programs to the School of Liberal Arts with the appointment of an Associate Dean for Graduate and Professional Studies has helped integrate some graduate programs into the general operations of the College.

#### Suggestions/Recommendations

As the College continues to address the March 6, 2006 letter from the Commission, consideration or attention to the following will be helpful.

1. Academia is well known for lengthy discussion before action is taken. There are many things that are commendable as that tradition manifests itself at Saint Mary's. The team suggests, however, that the institution would be better served by finding a way to move more quickly from discussion to actions that result in deliverables.
2. The actions taken to enhance library collections and staff should be continued beyond the projected end date and more realistically take into account the inflation rate associated with serials, books, and electronic materials.
3. Library facility needs should be aggressively addressed.
4. While there was much progress in addressing the concerns about the Ed. D. program in preparation for the 2005 special visit, momentum was lost shortly thereafter. It appears that the current faculty members have undertaken a number of the tasks that need to be accomplished. We strongly recommend the firm adherence to deadlines for accomplishing needed tasks.
5. We recognize the reasons for moving the School of Economics and Business graduate faculty to the Rheem Center but recommend attention to how those

faculty and staff members can maintain close connections with the Saint Mary's community on the main campus.

6. It is clear that the Saint Mary's community is grappling with issues of civility and difference. We recommend enhanced publicity for the many efforts to address campus climate issues that are underway.
7. We urge the College to develop and implement measures to aggressively address instances of incivility and other inappropriate behavior.
8. We urge the completion of a comprehensive plan with decisive action steps to foster community practices consistent with the ideal of an inclusive community.
9. While there are some committed and competent individuals working hard to address the campus climate challenges, it is not clear that progress has been widespread and substantial. We see the situation as urgent. We recommend the retention of an outside consultant to work with Saint Mary's on an ongoing basis.

#### Concluding Observations:

The Special Visit Team drew the following conclusions after reading the materials and visiting the Saint Mary's campus.

#### *Library Resources*

The evidence clearly indicates that Saint Mary's has responded aggressively to Commission and previous visiting teams' concerns. Plans have been developed and are being implemented to address collection and staffing issues. There are also plans to address physical facility needs. The fall 2007 Special Visit team commends Saint Mary's for the progress but also strongly recommends that the additional steps be taken to aggressively address needs.

### *Adult and Graduate Programs*

Much that has occurred during the past few years encouraged the Special Visit team. The elimination of SEED and consequent steps taken have produced positive results. Major steps forward have been taken with respect to integrating graduate programs in SOLA. Other measures have brought better coordination of graduate programs. There has been progress in linking graduate programs to the core mission of Saint Mary's although conversations about the nature of the institution need to continue.

### *Update on Ed. D. Program*

The team was disappointed that there seems to have been little progress since the 2005 special visit. There are signs that the Ed. D. faculty has begun the necessary work but that only occurred this fall. More progress should have been evident by the time the team visited.

### *Diversity*

The team is deeply concerned about the lack of significant action steps in addressing the concerns raised by previous site teams and Commission letters. During a brief visit, it is difficult to arrive at a definitive analysis of the situation or to prescribe solutions. The team's judgment is that there has been insufficient attention by the Saint Mary's community to the issues revealed in the campus climate study as well as matters that were brought to our attention during the visit. We acknowledge planning is underway but note that past planning has not led to substantial concrete actions that have brought about significant improvements. In our assessment, the situation is urgent and requires immediate action.