Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is WASC, and why does the organization exist?**
   - WASC is an acronym for Western Association of Schools and Colleges, a voluntary, non-governmental organization that evaluates and accredits the quality and educational effectiveness of schools, colleges, and universities. WASC accredits institutions and not individual degree programs.
   - WASC exists because the federal government has delegated the accreditation function to it and other regional bodies like it in the U.S.

2. **Why should I care about the WASC?**
   Accreditation offers students and employers’ assurance that the education students receive meets a rigorous set of standards. Cal State East Bay must retain its WASC accreditation in order to continue to be eligible to receive federal financial aid for students (40% plus of our students receive federal aid) and for our units to be transferable to other accredited institutions. Without WASC accreditation we would lose credibility and students, seriously undermining our standing and ability to operate as a university.

3. **Who makes up WASC, and what do they do?**
   Three groups of people make up WASC:
   - **The Commission**
     The Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities consists of 20 members, mostly university administrators. Commissioners are nominated and elected by the presidents of accredited institutions from within the WASC region.
   - **WASC Staff**
     The WASC Staff consists of the executive director and six associate directors who support the commissioners, staff committees, and serve as institutional liaisons.
   - **Unpaid Peer Review Teams aka “The WASC Visiting Team”**
     Faculty and administrators from universities and colleges volunteer to be members of a visiting team. They read all of the documents CSUEB submitted to WASC and then spend three days on campus interviewing faculty, staff, students, and administrators. After visiting the campus, they prepare a report with recommendations to the commission, which then makes the decision about accreditation.

4. **Weren’t they here a few years ago?**
   Yes. The WASC Visiting Team came to CSUEB in 2005 for the Capacity and Preparatory Review. At that time, they evaluated our capacity for fiscal stability, resources, structures, processes, and policies to support student learning. The 2007 visit is the second step in the WASC process, focused on Educational Effectiveness.
5. *When is the WASC Visiting Team coming to CSUEB?*  
   October 16-19, 2007

6. *Why is WASC Visiting Team coming?*  
   This time, the WASC Visiting Team will come for the *Educational Effectiveness Review*, which will evaluate CSUEB’s evidence of academic quality and student learning.

7. *What will the WASC Visiting team do on campus?*  
   The WASC Visiting Team will:  
   - Review all documents provided in advance (our Educational Effectiveness Report) and on site; and  
   - Interview and meet with a variety of administrations faculty, staff, and students. They are likely to meet with the faculty senate and many of its committees; the Associated Student Board; the University leadership team; and the staff divisional heads, as well as individual faculty, students, and staff.

8. *What are the WASC Visiting Team looking for?*  
   They are seeking to:  
   - Verify information in our Educational Effectiveness Report and exhibits  
   - Clarify areas that are confusing or not easily understood  
   - Explore matters of institutional focus and learn about climate and culture  
   They are looking for:  
   - Evidence of compliance with their standards of review  
   - Assessment of student learning

9. *What do they mean by evidence of student learning?*  
   Evidence of student learning includes the information, facts, and data we will present to prove that our students are learning what we expect of them. This includes:  
   - Assessment of student learning outcomes, student perception data, and pass rates on licensure exams.  
   - The use of multiple measures of student learning to fit different programs—for example, student achievement in the arts may be defined differently than in the sciences  
   - Evidence that student learning is collected in a systematic and documented way; it is analyzed and discussed; and the results are used to improve student achievement.

10. *Will they talk to me, and will I know in advance?*  
    In September, we will have a list of individuals and groups that the team plans to visit. Once they arrive, however, they may choose to speak with others not on their list (e.g. ask to speak with department chairs, sit in on a class, or speak to students).

11. *What if I don’t know anything about the assessment of student learning?*  
    If you are a student, share how much you learned in your classes and how you use what you are taught.  
    If you are staff, explain how what you do supports students so they can learn.
If you are faculty ask a colleague who uses assessment or the associate dean in your college for examples, before October 16.

12. Can I be honest?
   Just like your mother told you, honesty is always the best policy. But remember, the WASC visitors are not coming to listen to individual complaints or opinions. They are coming to evaluate evidence to determine whether or not the institution as a whole should be re-accredited and for how long. The university has the academic senate and its unions to deal with individual complaints.

13. Who has been involved in the WASC process on campus?
   - Over 120 faculty, staff, and students were directly involved in the Campus Outcome Teams during the Capacity and Preparatory Review phase, completed in 2005.
   - Over 100 faculty, staff, and students in the six research teams participated during this final review for Educational Effectiveness.
   - Over 30 presentations and facilitated conversations with the university community about the ongoing results of investigations and research undertaken for the WASC process were conducted.
   - Over 3,000 faculty, staff and students responded to the campus climate survey, which is part of this review.
   - The entire university community was invited to review and give feedback on drafts of the WASC reports that were submitted.
   - Other campus meetings, including President Qayoumi’s town hall meetings in 2006, helped to further define or many of the topics that are included in the WASC analysis.

14. So what does CSUEB’s report to WASC say?
   When we started the WASC process, we proposed several research studies. Our report presents the results of these studies (Program Review; General Education; Multiculturalism; Advising and Retention; Campus Climate; and Strategic Planning) and how we are using the results to improve the quality and outcomes of a CSUEB education. Also, the WASC Commission asked us to address some concerns raised during the 2005 visit. This report contains our response. Overall, we provide evidence demonstrating that CSUEB is an institution that is earnestly student-learning centered, committed to demonstrable quality and results, and therefore worthy of a full accreditation.