

Foundations of Excellence

Appendix A. Organization of the Self-Study

We present here a brief chronology of FoE self-study (after our campus was accepted into the 2007-08 National Select Four-Year Cohort).

- July and August, 2008. A “Launch Team” with representation from both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs¹ was assembled and sent to Asheville, North Carolina for the Policy Center’s Launch Meeting (together with the other institutions in our cohort).
- The FoE Launch Team and WASC Theme III leadership coordinated with one another to ensure that the two simultaneous self-study efforts were synergistic and not duplicative.
- The Launch Team accepted a recommendation that the campus seat specific dimensions committees for each of the FoE dimensions except for Philosophy and Improvement; these two dimensions would be the responsibility of the Steering Committee.²
- The FoE self-study was prominently announced by Provost Cutrer at the 2007 Convocation, and presentations were made in several fora by the Launch Team.³
- Faculty, staff and administrators were invited to participate in the self-study. Each person volunteering to serve received a preference sheet with a brief description of the dimensions and was asked to rank-order their preferences for the committees on which they were interested in serving. Ninety-one faculty, staff and administrators were placed on FoE committees.
- The FoE surveys were conducted. The student survey was administered in paper format in GEL courses and on-line to all first-year students not enrolled in GEL in the Fall.⁴ The on-line faculty/staff survey went to all campus employees.⁵
- The Launch Team sorted through all of the preference slips to put together balanced dimension committees with everyone being placed on a committee that was his/her first or second choice. Possible dimension committee co-chairs were identified (most committees

¹ Launch team membership: David Barsky, Geoffrey Gilmore, Lorena Meza, Patricia Morris, Joanne Pedersen, Dilcie Perez and Martha Stoddard-Holmes. Emily Cutrer had planned to lead the team, but could not attend the launch meeting as she was needed at the campus.

² (This note provided primarily for the benefit of anyone from another campus reading this report and thinking about undertaking an FoE self-study.) In retrospect, the Steering Committee had a very full plate; Improvement could/should have been assigned to a separate committee.

³ Student Affairs Kickoff, Academic Affairs Town Hall, Academic Senate Executive Committee, and Finance and Administrative Services Leadership Council.

⁴ First-year students take this survey rather early in the year. To provide some perspective on the student experience further into the year, a survey was developed in the Transitions committee and administered to several GEL sections in the middle of the Spring 2008 semester.

⁵ Serious thought had been given to identifying specific areas in which campus personnel were most likely to have contact with first-year students and knowledge of first-year issues, but the launch team decided that it was best to invite all faculty and staff so as to avoid accidentally overlooking some important area.

had one co-chair from Student Affairs and one from Academic Affairs) and invited to serve as co-chairs and as members of the Steering Committee.⁶

- As the offers of the co-chair positions were being extended, the campus was closed for a week in October 2007 due to wildfires raging through San Diego County.
- The Launch Team also developed a plan to include a student perspective. Rather than sprinkle a few students into each dimension committee, ten students were recruited to create a Student Focus Group,⁷ which separately reviewed several of the dimensions. The reports and transcripts of the student group were then provided to the dimension committees.
- Our Policy Center advisor, Dr. Betsy Barefoot, helped us to get the task force convened by running a pair of webinars during which she trained most of the FoE task force in the use of the FoEtec data platform.⁸
- The Steering Committee convened in December, 2007 to begin working on the Philosophy dimension. The other committees began their work at the beginning of the Spring 2008 semester.
- CSUSM sent nine members of the FoE Task Force to attend the Foundations of Excellence Third Annual Winter Meeting and the 27th Annual Conference on the First-Year Experience.⁹
- The first dimension report to be submitted for feedback was the Roles and Purposes report (March 26, 2008). This was followed over the course of the Spring semester by the reports for Diversity, Faculty, Philosophy and Organization.
- By late October, the three remaining reports (All Students, Learning and Improvement) were submitted and the Steering Committee convened to begin sorting through action items.
- CSUSM sent a team¹⁰ to the Proficiency in the First Year at the University Statewide Conference sponsored by the CSU. Some recommendations from the CSUM team were incorporated into the FoE action items.
- See the beginning of Section III of the final report for an account of how the Steering Committee made sense of 150 action items and concluded the self-study.

⁶ One measure of the level of campus interest in, and commitment to, the FoE self-study is that only one person declined the offer to co-chair a committee.

⁷ The students in this group either received a stipend or were paid as student assistants for the time they spent with the group.

⁸ We are indebted to Betsy for her patience with our campus (in much the same way as many of our students are on the “five-year plan,” we seem to have ended up on a “one-and-a-half year plan” – but we’re still very excited about finally having the opportunity to walk across the stage, even as we recognize that Commencement gets its name because that marks the beginning of “real work.”

⁹ CSUSM attendees: David Barsky, Brian Dawson, Ronald Gaschler, Geoffrey Gilmore, Linda Holt, Sahar Mosleh, Joanne Pedersen, Dilcie Perez, and Kimber Quinney.

¹⁰ CSUSM Proficiency Team: David Barsky, Dawn Formo, Geoffrey Gilmore, Erin Goldin, Linda Holt and Lori Miller.