After a lot of understandable anxiety about the visiting team, it does not appear that many faculty were approached in their classrooms. There were several short visits to campuses that I've heard of (and at least one reported instance of a positive comment about SLOs posters on classroom walls!), but the bulk of the interaction took place on Thursday and Friday of last week in meetings at Ocean Campus. As you may remember from previous visits, the members of the team were polite, positive and collegial. This visit was similarly pleasant in tone.

On Wednesday evening, April 3rd, the Chinatown dean, who happened to be answering the phone at around 5 p.m., received a call from several visiting team members who were lodging in the Union Square area - Sandra Serrano, Chancellor of Kern Community College District and chair of the visiting team, and Jonathan Cole, Professor of Physics at Mira Costa College. They asked if they could come over for a tour; they had been on the team last year and knew about the new campus but had not yet seen it. They did not enter any classrooms, but looked in on a Fashion class and a Math class. ESL classes at Chinatown don't really rev up until 6:30. The Fashion students were already in the classroom at 6:00 waiting for their teacher to arrive at the scheduled 6:30 start time. Students were also there early waiting for the Math class to begin. Both classes were notably diverse, demonstrating the fact that Chinatown, as all our campuses, serves everyone.

On Thursday morning, Yulian Ligioso, VP Finance and Administration from Solano Community College, was scheduled for an official visit at 9 a.m., but his driver got lost and he only had 25 minutes to visit. He did not observe any classes. Mr. Ligioso asked why we needed a coordinator at the campus, and why we hadn't closed more sites. He was told that our program is complex enough to require a coordinator and that we have closed locations which generated enough FTES to cover their costs and more.

Thursday and Friday were full of meetings, and we were called to them with very little warning. I went to three, and I have had first-hand reports from several others. The SLO meeting apparently went swimmingly and the visiting team was duly impressed. The team got an earful on the subject of consultation when they met with our Academic Senate. Reports on other meetings have circulated on the Electronic Faculty Forum (EFF) and elsewhere.

Since I was on Accreditation Response Work Group 1 - Mission Statement - I was asked to attend that session with Michel Bresso, AVC Governmental and External Relation, Kern Community College District. I was expecting the meeting to be a pro forma review of the official process of changing the college's mission statement, but several students, Associated Student President Shanell Williams and the well-known Diamond Dave, brought up several issues. First, they said, they had been brought in to the process of changing the college's mission late; WG1 meetings began in the summer, and I did not see Shanell until several weeks after the semester began. She
said that Associated Students had had to scramble to get students on work groups at all. Then Diamond Dave presented their issues with the changes WG1 had approved: the deletion of lifelong learning, civic engagement and cultural enrichment. He said he was "chagrined." I backed the students up by saying that even a faculty member such as myself had not been at the initial meetings, and that the student survey which was created was sent out before the semester began, and was particularly inaccessible to beginning language learners and noncredit students, who do not register online. Dr. Bresso asked how we planned to engage the college in future discussion regarding the mission statement and I suggested that we use the survey as a learning tool, and that we do so before the end of the semester so that Board of Trustees members have the results in their hands for their summer retreat, at which they are supposed to make changes to the mission statement. Ms. Williams, after recognizing that there had been a rush to begin work group proceedings, said that she had been told that the three areas of concern to Associated Students had been deleted because ACCJC had said they had to be, and asked Dr. Bresso if that was the case. Dr. Bresso said that all colleges were having to reevaluate their missions because of budget cuts.

Two of the meetings I attended were intended to gather information from department chairs. In the first, care was taken to have representatives of CTE, Noncredit, and the Sciences present. I expected to be asked about noncredit and took Vivian Ikeda's excellent lavender handout on SLOs along to share. Marybeth Buechner, Dean of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness (and former biology instructor) at Sacramento City College; the abovementioned Jonathan Cole; and Robert Miller, VP Education Services at Pasadena City College, represented ACCJC. The only question they had about SLOs was how they would be handled in the reorganization proposed by administration. We said department chairs have been at the forefront of SLO work (albeit "invisible" to administration at times) and that the question of who will handle that work under the new plan remains unanswered. They asked if DCC or Work Group 7 - Adequacy Staff/Administrators/Planning - had been consulted. They were not, and as one department chair added, "nor were the 34 deans who got pink-slipped." They asked about DCC contract negotiations and were told that, while the DCC negotiating team members present could not go into detail, the department chairs are "trying to bend over backwards [until we can determine] at what point we can absolutely not do our jobs." The accreditation team members were also informed that the district is demanding $2m from a 3.5m operational cost, and it is now clear that FCMAT's original $6m estimate was erroneous. They asked for details about release time and stipends and those were promised. DCC's current contract does not sunset until December 2013, so the current negotiations may include discussion of money, but not duties. The discussion of discipline expertise, job duties and complexity will come later, perhaps as early as August.

The last meeting I attended as with the abovementioned Yulian Ligioso, who called in the DCC as a bargaining unit. Something 30 chairs packed into a small conference room in the Multi-Use Building at Ocean Campus (seats maybe a dozen). Mr. Ligioso wanted the department chairs take
on - you guessed - the proposed new administrative structure. Darlene Alioto, President of DCC enumerated our concerns:

1. Losing or changing 24 deans at the same time leads to loss of institutional memory;
2. Such a wholesale change at this time only adds to the chaos;
3. There are concerns about the way administrative hiring is taking place - only one or two uber-committees to hire all of the positions, and there is no guarantee of anyone on them who has the qualifications to judge academic credentials and discipline expertise;
4. Separating schools deans from campus deans is a place we've been before - our current system of merged roles is more collegial and no one feels like a second class citizen in it;
5. The last accreditation team said we have too many interim administrators, yet "recently retired" has been added as a desirable qualification to some job; announcements - this is contradictory if we are to be looking for permanent people;
6. We're doing this backwards: first you have a new permanent chancellor, then you hire administrators who fit in with his or her vision.

Mr. Ligiosso commented on our positive attitude, the way we keep students at heart, the many strides that have been taken since July and thought that things are really starting to gel. He added that his college, Solano, was on show cause 6 or 7 years ago, and that there was restructuring there, including two or three CEOs.

Individual chairs then made the following comments:

- There is an opportunity here to restructure the school, but the proposed reorganization plan is thin.
- Combining the proposal to restructure the department chair system with all new administration can only result in chaos
- The workload of chairs is not sufficiently understood or appreciated: who’s going to run the college?
- The lack of communication from the interim administration, and their apparent lack of interest, have led to a very different interpretation of the 14 points set forth by ACCJC; are these major changes what ACCJC asked for? Interpretation of ACCJC's recommendations has been left in the hands of a few people from the outside. More communication could have resulted in less lack of trust.

All in all, the members of the visiting team seemed quite interested in what we had to say, and were often complimentary and supportive. But I hasten to add that they are only information-gatherers. They will make their reports to Sandra Serrano, the chair of the visiting team, and she will make her report to Barbara Beno, the president of ACCJC. Their decision about City College will happen behind closed doors. The meetings with the visiting team are not confidential, but the inner working of the process of deciding our fate are. We will not know until late June. In the meantime, we will continue teaching and working together and serving students. We have a lot to be proud of, and I have a feeling we will still be here when this is all over.