

Site Team to Visit De Anza for Accreditation Process

De Anza College to prepare with rigorous self-evaluation

La Voz Weekly, Jan. 25, 2010

Refugio Garcia

The Accreditation Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, a subdivision of the Western Association of schools and colleges, will be sending a site team to evaluate De Anza College in October 2011.

The visit will consist of an examination determining whether or not De Anza has an appropriate purpose, sufficient resources, evident accomplishments, and affirmation that De Anza will fulfill its purpose.

In preparation for this visit, administrators, faculty and staff members met last Thursday to discuss the importance of volunteering for positions of the standards committees and the functions of the group.

"The heart of this work is going to be done in the committees," said Brian Murphy, president of De Anza College. Murphy spoke to a group of potential volunteers at the California History Center and explained the significance of the four committees.

The committees will focus on several areas, including institutional mission effectiveness, student learning programs and services, the resources for those programs and the leadership and governance committee.

The self-study is mandatory. "We are requested and required by the accrediting commission to produce the self-study in anticipation of the visiting team's review," said Murphy

The work of the standards committees shows the different phases that the four self-study groups would complete in order to complete the study.

The time line begins in January 2010, and indicates completion to be by October 2011. "We have to do it according to a time line, and do it

in the order that they expect us to do it," Murphy said. "All we do between now and then is prepare ourselves using this as the occasion for that preparation for that site visit."

Despite the formality of the entire process, Murphy also pointed out that the preparation for the visit could serve as an opportunity for constructive self-criticism.

"This is an occasion for us to review what we do, and to think thoughtfully about our capacity to do it as well as we can," he said.

Regarding the areas of possible strengths and weaknesses, Murphy said, "There are places where we believe we are strong and where we ought to be commended for being strong." He went on to say, "There are those places where we are challenged, we admit that, and confront it, and deal with it."

Murphy stressed the importance of being thorough. "The more engaged we are, the better off we are when we reach that endgame, when we meet the deadline."